UNDERSTANDING THE IMAGE IN ART THERAPY

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL-HERMENEUTIC INVESTIGATION

BLANCHE DAW DOUGLAS

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy,
Rhodes University Grahamstown.

December 1999

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank Dr Kevin Kelly for his supervision of this thesis.

I wish to thank Ruth Jackson for her many hours of typing several drafts of this thesis.

I wish to thank the participants who participated in this study for their time and effort, willingness to create images, and willingness to disclose personal information.

I wish to thank the National Research Foundation for its financial assistance. Opinions expressed in this publication, and conclusions arrived at, are those of the author, and are not necessarily to be attributed to the National Research Foundation.

DEDICATION

To Lance and Aidan for their patience over the years.

In the word, or its plastic equivalent, the image,
the past, present and future are endlessly
reproduced and re-interpreted.
(Steele, 1982)

ABSTRACT

Part One of the research seeks to establish a context wherein certain assumptions pertaining to the interpretative dimensions of understanding the image in art therapy can be considered and reviewed. Notions about the image, meaning and reality are discussed both in terms of how they relate to current art therapy practice, and how they may be alternatively thought about, both from the perspective of ancient Hellenic Greek thought, and more contemporary thought, particularly that of phenomenological and philosophical-hermeneutics. *Part Two* of the research investigates the phenomenon of understanding the image in an art therapy situation, with a view to reconsidering certain of the assumptions raised in the first part of the thesis (phrased in the form of research questions). It did this utilizing a qualitative method, by exposing four respondents (patients), and two therapists to an art therapy situation in which images were created out of clay. The respondents (patients) and therapists articulated their understanding of the image production procedure, and the meaning of the images created.

The way understanding occurred in the empirical part of the research was explained and illustrated by means of the hermeneutic circle, which was operational on a number of different levels. The results of the research suggest that the meaning of the image in art therapy is a creative synthesis, which emerges from within a dialectics of exchange. This exchange involves a number of meaning-generating contexts, of which the patient's experience, and the therapist's knowledge, form only a part. The outcome of this exchange is the derived meaning of the image, which represents a 'fictional' world that gives the patient and therapist a way of understanding the patient's situation.

The process of the research, which investigates the way understanding of the image in art therapy occurs, is at the same time, an application of the principles of understanding.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GENERAL INTRODUCTION
CHAPTER ONE

1NOTIONS ABOUT THE IMAGE, MEANING AND REALITY IN ART THERAPY

This study investigates the way the image is created and understood in art therapy with a view to discovering the interpretative dimensions of this process, and for addressing the assumptions which inform this process. As art therapy is concerned with therapeutic practice, as well as with explaining and thinking about such practice, both practice and the rationale for it need to be covered in such an investigation.

Thinking in art therapy proceeds from the general assumption that the images created by the patient, in, for instance, clay, paint and graphic media, provide important information about the patient's experience (whether conscious or unconscious). It also proceeds from the assumption that an understanding of the meaning of these images, within a facilitating, therapeutic setting, provides a forum for the patient's healing. Such assumptions, in turn, proceed from certain implicit notions to do with the nature of the image, the nature of its meaning, how this meaning comes about and can be investigated, and what this means for the overall practice of art therapy.

These notions, in their taken-for-granted form, have been thrown into question by phenomenological- and philosophical-hermeneutic thought. Such thought provides an alternative answer to the issues of meaning and understanding, and thus has the potential to alter ways of thinking and practice in art therapy. As these notions, and the terms used to denote them, have their roots in history and philosophy it is necessary to consider these roots in so far as they shed some light on such thinking. As the meaning of these terms and notions also proceeds from their practical application, some history of their use in art therapy, and other psychological disciplines also needs to be considered.

Any interest in the image tends to be concerned about its meaning: what it says, and why it is being said, or, why a particular person says it and what it really means. As the notion of real meaning presupposes a belief in the way things really are, concepts of reality come to play a part in the way the image (or anything else for that matter) comes to be understood. Such notions have differed considerably over time, and the meaning of the image can be understood in various different ways.

1.1UNDERSTANDING THE MEANING OF THE IMAGE IN ART THERAPY

The image in art therapy is regarded as a personal expression, and means of communication by the patient. As the patient's expression, the image is treated as a representation of his or her psychological world with its dimensions of an intellectual, developmental, personality and pathological nature. Externalized in the image, this world, with its quality of relationships, becomes open to view, and is thus made available to investigation and treatment intervention. In art therapy the assumption is frequently made that meaning is to be located in past or present problematic events or situations. Such events and situations occupy the patient's inner world where they come to influence his or her thinking, emotional quality of life, and behaviour. Alternatively, the assumption is made that the meaning of the image coincides with what the patient intends as meaning.

Such assumptions presume that meaning is already there, either before the image is created, or during its creation, and that it can be transferred in unaltered form from the realm of inner experience (whether conscious or unconscious) to the image (as an external and visual representation of such experience), or, that it can reside in the image, which acts a container, or visual symbol for it, as an existing fixed expression of meaning. Meaning which has been 'projected' onto the image, and/or comes to reside in the image can then be disclosed, either by means of interpretation, or description. In other words, it is generally assumed that meaning remains essentially the same in being transferred in linear fashion from the inner to the outer world, and from its expression in the image to its reception by the patient and therapist, whether this meaning is described or interpreted. For instance, the meaning of an event of sexual abuse is assumed to already exist, and remains essentially the same when the patient comes to express it in an image, and when it is verbally articulated, communicated, and discussed between patient and therapist, who are able to grasp it on its own terms.

Interpretative perspective, expressive medium (whether that be creating an image in a plastic medium, or using language) and the art therapy context tend not to be regarded as influential in any way to issues of meaning. Likewise, understanding is deemed to occur as a form of recognition and identification of the patient's experience as meaning. Understanding is thought to entail the adoption of an existing meaning: a meaning which already belongs to the patient's experience, this in spite of any discussion which may, and typically does occur between patient and therapist.

While interpretation and dialogue about the meaning of the image are common features in the context of art therapy, their influence upon understanding may not have been adequately understood. Here, either the therapist's or the patient's explanation of meaning is often

regarded as the correct meaning of the image. Furthermore, in art therapy, the influence of context tends to be viewed in terms of whether or not it promotes creativity rather than in terms of how context itself influences what occurs in the art therapy situation, what it makes possible in terms of thinking, and how it influences the outcome as meaning of the art therapy investigation.

1.2AN ALTERNATE VIEW FOR THOUGHT IN ART THERAPY

Alternative ways of thinking, such as phenomenological- and philosophical-hermeneutics, critique the notion of meaning as something which is fixed, can be unilaterally determined, and determined free from the influences of context and interpretative strategy. Such thinking also critiques the unidirectional notion of understanding, which assumes that meaning can be transferred from the patient's inner world to the image and to the therapist's understanding, without alteration. Phenomenological- and philosophical-hermeneutic thought propose instead, a prospective view of meaning, a dialogical and circulatory model of understanding, and a notion of meaning which is dependent upon the context in which its occurs. It suggests further that any investigation concerned with identifying meaning needs to take into consideration the functions of theory, language, and anticipation of outcome in the construction of meaning. It also underscores the necessity of interpretation for the achievement of deeper meaning in order to prevent a superficial understanding and the emergence of what may simply be the confirmation of a taken-for-granted meaning.

What this suggests for art therapy is that to rely upon the mere discovery of original situations or events upon which to pin meaning, or to rely upon only the therapist's interpretation, or only the patient's intended meaning as the one true, or correct meaning of the image may be problematic. Furthermore, it suggests that therapeutic practice that eschews interpretation and dialogue about meaning may be foreclosing on the discovery of deeper meaning.

1.3DEFINITIONS

1.3.1A definition of terms

Any investigation into the phenomenon of understanding the image necessarily concerns itself with notions of meaning and notions about the image.

The words 'image' and 'imitation' proceed from the same root: '*imitor*' which means 'to imitate'. The terms 'imaged', and 'imaging' mean to 'represent by an image', by 'reflecting the likeness' of something, or, to 'mirror' it, or to 'represent to the mental vision, as by descriptive language' of something, or, to form a 'likeness of it in the mind' (The Living

Webster, 1975). As a ‘representation’ or ‘imitation’, the image is both that which is brought before the mind, and that which is described, portrayed, exhibited, presented or served as a sign or symbol of something else (p.814). What the image means tends to be construed in the terms of that which it portrays. The term ‘meaning’ as the ‘intention of a verbal expression, a gesture, or an act’, or ‘what is to be understood’ (p.590), is that which is sought in investigations which utilise the image in order to come to some kind of understanding. What an image means refers to what its creator `had in mind' while creating it, what he/she `intended', what is `fixed' by the image, what the `purpose' is of the image, what it (the image) `intends', what it `signifies', what it `imports', or, what it `denotes' (p. 590). To understand meaning means to ‘grasp’, to be ‘familiar’ with, or to ‘comprehend’ meaning. The act of understanding entails the ‘gaining of knowledge’ about something, ‘discernment’ of it, or its ‘interpretation’ (p. 1077). Thus, to understand meaning is to know it.

1.3.2The application of definitive terms in art therapy

What is common to such definitions and terms, as they are used in art therapy, is the assumption that the image and its meaning not only correspond in some way to that which the image portrays but that meaning is also determined by that which the image portrays, free from interpretative strategy, language and context. What the image portrays tends to be regarded as something existing prior to the image's creation, thing-like, and fixed, thus the assumption is made that meaning is equally something fixed and thing-like. Based on the notion that what the image portrays determines its meaning, art therapy has tended to confuse notions about meaning with notions of origin.

1.4THE DISCIPLINE OF ART THERAPY

1.4.1Art therapy as a discipline within a broader context of interest in the image

The image in the discipline of art therapy finds a particular place within the broader context of interest in created images. Throughout history created images have fascinated mankind. Historians, sociologists, archaeologists, and anthropologists alike have sought to interpret the created image by way of gaining information about dimensions of human life, which are of interest to their particular disciplines. Information about the origins and conditions of peoples, civilisations, *zeitgeists*, historical and social events have been followed and illustrated in the belief that the image may convey, disclose, or represent something else, which needs to be investigated. The influence of images upon peoples has been given prominence, where, for instance, the image as relic or symbol is used in religious and ritualistic practices. In the arts the power of the image is believed to lie in its expressive and aesthetic value, and in its ability to educate and move its viewers. In psychology, projective techniques using images, and a patient’s dream images are frequently used as a means of gaining information about a person.

In art therapy the creation and understanding of images is considered to be a diagnostic and therapeutic *modus vivendi* in that the understanding and treatment of patients occurs in terms of their created images.

1.4.2Historical background of art therapy as a discipline

The professional use of created images in psychology started in the nineteenth century, when the first descriptive classifications of the psychoses in psychiatry were based upon the art of the insane. In 1859, a psychiatrist, de Tours postulated a link between genius, artistic ability and insanity. Diagnostic evaluations based upon artwork were explicitly made in 1875 by Max Simon, and, in the 1880's Lombroso and Simon linked the subject matter of the artwork of the insane to their personal conflicts (Anastasi & Foley, 1940). Lombroso was also one of the first people to regard psychotic art as an attempt to communicate (Naumberg, 1950). Prior to the turn of the century, children's drawings were being studied in terms of developmental phases (Wilson, 1982). Thus, the use of art to determine psychological conditions was being actively recognised before the turn of the twentieth century.

By the turn of the twentieth century, Freud had written the *Interpretation of dreams* in which he used the term 'primary process thinking' to describe a feature commonly found in the psychoses, creativity, and in dreams. This process entails the phenomena of condensation and displacement (Freud 1975, in Richards)[1] and was recognised as a particular kind of work of the mind, which, although illogical, can be decoded and understood. In referring to this 'primary process', Kris (1952) maintained that undifferentiated perception, and the capacity for regression to unconscious levels of the mind is necessary for creativity.

At this time drawing tests were also being devised for the purposes of testing the intelligence of children, and in 1906-7 Mohr used patients' free associations to their artwork, and claimed that such associations, and the artwork itself, provided insight into the psyche. In the 1920's Nolan Lewis was the first person to use art for therapeutic purposes, and in the 1930's psychiatrists such as Schilder and Pfeifer began tracing case histories of patients through their artwork (Naumberg, 1950; Wilson, 1982). In 1926 the Goodenough *Draw-a-person Test* was published, and in the 1940's Lowenfeld began to link artwork to stages of personality

[1]Freud, (1975, in Richards) postulated that primary process thinking belongs to unconscious processes in the mind which are impulsive, contradictory, illogical, irrational and extraordinarily changeable. Condensation, which is one feature of this thinking, relates to the partial fusion of two or more ideas, and to the use of words or names as if they are things. Displacement, which is another feature, is the distortion which occurs when there is a shifting of affect from one thing to another.

development.

During the First World War, when the necessity for effective and rapid psychological screening of combatants became imperative, there was a rapid escalation of the creation and use of personality assessment measures, and projective techniques such as the *Rorschach* and the *Thematic apperception Test* became widely used during the 1940's and 50's (Wilson, 1982). Thereafter, Alschuler and Hattwick (1947/1969), as well as Machover (1949), made intensive studies of artwork, and correlated what they found to certain psychological variables. By the middle of the twentieth century, artwork and personality assessment, using

images, were thus being extensively used for diagnostic purposes, and less widely for treatment.

During the 1950's, psychoanalytic thinking had begun to have an influence on psychological practice and thought, and in the arts. This is evident, for instance, in the Surrealist movement. In 1947 Lowenfeld, who had discovered that children project the way they perceive the world, and project their fears and fantasies into their artwork, published a book on the developmental stages of children's art (Lowenfeld, 1982). In 1958, Hammer wrote a book titled *The Clinical Application of Projective Drawings* which remains an authoritative text on the interpretation of drawings to this day. By the second half of the twentieth century, the use of the image for diagnostic purposes thus came to include the abnormal and normal stages of the perceptual development of children.

1.4.3The status of art therapy today

In the 1960's, art therapy became a recognised professional discipline in the United States of America. Since then, all the hitherto developed methods of diagnosis, assessment of personality, and its development, and the theoretical thinking surrounding them, came to inform ways of utilising and thinking about the created image in the practice of art therapy throughout the Western world.

Today, art therapy is practised and taught in a number of different settings under the auspices of controlled supervision, and/or professional registration with bodies such as the American Art Therapy Association. Art therapy tends to be taught at the post-graduate, Master's degree level by accredited universities, and requires a specified number of hours of internship practice, plus additional practice, before registration as a professional can occur. The types of settings in which art therapy is utilised ranges from private practice, to hospitals and other in-

patient facilities, hospices, old-age homes, and homes for the mentally, physically and socially compromised, to out-patient facilities such as clinics, and other institutions such as schools. The art therapist is often a member of a professional team but also often functions in the capacity of a private practitioner. Art therapy can be used as a sole therapeutic medium with particular patients (such as children and psychotics), or in conjunction with psychotherapy.

1.4.4Claims made for the therapeutic benefits of art therapy

Numerous claims are made on behalf of art therapy. For instance, the creative process, as a sample of living, and the image as a symbol of this, is said to provide the opportunity for thinking and behaving differently (Benedetti, 1975, in Jorstadt, Gilroy & Dalley, 1989; Langer, 1979; Malchiodi, 1990; McNiff, 1992; Moon, 1990; Rogers, 1970, in Vernon). Unlike verbalisations, the created image is said to have a greater than usual capacity to contain expressions and experiences of the self, and therefore, to reflect back relevant information about the person. Furthermore, the creative process is said to require that the patient make various decisions about the form and content of certain experiences or ideas which then help the patient to gain a sense of control and mastery over such experiences. Such mastery and control is said to increase a sense of effectiveness, promote self insights, and/or develop ego functions.

1.4.4.1Creative activity and the image as forms of communication

Creative activity and the image are said to be forms of communication which both promote verbalisation (Naumberg, 1966) and do not require verbalisation (Langer, 1979). Susanne Langer, for instance, maintains that, "visual forms…are just as capable of articulation, i.e. of complex combination as words". She states that,

> …the laws that govern this sort of articulation are altogether different from the laws of syntax that govern language. The most radical difference is that visual forms are not discursive. They do not present their constituents successively, but simultaneously, so the relations determining a visual structure are grasped in one act of vision. Their complexity, consequently, is not limited, as the complexity of discourse is limited, by what the mind can retain from the beginning of an apperceptive act to the end of it. Of course such a restriction on discourse sets bounds to the complexity of speakable ideas. An idea that contains too many minute yet closely related parts, too many relations within relations, cannot be "projected" into discursive form; it is too subtle for speech (Langer, 1979, p.93).

In these terms, the created image is capable of conveying complex information in a form

which is both subtle in terms of meaning, and economical in terms of time.

1.4.4.2Creative activity, self esteem, self cohesion and self differentiation

Claims for the therapeutic effects of art therapy also make reference to the capacity of creative activity for increasing self esteem, as well as self cohesion, through narcissistic gratification. This occurs by various means (Malchiodi, 1990; Rogers, 1970, in Vernon). In providing an acceptance of the patient and his or her image, the therapist succeeds in influencing the patient's internal processes by reflecting back to the patient a sense of his or her creation being something worthwhile. The patient then adopts the same attitude towards him or herself (Lachman-Chapin, 1979).

By means of creative activity a person discovers a sense of self (Winnicott, 1971), a sense of body, and a sense of intra-psychic completeness (Levy, 1995). This completeness is a sense of being whole, and free from inadequacy. The creative act is thus, "an unconscious remaking of the body ego" (Niederland, 1976, p.197). In psycho-biological terms, this is partly the result of evoking the stimulus barrier (which is necessary for screening out distracting stimuli) by forcing attention to certain stimuli and not to others (Wilson, 1982), and partly to do with a developing sense of body boundaries, which refers to the capacity of being able to distinguish between inner and outer experience (Douglas, 1986).

1.4.4.3Creative activity and ego functioning

Adequate body boundaries promote ego functioning with an increase in reality testing and the development of a self-concept. Nash (1970) explains that there is a hierarchical progression from the body schema (which belongs to the realm of neuro-physiology), to the body image (which distinguishes the self from the environment), to the self concept (which is the purely psychological aspect of awareness). The self concept attributes meaning to experience. In giving tangible expression to personally meaningful experiences and psychological states, creating images in art therapy is said to strengthen the ego by increasing autonomous, synthetic and integrative functioning, enhancing reality testing, promoting judgement, making possible the regulation and expression of drives, and effectively articulating thought processes (Blanck & Blanck, 1974; Wilson, 1982). Ego enhancement is said to occur, for instance, through counteracting, "the chaotic discharge of affect, and uncontrolled abandon to fantasy on the one hand, and the formation of rigid mechanisms of defence on the other" (Ulman, Kwaitkowska & Kramer, 1978, p.30). References are made to the externalisation of introjects

as a first step in ego reparation (Kris, 1964). The creative process is also said to provide a means for adaptive regression in the service of the ego (Kris, 1964), which entails a process of dedifferentiation in which the expression of unconscious material, and the creative solution to problems occurs.

1.4.4.4Creative activity and object-relating

What this means in object-relations terms, is that the patient has internalised certain attitudes and ways of relating to the self and the world through identification with significant people in his or her life (usually the parents). These attitudes, and ways of relating, become projected outwards, and are expressed, and made available to understanding and influence (for instance by the opportunity for creative expression), (Stone, 1981). Others believe that a patient's artwork can become a transitional object which starts the process of "externalization of toxic introjects" (Robbins & Sibley, 1976, p.23). What is meant by this is that the artwork stands for aspects of the self that are split off, or denied, because they are too anxiety provoking. At the same time the artwork is something tangible and retains its own qualities in spite of projections from the patient, thus allowing the patient to recognize its existence as an 'otherness', or something beyond his or her manipulative influence. The toxic introjects externalized in the image can now be talked about in the abstract, rather than merely influencing the patient on an unconscious level. This externalization process can be handled in the following way: "The therapist, cognizant of both inner and outer pressures on the patient, moves from the symbolic to the concrete, from the unconscious to the conscious, and attempts to build an ego by channelling frightening affects into images" (Robbins & Sibley, 1976, p.27). The externalisation of introjects, in projected form in the artwork is a first step in ego reparation in that what the artwork represents becomes contained in manageable form in the image, which can be viewed, spoken about, and thus accepted, and no longer denied. In becoming more conscious, these introjects lose some of their threatening power. Kris (1964) holds a similar view, that the creative work enables the ego to bind, neutralise and channel energy. Externalisation constitutes creating visual symbols which can also be acted upon, thus making it possible to find new solutions to old problems on a symbolic level.

1.4.4.5Creative activity as symbolic expression

Reference occurs to the complete freedom of symbolic expression made possible by creative activity, a freedom which may not be possible in real life. Carl Rogers, for instance, says, "this permissiveness gives the individual complete freedom to think, to feel, to be whatever is

most inward within himself", and, "symbolic expression need not be limited" (Rogers, 1970, in Vernon, pp.148-149). In the words of Ulman and others (1978),

> The freedom of art links it to imaginative play. Both constitute islands wherein the reality principle is partly suspended. Forbidden wishes and impulses can be expressed symbolically. Painful and frightening experiences that had to be endured passively can be assimilated by reliving them more actively on a reduced scale. Affect can be safely discharged in play and also in art (Ulman, Kramer, & Kwiatkowska, 1978, p.24).

Benedetti (1975, in Jorstad) claims that the severely regressed patient benefits from having a symbol (verbal or visual) which stands for him or herself, or the therapist, onto which he or she can direct aggression.

1.4.5The influence of meta-theoretical foundations upon thinking in art therapy

While art therapists such as Naumberg (1966) point out that the externalization of experience and emotions in the form of created images is not merely subjective, because the creative act has "one pole which is outside of ourselves" (p.21), the meta-theoretical foundations of art therapy nevertheless avoid acknowledging anything beyond the patient, and his or her issues in the construction of meaning. Today, the image in art therapy tends to be regarded as a 'projection' of the patient's psyche. Projection is understood to be either an unconscious displacement of problematic intra-psychic material onto the external world, or to be the externalization of inner experience in symbolic form onto the image. The meaning of the image thus tends to be understood purely in terms of the patient's subjective issues.

While statements made about the therapeutic effects of art therapy tend to rely upon humanist or psychoanalytic notions and explanations, the effects of such notions and explanations upon understanding are not recognized. It is clear from the brief overview of some of the notions used, and claims made by art therapy, that the way such issues are thought about relies heavily upon particular theories, or paradigms of thought for their meaning. The nature of the patient's inner world, portrayed by the created image, is construed differently depending upon which theoretical frame work is being applied. For instance, this world may be construed in terms of internal object-representations, as occurs in object-relations theory, or it may be construed in terms of inner drives and mechanisms of defence, or in terms of learned behaviour. While it is beyond the scope of this thesis to go into these theories and paradigms in any great detail, the fact that they exist needs to be noted, and they need to be dealt with in so far as they influence, not only thinking, but practice in art therapy. Furthermore, while the thinking and practice of art therapy can be seen to proceed from implicit theoretical models,

these models are themselves steeped in broader, implicit world views which promote particular notions about the nature of reality and meaning. In any investigation into the meaning of the image, these implicit views unwittingly come into play.

1.5THE INTENDED SCOPE OF THIS THESIS

The objective in this thesis is not to question art therapy's efficacy so much as to understand the interpretative dimensions of the process of creating and understanding images in service of the therapeutic goal of helping the patient gain self insight.

This thesis considers certain of the various notions of reality, meaning, and truth, in so far as they have wittingly or unwittingly come to play a role in the way the image has been, and may be understood in art therapy. As these same notions ultimately result in investigative approaches, these approaches will be broadly mentioned in the light of some of the differences of opinion surrounding them. Within the discipline of art therapy there is the tendency to view the meaning of images in psychologically significant terms, yet there is little awareness of the meaning and status of these terms from within the broader philosophical tradition from which they proceed. By relocating these terms in their proper context, as world view, it becomes possible to understand more fully how art therapy is traditionally understood and has come to be practised.

As already suggested, certain notions about the nature of the image, meaning and reality that challenge this traditional understanding can be found in phenomenological- and philosophical-hermeneutic thought. The body of this thought that is of particular interest provides a means for reconsidering the taken-for-granted notions which influence understanding and practice in art therapy. This reconsideration will be introduced from the perspective of Hellenic Greek thought from which philosophical-hermeneutics borrows many of its concepts. Only in so far as aspects of this ancient thought seem to provide a clarifying ground for these more recent concepts, and their debates, will they be referred to. What is presented is not intended to be a comprehensive, historical overview of these systems of philosophical thought, but is expected to clarify the meaning of terms, ideas and approaches which have been, and may yet be adopted in the course of understanding the image in art therapy.

Part One of this thesis presents and questions existing assumptions about the image, meaning, and the nature of reality by considering the image in ancient, modern and post-modern terms. It does so for the purpose of setting up certain opposing, and complementary arguments with a view to establishing a basis, or context, for investigating the phenomenon of creating and

understanding the image in art therapy which occurs in *Part Two* of this thesis. It proceeds from a brief overview of ancient Hellenic Greek thought, in particular that of Plato and some of his followers, and does so insofar as this thought presents a foundation for a different way of thinking about issues to do with reality, meaning and the image, which are of interest to this thesis.

Having established this foundation, and having introduced the relevance of this ancient thought for phenomenological- and philosophical-hermeneutics, various contemporary ways of thinking about reality and meaning are presented with a view to showing how these impact upon understanding in art therapy. This is done by considering certain constructs of reality, and their related epistemologies and notions of truth. In this regard, reality as actuality, reality as the indubitable, reality as the determinable, reality as the essence of existence, and reality as an understanding of the truth, will be considered. Here, the notions proposed by certain thinkers such as Vico, Dilthey, Husserl, and Heidegger, are presented with regard to the particular contributions they make for understanding the notion of 'understanding' itself. Their thought is also considered in terms of its capacity for highlighting the need for an appropriate method of investigation in issues to do with meaning, and for establishing an alternative way of thinking about the image and its creation.

In this regard, Vico's notion of reality as imaginative construction, which was to herald later notions about the historical, imaginative, and constructive nature of understanding is presented. Dilthey's quest for a method of investigation which could do justice to issues of meaning in human expressions of any kind, yet be as reliable as methods adopted by the hard sciences, is also mentioned. The contribution made by Husserl's phenomenology, in critiquing Cartesian thought, and presenting an alternate way of thinking about reality and meaning, is further presented. The development of Husserl's thought by Heidegger into an ontology of *Being,* in which understanding and interpretation are necessary aspects of all forms of knowledge, is presented within the context of a reminder of the relationship between this thought and that of the ancient Hellenic Greeks. Finally, notions about the nature of understanding, meaning, and reality in the contemporary thought of Gadamer and Ricoeur, in so far as it potentially have something to say about understanding and meaning in art therapy is considered. In this way a context will be provided within which, and from which, the second part of this thesis can be understood and legitimately proceed.

Part Two of this thesis attempts to investigate certain of the assumptions raised in the first part about the nature of meaning and how this comes about in art therapy. A set of research

questions, which speak to these assumptions, are used to direct the research method which adopts a qualitative research design: a design which will be seen to have its rationale in phenomenological-hermeneutic and hermeneutic-phenomenological thought. This part will investigate an actual experience of the creation and understanding of images in an art therapy situation. In so doing, it utilises the resources of two therapists, four respondents, and clay images produced during the process of the research by the respondents. It also utilises, as data for analysis, the understanding conveyed by each respondent and therapist in their respective descriptive accounts of the process of creating the image, and their understanding, through dialogue, of the meaning of the images created. Finally, after some discussion of the results, and in light of certain of the previous arguments raised in *Part One* of this thesis about the nature of the image, meaning and reality, a consideration will be made of the thinking and practice of art therapy. This consideration will form the *Conclusion* section of the thesis.

PART ONE
THE STATUS OF THE IMAGE AND REALITY

CHAPTER TWO
HISTORICAL INFLUENCES

2.1INTRODUCTION

The nature of the created image, its relationship to reality, origins, meaning, and ideas about from where meaning proceeds, and where it is located, as well as the epistemological and ontological foundations of these dimensions are the typical subject of philosophical debate. Aspects of such debate serve to clarify the way in which the image has come to be (and may yet be) understood in art therapy. Various tenets of such debate have their roots in early Hellenic Greek thought.

Broadly speaking, the influence of Hellenic Greek thought is evident in contrasting notions about the correctness of meaning as something equivalent to reality (or the truth), where meaning and the truth are regarded as something timeless and pre-existent, and in an alternative view of meaning as the possibilities of being. The Greek notions which are of particular relevance to this thesis call into question the Cartesian foundations upon which scientific knowledge, and art therapy theory are based. A knowledge based upon these foundations, assumes a split between the capacity to know, and knowledge itself, and makes the assumption that knowledge of the truth is possible in a form uninfluenced by the necessity and means of its dissemination. This view of knowledge tends to be based upon a view of reality as something objective, fixed, and determinable in and of itself. Certain post-modern thought, which eschews a view of knowledge based upon these foundations, finds its rationale in a view of knowledge as understanding of that which is given by the world as the possibilities of being. Under the name of phenomenological- or philosophical-hermeneutics[1], this brand of thought seeks its rationale in a view of reality as something prospective, mediated and complex, yet which is finite in terms of its possibilities for meaning. Here, the

---

[1]In his overview of contemporary hermeneutical thought, Josef Bleicher, loosely defines hermeneutics as, "the theory or philosophy of the interpretation of meaning" (Bleicher, 1980, p.1). He distinguishes between hermeneutical theory which is concerned with the theory of interpretation as a methodology for the human sciences, hermeneutic philosophy which is concerned with the explication and phenomenological description of temporal and historical human being in the world, and critical hermeneutics which combines a methodological and objective approach in its striving for a practically relevant knowledge.

view is held that reality, meaning and the truth are in need of continual reconstruction for their expression to occur, a reconstruction which nevertheless occurs within a given context, and is influenced by certain mediating means. Such means include human understanding, language, paradigms of thought, the object itself of the investigation, and the anticipation of a certain kind of meaning, given the particular context within which the dissemination of meaning occurs.

In Hellenic Greek thought we find the roots of this later thought, which accepts a given phenomenal world, proposes a hermeneutical basis to all knowledge of it, and recognizes the practical, and human significance of such knowledge. Greek thought, which saw human engagement, and participation in the truth as both the epistemological means and the ontological end, or aim of human life, proposed various cognitive and experiential modes as means of access to knowledge as the truth. These modes, for instance in the form of rational contemplation, intuition, rhetoric and dialectic, were the place where knowledge (as the truth) could appear, and in its appearance directed human thought and action, and thus ensured the proper, masterful functioning of true human potential. In terms of both this ancient Greek thought and phenomenological- or philosophical-hermeneutic thought, knowledge is not awareness simply of what is, as something thing-like and external to humankind, but is knowledge of what is true meaning given in the *Logos,* or existence itself, which includes the true exercise of human potential. (Edwards, 1967; Heidegger, 1977, in Lovitt; Hofstadter & Kuhns, 1964).

Phenomenological- and philosophical-hermeneutics see the necessity of human engagement, in the form of understanding and interpretation, for knowledge of any kind. This engagement occurs both at the ontological and epistemological levels. Phenomenological-hermeneutics is that branch of hermeneutical thought concerned with the given existence of the world (including its field of delimited, existing meanings): an existence which presents itself, and becomes appropriated in being understood by means of interpretation (epistemology). Philosophical-hermeneutics is that branch of hermeneutical thought concerned with the existential nature of understanding and its contribution towards the meaning of *Being* (ontology), particularly in its historical and linguistic aspects (Bleicher, 1980). Here, understanding, as a given existential of humankind, is seen to occur at the interface with the world, and thus cannot be something either objective, in the sense of being free from human significance or influence, or subjective in the sense of being uninfluenced by the world. Knowledge based upon Cartesian foundations (such as exists in art therapy), on the other hand, would have us believe otherwise in its assumption of a fundamental split between the

knower and the known, and in the possibility of determining meaning free from the influences of human understanding and interpretative strategy.

2.2HELLENIC GREEK THOUGHT AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR CURRENT NOTIONS ABOUT 'REALITY', 'MEANING', AND 'THE IMAGE'

2.2.1 An essential reality defying immediate perception

The Hellenic Greek philosophers believed reality was that which was durable and immutable: what is without the qualifications of time, context, intention or perspective. In his review of the development of Western thought from the time of the pre-Socratic Greeks, Tarnas, (1991), explains this position by saying,

> Speaking in…broad terms, and mindful of the in-exactness of such generalities, we may say that the Greek universe was ordered by a plurality of timeless essences with underlay concrete reality, giving it form and meaning (p.4).

Plato called reality *Ideas* '*eidos*' or *Forms*. This reality, governed by the principles of an all encompassing divine intelligence in which humankind shared, yet was outside human prescription, and quite independent of immediate perception and the mind, was to be seen with a kind of intellectual vision. Once it was understood it could not be doubted. For Plato "to know the *Form* of X was to understand the nature of X" (Flew, 1979, p.123). It was to grasp its possibilities and inherent tendencies.

This notion of reality seems to have influenced[2] Martin Heidegger (1962; 1977), the German Philosopher, for whom it came to mean something akin to the finite potentials of being, which either come to be expressed authentically, or in-authentically in and through human understanding and articulation. For Heidegger, the search for ontological truth suggests a reciprocity between human expressions and existence, and for Plato it suggests a reciprocity between dialectics and existence (Friedlander, 1958). The potential to grasp the nature of `X' is for both these philosophers an ontological possibility of true being as existence, which in Greek terms was termed an aspect of 'oneness', the 'absolute', or 'divine reasoning'

[2]According to Olafson (1987), Heidegger sees the history of being as having its beginnings in ancient Greece, "because it was in Greece that being for the first time disclosed itself as presence" (p.206). For Heidegger, both "being as thought and being "unthought" are modalities of being itself" (p.221), and this seems to suggest that *being* as the expression of existence, although finite in its possibilities, underlies all expressions, or realisations of it.

(Hofstadter & Kuhns, 1964), and in Heidegger's terms was called `being-in-relationship'. It was for both a means of participating in the truth.

What the ontological and existential philosophies of Plato and Heidegger suggest for the discipline of art therapy is that the search for true meaning, of, for instance, the patient's psychological problems and images, may be, and perhaps should be, located and understood within broader ontological realms, as it is related to the nature of understanding, and meaning in life in general.

Appearance as image

In his explanation of Platonic thought, Richard Patterson (1985) states that Plato used the notion of 'the image' as an analogy to explain reality, in that he, advanced the proposition that, "the world and its contents, the reliable objects we see and handle every day, are only images of truly real things" - so-called *Forms* or *Ideas* (*eide*) - "possessing no perceptible properties, existing nowhere at all, and accessible in their purity to pure reason alone" (Patterson, 1985, p.1)[3]. In Platonic terms, these images (perceptibles) had the power to deceive, yet also held the possibility of access to the truth. As sensible particulars, or perceptibles, they pointed beyond themselves to a realm which mankind was destined to seek for the sake of leading a fully human life (termed arete[4], or `virtue', by the ancient Greeks).

What the Platonic notion of appearance, as `image', suggests for art therapy is that meaning lies beyond taken-for-granted appearances, which may be deceptive. Furthermore, the discovery of the meaning of the image lies within the realms of the human attempt to discover the truth, which is ultimately a discovery about how to live life. It thus proceeds from existential and practical concerns, which ultimately can be seen to motivate the investigation into meaning in the first place: concerns which may or may not be adequately fulfilled in the way art therapy sets about its investigation of meaning.

1.1.2The created image as `sensible particular'

[3]While the use of the phrase 'pure reason alone' is a problematic one given Plato's belief in various modes of access to the truth such as contemplation, intuition, and aesthetic experience, the point being made is that what is perceived by mankind is the appearance of reality, which is merely its surface aspects and an illusion, and not its true meaning. The term 'pure reason', in contemporary terms, is better understood as the true expression of something, which is its expression in human understanding given the context of the world.

[4]*Arete* has traditionally been translated as `virtue', but its central meaning was `excellence' of any kind, including the fulfillment of human function or potential (Edwards, 1967).

In The Republic, Plato focuses his discussion upon the concept of `imitation', and thus introduces not only the notion of the created image as a likeness, or resemblance, but the distinction between the image as appearance, and that which is real (Barasch, 1985). The status of the image as imitation, representation, and fiction, or as a new creation, and expression of being, has been a point of philosophical debate ever since, and features in the history and philosophy of art. In Platonic terms, the image, as art, tended to be viewed as something `inferior', due to its being a human creation, and but a `pale reflection' of the more essential, divine reality. As a copy of some or other sensible particular, which itself was removed from the truth by virtue of its mutability, the image stood "at several removes from reality" (Flew, 1979, p.6). It also had the capacity to deceive, and to detract from the truth, as it could engage the passions, and thus divert, or obscure knowledge of the truth.[5]

Many writers on Platonic philosophy have concluded that, for Plato, the created image held no possibility of embodying or directly communicating knowledge and truth (Copleston, 1946; Trusted, 1981), yet it is clear from some things he said, that it pointed towards some truth which could be gained through contemplation[6]. By virtue of its being an image of some particular and/or sensible thing, which itself adhered in terms of meaning to some `Form' (immutable, intelligible reality), an image did share some similarity with the `Form' of that which it portrayed. Images thus participated indirectly in the truth, yet nevertheless required dissemination for this truth to be grasped by intuition and/or ratiocination. Plato himself stated that as an aesthetic form, the created image had the capacity of opening up human awareness through which the `divine could speak' (Plato, 1964, from Ion, in Hofstader & Kuhns), and thus could provide a means of access to the truth.

In terms of art therapy, what this suggests is that a distinction between the image as appearance, and its meaning needs to be made. It suggests further, that, while what is assumed to be the meaning of the image may be misleading, the image as expression of life necessarily

[5]In The Republic: Book X, (603D-605B), Plato refers to the painter who makes things (images) which are inferior in point of reality (being images) and which betray the truth. He also refers to the corrupting nature of the arts in their capacity to evoke belief in their reality, and to evoke emotions which are better suppressed (Plato, 1956, in Warmington & Rouse, pp.405-408).It is a matter of dispute, however, whether Plato dismissed all art as being imitative and twice removed from reality, or whether he conceded that some art could imitate `Forms' directly (Edwards, 1967). His concern seems to have been with imitations that were not concerned with the truth, but more with convincing appearances.

[6]According to Trusted (1981), Plato argued that since knowledge had to be indubitable, the objects of knowledge could not be apprehended by the senses, which yield changeable aspects of things, but had to be apprehended by the mind, by direct mental intuition, or ratiocination. The truth of propositions, for instance, could not be arrived at by observation, but by contemplation.

always relates to some fundamental truth which can become known. The image as imitation, representation, and fiction, or as new creation and expression, points towards some reality as its true meaning. Discovering this meaning however, relies upon certain conditions related to intuition, contemplation, or rationation for its access.

1.1.3The image as imitation that reminds one of the truth.

For Plato, while images did not share the same ontological status as that which they portrayed, they nevertheless served a reminding function. Their 'inferiority' lay in their lack, or 'falling short', yet as imitations (*eikones or mimemata*) they revealed the nature of their models (Patterson, 1985, p.159). In the Phaedo, Plato, (1956, in Warmington & Rouse, pp.460-521) suggests that mankind is born with knowledge which is not conscious, but which becomes readily recollected once we are prompted (Flew, 1979, p.271).

In phenomenological-hermeneutic terms, the notion of a known but forgotten truth refers to a knowledge derived from culture, language, paradigms of thought, and lived experience, rather than to a knowledge that mankind is born with, or that is archetypal, mystical, or a re-incarnated knowledge as the soul (as it was for Plato). As an aspect of 'oneness', or '*eidos*' (as a spiritual force, (Friedlander, 1969)), Plato's notion of the truth, translates in philosophical-hermeneutic terms, into something akin to the true possibilities of the expression, or meaning, of something which occurs within the existential nature of human understanding which has the capacity for true, reflective and/or experiential engagement with the possibilities of being, given in existence (Heidegger, 1962; 1977; Gadamer, 1975).

As imitations, images for Plato served to recall something: to bring something to mind. Simmias and Socrates, before Plato, had pointed out, "that in being reminded of one thing by some different but similar thing, one notices the reminding thing lacks something (*ti elleipei*) in its similarity to the thing it calls to mind" (Patterson, 1985, p.98). For Plato, like other sensible particulars, created images had certain similarities to that which they portrayed, yet they lacked something as well. They related to universal, ideal qualities of *Forms* by means of 'participation' yet were themselves not reality. In the Phaedo, Plato has Phaidon say, "…each of these ideal qualities has a kind of existence, and the particular things that partake of them get their name from them" (Plato, 1965, in Warmington & Rouse, p.506). What has been inferred from this is that,

> …the participating image is neither identical with its model nor completely cut off from it. The image participates, "in some way" in the model…and therefore it enables us to get into contact with the original; it makes it possible for us to grasp what the essence of the

represented figure is, but it is never identical with the archetype (Barasch,1985, p.56).

Although caution needs to be exercised in drawing a parallel between such ancient Greek ideas, and those of phenomenological- and philosophical-hermeneutic thought, due to their different ontological foundations, the Greek notion of 'unreal' sensible particulars that `imitate' reality, yet, 'participate' in it, and provide a means of `access' to its truth, and the philosophical hermeneutic notion of a `fiction' (whether a word, text, or image), which refers beyond itself, and serves to bring something into presence (thus providing the possibility for engagement with it, and the opportunity for accessing its meaning), have some affinity with one another. Both present the idea that an `imitation', or 'unreal' thing, can provide the opportunity of access to the truth as real meaning, which is something experienced (participated in). It is, for instance, by means of the `fictional' name, theory or image, that something is called in presence, and by virtue of this presence as reminder, there exists the possibility of access to the truth of that which is being imitated. Furthermore, as will be discussed, the unreal, as `fiction', is necessary for pointing towards the real as true meaning.

Plato says that sensible particulars cannot be anything at all without participating in various *Forms*. It is not that these particulars already have a variety of properties and take on others, nor do they come to be seen in a different light by participating in a *Form*, as only *Forms* give meaning to anything at all (Patterson, 1985). In philosophical-hermeneutic terms this can be translated to mean that there are already existing possibilities of meaning given in and by the world: meaning that comes to inform whatever presents itself to our awareness. From this perspective, Plato's *Forms* may be understood as existing possibilities of meaning.

From the scientific perspective, Plato's focus upon the image as 'imitation', in distinction to the real, heralded the concern with issues of 'comparison', `correctness', 'sameness' and 'difference', and the notion of truth as correspondence. Appearance, which speaks of what is superficially and visually apparent, in distinction to the truth as something known with certainty and conviction, is seen in the contemporary rationalist view of reality as underlying, fixed principle. Recognition, as a means of accessing that which is (as true meaning), or that which can possibly be, suggests the requirement of needing to receive the truth, necessarily depends upon the human capacity of understanding. Here the task may be one of being able to see beyond the world of appearances, or taken-for-granted meanings, to the implications of meaning for action (as suggested by the Greeks). Heidegger (1977), and his followers, were to assume the necessity of human understanding and reflection for assisting the expression of *Being*: The human quest for determining the truth of *Being* occurs in relationship to the world

as presence, rather than from a position outside of it. The Greek notion of *mimesis*[7], as both an imitation and constructive means of expressing life, was regarded as such an attempt at grasping the truth.

What this suggests for art therapy is that the images created by the patient are imitations (fictions), which are attempts at conveying some truth, or reality. It is, however, the involvement of the participants (patient and therapist) with these imitations in art therapy, and their understanding, that is fundamental for the emergence of this truth to occur. The created image exists by virtue of some truth, and provides the means whereby some truth may come to be remembered or realised. It bares some kind of relationship to it, but this does not necessarily mean that the truth is disclosed in an obvious manner. It has to be disseminated and understood.

1.1.4The relationship of reality to receptacle as place

According to Plato, "A sensible [particular] must come to be in something or be nothing at all, while a *Form* is not in any place at all, occupies no room" (Patterson, 1985, p.84, cites Plato from the *Timaeus*). Particulars only become what they are in some place: *chora*, or receptacle. It is in the nature of the receptacle to present something in a particular light, and at the same time to obscure other ways in which it may alternatively be presented.

In philosophical-hermeneutic terms, this is taken to mean that the meaning of anything (including the image) comes to be by virtue of the meaning horizon, or perspective, within which it is located, and by means of which it is defined. Such perspectives exist as particular known contexts, or paradigms of thought that determine the identity and meaning of things.

In terms of the image in art therapy, this suggests that certain perspectives are essential, and implicit within the art therapy context, and come to provide the image with a certain kind of meaning by serving to present it in a certain light. Without such a perspective and/or context, the meaning of the image cannot exist.

1.1.5Truth as a shifting participation of `Forms'

In Platonic terms, the truth is not something uni-vocal. According to Tarnas (1991), for Plato:

[7]In *The Republic*, Plato was the first to use the term *mimesis* to describe counterfeit 'creations', which "reflect and mimic the transient appearances of this world" (Fowler, 1987, p.125). Aristotle extended the term to include the aspect of representation with a "sense of the work itself as an object, not merely a reflecting surface" (Fowler, 1986, p.126).

> Any particular thing in the world is actually a complexly determined appearance. The perceived object is a meeting place of many Forms which at different times express themselves in varying combinations and with varying degrees of intensity. Plato's world, therefore, is dynamic only in that all phenomenal reality is in a state of constant becoming and perishing, a movement governed by the shifting participation of Ideas (p.9).

In philosophical-hermeneutic terms, true meaning is also viewed as something which can be expressed in a number of different ways, and is something which influences the perception of phenomenal reality.

This implies certain things for understanding the image in art therapy. It suggests that the reality the image expresses is complex, and is determined by its meaning which can come to have various forms of expression. Furthermore, such meaning colours the way the image is perceived.

1.2ACCESS TO REALITY AS KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH

For Plato, knowledge of transcendent *Forms* was the purpose of life. Tarnas, (1991) explains that access to such true knowledge was said to be mediated by several different, and usually overlapping, intuitive and cognitive modes, each of which involve different degrees of experiential directness. The *Forms* could be known most directly through "an intuitive leap of immediate apprehension, which was also considered to be a recollection of the immortal soul's prior knowledge" (p.54). Their logical necessity could be discovered "by meticulous intellectual analysis of the world of empirical experience, both through dialectic and mathematics" (p.54). They could be encountered "through the astronomical contemplation and understanding the heavens", and "be approached through myth and poetic imagination", and "by attending to a kind of aesthetic resonance within the psyche touched off by the archetypal in veiled form from within the phenomenal world" (p.54). For Plato, the various methods for acquiring this knowledge thus included intuition, memory, aesthetics, imagination, logic, mathematics, and empirical observation (Tarnas, 1991). Knowledge of the truth was a means to living a better life, yet the truth itself could not be spoken or apprehended by the senses. It could only be arrived at by means of these methods, and had to "be apprehended by the mind"(Trusted, 1981, p.27), yet was something intensely experienced[8].

What this suggests for art therapy is that different dimensions of experience and modes of

[8]Tarnas, (1981) explains that *Forms*, or *Ideas*, as transcendent essences, when directly experienced, were deemed to "evoke intense emotional response and even mystical rapture" (p.41)

thought come to play a role in the discovery of the meaning of the images, which is apprehended in understanding, experience, but cannot be spoken.

1.2.1The necessity of 'toil and labour' for access to reality

Plato's conception of knowledge entailed beating a path through a world of deceptions (images) towards the real as the truth. Friedlander, (1964) describes this path as follows:

> For there is a path to knowledge leading upward through predetermined stages: from the name or the word…to the statement (speech, definition,…), thence through image, view, and perception…to the higher and highest forms of knowledge. Ascent and descent must be repeated often, the forms of understanding on the various levels must be "rubbed against one another"…until finally, after toil and labour…rational insight suddenly lights up…(Friedlander, 1964, p.61).

This suggests that the acquisition of knowledge entails a process, or work, and that knowledge is not something necessarily easily, or readily accessible. It suggests further that true understanding requires something akin to a synthesis. Epistemology, in these terms, is thoroughly reliant upon language, images, perspectives and perception, as well as upon human understanding and participation. Heidegger, Gadamer and Ricoeur were to assert something similar in proposing the necessity of a process of understanding that involves articulation, formulation, and a dialectical and dialogical exchange between contributing factors, for knowledge of meaning to occur.

What this suggests for art therapy is that understanding requires an epistemological work which involves perceptual, linguistic, and imaginative dimensions, that mediate one another until insight occurs.

1.2.2Creating the image as a means of access to reality

For the Greeks, the 'gathering of the meaning of things' was the raison d'etre of human life which was to discover the truth. For Aristotle, creating artwork was one way in which this gathering occurred. He believed that, "art is identical with a state of capacity to make, involving a true course of reasoning" (Aristotle, 1964, from Nicomachean Ethics, p.83 in Hofstadter & Kuhns). Such reasoning involves experience, and experience occurs through the capacity to connect sensation and memory. He located the created image in the realms of knowledge and understanding, and perceived these as advances in the process from sensation, through memory, experience, and art towards theoretical knowledge (Aristotle, 1958, on Metaphysics, in Kaplan, pp.108-109).

What this suggests for art therapy is that the created image expresses knowledge which is based on experience, and involves connecting sensation and memory. This expression of reality (the image) proceeds from something akin to a gathering of meaning. In philosophical-hermeneutic terms this can be understood in terms of lived experience informing the shape and qualities of the images, as well as its identity and meaning. For Heidegger, this is a "letting-be-seen" (Marx, 1971).

1.2.3The relationship of agency, origin and category to reality

In the Metaphysics, Aristotle (1964) says,

> Of things that come to be, some come to be by nature, some by art, some spontaneously. Now everything that comes to be comes to be by the agency of something and from something and comes to be something. And the something which I say it comes to be may be found in any category; it may come to be either 'this' or of some size or of some quality or somewhere (in Hofstadter & Kuhns, p.90).

As will be discussed, Heidegger, Gadamer and Ricoeur were all to propose something similar in recognizing the given linguistic, historical and traditional nature of understanding, with its existing possibilities, or categories of meaning, which provide a given context within which understanding occurs.

What this suggests for art therapy is that it is the artist as agent, together with existing categories of meaning that make it possible for the medium to be created into an identifiable image, which has meaning.

1.2.4The image as fiction and a means of access to reality as the truth

For Aristotle, the art object was itself knowledge of the truth in the sense that, as a fiction it presented the real in a simplified or exaggerated form, thus making it possible for the truth to reveal itself. In other words, the created image, as an exaggeration of reality, made it possible to learn about things.

In writing about The Imitative Art of Poetry, Aristotle (1964, in Hofstadter & Kuhns, pp.97-125) refers to forms of imitation (*mimesis*) which rely upon their respective 'means' (whether colour and form used by the artist, or rhythm, language and harmony by the poet), with which to imitate the diversities of reality by exaggeration.

What Aristotle's notion of *mimesis* suggests for art therapy is that creating the image from a

medium, and speaking about it in the medium of language, and thinking about it in the medium of paradigms of thought, is a means of portraying reality in exaggerated form. As such it is an expression of it in such a way as to exaggerate it, in order to show it, and to draw attention to it. What provides this exaggeration is the particular qualities of the medium, such as linguistic and paradigmatic means of expression.

In the ancient concept of *mimesis*, we find various current notions of understanding, for instance as: 'identification with', in the sense of 'being like'; as 'empathy', in the sense of vicarious, emotional re-experiencing of meaning; or as 'appropriation', as an 'imaginative living in', or a 'making one's own'. We also see the beginnings of an epistemology which argues for the necessity of imitation (as fictional text, or representation), for the acquisition of understanding.

In such terms, creating the image is a process of expressive *mimesis* in the sense of giving expression to experience. It also involves the artist's participation in, and identification with the medium, and its qualities, and suggested forms, which is also a form of *mimesis*. Talking about, and thinking about the image is also an expressive *mimesis*. Understanding is also *mimesis* in the sense of 'being like', 'imaginative living in' and 'a making one's own'. In other words, human expressions and articulations of experience are imitations of it which serve to show it, but are not to be equated with it.

1.2.5Creation and directed action as a means of access to reality

Socrates' belief in a purposive universe, with "the right exercise of reason as the supreme human good" (Flew, 1979, p.144) saw truth as the awareness and expression of real meaning. Being truly human meant exercising one's full potential as a thinking, mastering, experiencing being in relationship to that which presents itself for thinking about in the world, and as the world (Heidegger, 1977). All human expressions and activity are ultimately a striving towards an expression of this truth. Aristotle (1964, in Hofstadter & Kuhns) said,

> Every art and every inquiry, and similarly every action and pursuit, is thought to aim at some good; and for this reason the good has rightly been declared to be that at which all things aim. But a certain difference is found among ends; some are activities, others are products apart from the activities that produce them (p.94).

What this suggests for art therapy is that the creation of the image is an attempt at mastery, not only of the medium, and the creation of a particular image, but of living in the world. For

Aristotle, the process of creating art was one of "distinct articulation in which an object becomes real" (Barasch, 1985, p.9). In the Nichomachean Ethics Aristotle (1958, in Ross) said, "art is identical with a state of capacity to make" (p.227), involving either a true course of reasoning, which results in a work of art, or a false state of reasoning, which results in a lack of art. "All art is concerned with coming into being, i.e. with contriving and considering how something may come into being which is capable of either being or not being" (p.227). `Reasoning', in Greek terms meant giving expression to some truth. Being for the image lay in the artist's capacity to engage in a true reasoning process. This relied upon the artist having correctly engaged with, and responded to, the medium for the end purpose of revealing some truth through the image created.

Aristotle makes a distinction between the aim, the means, and the end: the end being the final cause towards which something naturally moves. In so doing he implies that human life moves in the direction of achieving actualization which is the discovery of the true meaning of life. The process of actualization, which involves action and theorizing (Flew, 1979), was to be distinguished from its outcome as true knowledge. Reality could be brought into presence either by the natural expression of the quality of the things that confronted humankind, or, helped into being by humankind through the process of its realisation. Various terms were devised by the Greeks for expressing certain forms of this realisation. *Poisésis* was such a term, and derived from the verb *poieo* meaning `to do' or `make'. It referred to both directed action and the `manufacture of' objects, as well as to `generation', `the giving shape to', and the `creation' of. *Techné* was regarded by the Greeks as a skilled form of this.

Heidegger (1977), in harking back to Greek thought, refers to the attempt to grasp and `master' the 'presencing' of being in Greek terms. He says:

> This "bringing forth" was manifest first of all in physis, that presencing wherein the bursting-forth arose from within the thing itself. Techné was also a form of this bringing forth, but one in which the bursting-forth lay not in the thing itself but in another. In techné, through art and handcraft, man participated in conjunction with other contributing elements - with 'matter,' 'aspect,' and 'circumscribing bounds' - in the bringing forth of a thing into being. More over the arts of the mind were called techné also (Lovitt, in Heidegger, 1977, p.xxiv).

As will be discussed, in philosophical-hermeneutic terms, understanding is also explained in terms of a process mediated by `matter' (such as the art medium, and language), `aspect' (such as theoretical or cultural perspective), and `circumscribing bounds' (such as existing

contexts of meaning, tradition, and paradigms of thought). In Heidegger's (1977) terms, mankind lends a `helping hand' to *Being*, without which it could not be fully expressed. This entails speaking for, and thinking about *Being* (Heidegger, 1978, in Krell).

1.2.6Interpretation as a means of access to reality

Aristotle used the term '*techné herméneutiké'* (Ihde, 1975, p.4), for all forms of meaningful discourse whereby interpretation was also an important form of revealing reality. As will be discussed, Heidegger (1962) was also to refer to the importance of interpretation for `laying out' what is implicit in understanding, and Heidegger, Gadamer and Ricoeur, were all to understand the importance of interpretation for revealing the nature of existence. What this suggests for art therapy is that, apart from the image being an expression of reality, the interpretation of the image is also a means for its discovery.

1.2.7The use of metaphoric language as access to reality

Aristotle understood the need for a novel language, and particularly metaphor, for seeing the truth in what is being spoken. In Poetics, he says, "The thought of the personages is shown in everything to be affected by their language" (Aristotle, 1964, in Hofstadter & Kuhns, p.117). The use of some unfamiliar terms in language, such as strange words and metaphors, make language non-prosaic, and serves to create an impact. Poetic language, provided that it is not over done, will readily engage the listener. His view on metaphor captures this sentiment:

> [It is] the greatest thing by far is to be master of metaphor. It is the one thing that cannot be learnt from others; and it is also a sign of genius, since a good metaphor implies an intuitive perception of the similarity in dissimilars (Aristotle, 1964, in Hofstadter & Kuhns p.119).

In espousing the need for exaggeration, simplification, unusual ways of saying something, and the importance of metaphor for capturing the similar in the dissimilar, Aristotle thus instated the value of eloquence and imaginative expression for showing the truth.

Heidegger (1962) was also to acknowledge that the meaning of existence appears in a non-prosaic languaging of it, and adopted a similar view to that espoused by Aristotle in asserting the necessity of saying something in `fresh' ways in order for it to be heard. This was to avoid the listener unreflectively assuming taken-for-granted meanings.

What this suggests for art therapy is that the meaning of the image is something given in

language, and is influenced by the particular language used.

1.2.8The created image as the artist's capacities to convey reality

Dio of Prusa, in about A.D.100, extended the Platonic emphasis on aesthetics (whereby the divine could speak), as the only legitimating aspect of the created image to include the capacity of art to also visualize and express, and to evoke a particular understanding in the viewer[9]. This heralded a change in the artist's and image's status in a positive direction. A century later Philostratus articulated what Dio had intimated about the origin of the image being imaginative rather than imitative[10] and thus paved the way for an interest in the creative process, and the imaginative capacities of the artist (Barasch, 1985).

1.2.9The created image as the reflection of an inner reality

In the first three centuries A.C.E the process of creation became increasingly significant, and questions were posed concerning the creative conception, the execution of the image, and how the image came to be transferred from the mind to a medium. The idea emerged that the created image was a reflection of an image in the artist's mind, which had a clarity of shape as clear as any material object: a shape the artist contemplated and imitated with the use of his hands (Barasch, 1985). The belief that it was the artist's ability to imitate his own conceptions (perceived at this stage as an inversion of sensate reality), which resulted in the image, seemed to herald the idea that the image was a reflection, or representation, of some inner reality. For the neoplatonist philosopher Plotinus (c.205-70 A.C.E), however, the form or image that the artist carried in his mind, which became embodied in a medium, was not so much a subjective vision, but "some kind of revelation of the god's true `essence' (Barasch, 1985, pp. 38-39). In other words, it reflected a truth about existence itself, in spite of relying upon the artist's genius for giving shape to it.

What Plotinus' notion about the image's capacity to convey `essence' suggests for art therapy is that, what comes to be expressed as meaning through the image is not the particularities of meaning intended by the patient as creator, but meaning which relates to the broader context of the truth of existence (ontology).

---

[9]Barasch, (1985), states that, in remarking upon a statue by Phidias, Dio referred to the capacity of art to mould the imagination of its viewers to such an extent that they are unified in their understanding of it, and cannot thereafter imagine that figure differently.

[10]Dio had said that, as the artist did not have visual access to the gods they portrayed, images depicting these gods must originate in the artist's imagination rather than in reality (Barasch, 1985, p.27).

Heidegger's ontology of *Being*, made up as it is of existential possibilities, similarly accepts the inseparable relatedness between understanding and `reality' as existence and sees not only the artist, but all humankind, as a medium for helping `*Being*' (as reality), express itself. Humankind lives in relationship to the world, and it is in this relationship that meaning is grasped and conveyed.

1.3THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE MEDIUM AND ITS FORM TO THE IMAGE AND ITS MEANING.

1.3.1Resistance of the medium to being reconciled with an inner vision

In lamenting the difficulty of executing an inner vision of the truth in plastic form, Plotinus recognized that matter occupied "the realm of the amorphous, a force obstructing form, a substance that can never be completely cast into shape" (Barasch, 1985, p. 11). Here we see the notion that a vision, or idea, and an artistic medium cannot ever be fully reconciled. This had formed the basis of Plato's complaint about art (and all sensible particulars). The truth which could not be spoken was something beyond appearances, and experienced in a manner akin to an intellectual vision.

Truth is not anything substantial given in appearances, while the medium is. The truth can be known but cannot be seen, while the plastic image can be seen, but its meaning lies beyond appearances. Plotinus' lament that a vision of the truth cannot be equated with anything substantial suggests the necessity for something akin to a process of abstraction for the determination of meaning, and that the meaning of the image is something different from the image itself, or its creation. This appears to anticipate what Ricoeur (1976) was to say of the necessity for making a distinction between an event and its meaning, where the discovery of meaning is something which is not to be equated with actual conditions, actions or events themselves. What is not evident in Plotinus' lament (but was understood by Simmias and Socrates) is a recognition of the value inherent in the so-called obstruction between an abstract, inner vision, or idea, and the created image: a value which, as will be seen, makes it possible for something to be recognised, which is necessary for the development of new understanding to occur. Here, the plastic image, in its fictional aspect, acts as a reminder of its referential meaning.

1.3.2The distinction between shape, or form, and meaning

Plotinus, (1964, in Hofstadter & Kuhns) says, that what is denoted in shape is "without shape, though in another sense shaped" (p.166), and so long as the attention is upon visible form, the

essence of that which is depicted is not visible. For the *Form* (true meaning) to be perceived, "all such shape must be dismissed" (p.167). "Shape is the impress from the unshaped; it is the unshaped that produces shape, not the shape the unshaped; and Matter is needed for the producing" (p.167). Here, Plotinus makes the distinction between perception and contemplation, and sees the former as an attempt to fill the void caused by an inability to 'seize the vision' enabled by the latter.

Plotinus seems to be saying a number of things: that creating the image is an attempt to grasp what already exists as meaning; that focusing on shape, as the perceptual, or surface impression, detracts from the recognition of meaning as a truth which lies elsewhere; that true meaning dictates the shaping of the image, but the shape does not dictate truth as meaning; and, an existing truth and a medium are both necessary for bringing an image into being. Furthermore, seeing beyond shape towards meaning requires a different kind of engagement, as it necessarily involves the attention being drawn away from appearance into contemplation.

What Plotinus has said is akin to what Heidegger (1962) was to say about the necessity of having `forestructures of understanding' which make understanding possible. It is also akin to what he had to say about the necessity of reflection and interpretation for bringing reality to the fore. He, like Plotinus, suggests that the truth of *Being*, although existing prior to the image's creation, requires expression. Once expression has occurred, and a shape is created, and has been identified in language, concentrating on the shape, or identity (as taken-for-granted expression of meaning), detracts from the truth which is revealed in a further reflection and interpretation. What is, as the given world, existential possibilities of being, and given potentials for meaning,[11] precedes its shape as appearance. The image, for instance, is an expression of the possibilities of shape, and of the artist's being in relationship to the medium, and to his or her world. Once the image is created, its meaning can be sought beyond its shape as surface appearance, and in a relationship between it, the interpreter and the world.

With Plotinus's notion of the necessity of moving `beyond shape to the unshaped', we see the stirrings of the philosophical-hermeneutic notion of understanding as something that is never final. Everything that is given for understanding is given as shape (whether objects, words

[11]Existential possibilities exist, for instance, in the understanding and capabilities of the artist for deriving or discovering a particular shape, and are inherent in the medium's possibilities for being shaped in one way rather than another. That which is 'without shape, though in another sense shaped' later came to be expressed by Ricoeur as the possibilities of meaning that have already been constituted in the world, and that cause, for instance, the medium to become identifiable as this or that shape. Furthermore, the possible meaning of this shape is also prescribed by the world, in the sense that paradigms of thought exist within which it comes to be thought about.

spoken or written, the image, or actions). `Shape' needs to be reflected upon, and understood if its true meaning is to be released. In other words, while shape remains, meaning has to be disseminated every time anew.

In both this early and later thought, what is suggested is that meaning is more fundamental than shape, which is one of a number of possible expressions of it. Shape is always particular and concrete, whereas meaning is not. Shape, nevertheless, serves a reminding function by bringing into view that which is not physically present, yet, which is somehow related to what is present. What is understood as lived-experience becomes structured and known through the medium and shape of its articulation, which nevertheless is not to be equated with its meaning, as meaning is always something that is released and experienced in an event of understanding generated by `contemplation' as reflection and interpretation. Shapes, or structures, such as words or images, relate to, and emanate from, and refer to some meaning which lies beyond themselves.

What the notion of meaning as the `unshaped' (although in a sense shaped), and the image being the `shaped' suggests for art therapy, is that the shape and identity of the image rely upon, yet are not to be equated with, an existing meaning, and this meaning can only be understood in an act of dissemination that looks beyond the image as its shape.

1.3.3`Contemplation' and the guiding of action and creation in a particular direction

In the Ennead 111: Eighth Tractate, Plotinus (1964, in Hofstadter & Kuhns) maintains that, "all doing must be guided by an Idea", and, "creation is the outcome of a contemplation which never becomes anything else, which never does anything else, but creates by simply being a contemplation" (p.169). The purpose of contemplation for Plotinus, as it was for Aristotle, is to "receive the form of the object contemplated … [which] thus becomes an image, albeit imperfect, of its parent hypostasis" (Flew, 1979, p.277). What this says for art therapy is that, while the image emerges from within an existing sense of meaning that guides its creation, this meaning can only become manifest once the image, as form, has been created, and this form has been understood in its meaning, which is its meaning in experience and understanding.

What this means in phenomenological-hermeneutic terms, is that there is already a form of meaning that dictates human action and awareness. In other words, action and awareness are intentional in that they are directed by a certain kind of existing meaning, which only comes to be recognised via its concrete form, once it has been formulated. For instance, when the image comes to be created, it emerges from within the context of some kind of vision, or

understanding, yet understanding the image relies upon recognising its meaning (or reference), rather than understanding the form itself. As will be discussed, Ricoeur (1991, in Valdés) was to refer to a `three phase *mimesis'* to explain how the existing potential for meaning is constructed into a configured meaning, which then has to be reconfigured in understanding by means of an interpretation of configured meaning.

1.3.4The outcome of action as creation in distinction to meaning

In line with Plotinus's contention that contemplation 'never becomes anything else', the expression of intended meaning, and the outcome of action as creation, whether in the form of a created image, or words written or spoken, is something other than true meaning, which is only given in an act of contemplation. What this implies is that the image, having been formed out of a medium within the context of a certain vision, with its intentions and anticipations, acquires a different ontological status once it becomes a thing. It cannot be equated with the contributing influences which guided its creation, neither can it be equated with what it comes to generate as understanding. Thus we see the notion of the image as something which has a reality in terms of its plastic qualities, but also a meaning which is not to be equated with these qualities. Here, meaning escapes the objective aspects of reality, and the sum of its determining and contributing parts. Meaning is thus not something thing-like.

1.4THE IMPLICATIONS OF ANCIENT GREEK THOUGHT FOR CONTEMPORARY EPISTEMOLOGY

In contemporary terms, understanding the image implies understanding its meaning as that to which it refers. It is therefore to the what (rather than the how) of understanding that investigations have tended to direct themselves. The notion of imitation, which holds sway in art therapy, and which yields a concept of meaning as reference, sees the image as a confirmation of some existing reality with its meaning as something fixed. This notion has tended to be less concerned with the Greek idea of imitation as serving a revealing or reminding (thus epistemological) function, or as participating in some truth in need of being experienced. Belief in a reality beyond the image: a reality somehow transcending the realm of appearance, whether that appearance be accurate or misleading, currently tends to assume the possibility of deciding meaning solely in terms of that reality, as something objective, and in the absence of an acknowledgment of the various modes necessary for its dissemination (such as those proposed by Plato). The Platonic notion of reality, as that which is durable and immutable: what is without the qualifications of time, context, intention or perspective, has, in contemporary thought, emerged in a concept of reality as actuality, as that which is deemed to exist beyond the prescription and influence of the human mind, even if the mind is required for

its discernment and understanding.

1.4.1Reference and the correspondence theory of truth

The option which locates meaning in a reality which the image portrays, yields a concept of truth as agreement with reality (Flew, 1979). It tends to presume an ontology in which there is a world in-itself, and a way in which things really are, unambiguously and independently of human categories and projects. This option equates meaning with reference, and presupposes a matching correspondence between the reality referred to, the image portrayed, and its interpreted meaning.

From within this idea, that reality is actuality, stems the notion of truth and meaning as something akin to a property, or as something original, fixed and thing-like. This notion can be traced to the early Greek idea of essence as that which is as the 'truly real', yet excludes the Greek notion of essence as, "the timeless possibility of existence" (Flew, 1979, p.111). What no longer generally applies to the notion of reality is the idea of a relationship between true knowledge, and the human capacity to understand, which includes the capacity to orientate oneself meaningfully in life. Knowledge as the truth has thus become instated in the modern world, as knowledge of reality as the objective, indubitable, and demonstrable, which tends to ignore its human implications and modes of dissemination.

In the history of art, emphasis on the notion of the image, and its meaning, as `correspondence', or `imitation', can be seen to have taken the form not only of faithfulness to what the eye sees, but faithfulness to what the mind, or heart for that matter, knows (Reeves, 1958). This notion of faithfulness (imitation) underlies the generally held definition of truth as `conformity with facts', or `agreement with reality', and has become known as the correspondence (or copy), theory of truth. This theory claims that a statement is true if it corresponds with the facts (as reality) (Flew,1979): the basis upon which scientific knowledge tends to rest. As Madison (1988) concludes, the reality-appearance distinction presupposes a metaphysical basis: the reason behind; the coherent unity; constancy of relations and permanency of structure (p.135), which is the true cause for the existence of the image and thus for its meaning. It also presupposes, a fixed, one true meaning, which may be determined by ignoring the means by which such meaning is derived. Furthermore it assumes that meaning is thing-like and identifiable as being the same for all time. Implicit to this perspective is the notion of a linear and unidirectional relationship between reality, the image and meaning, truth being a function of the relationship between the statement made about the

image and the way things are (Flew, 1979).

1.4.2The problems encountered by epistemology where meaning is regarded as something discrete and fixed

A reality made up of discrete facts, discernible by discrete statements, likewise assumes the existence of discrete, fixed ontological states which may be unequivocally articulated as such. It is such an ontology which yields a correlative epistemology that has been called the scientific method, and an ontology that makes it possible to believe in so-called `objective' knowledge. Meaning conceived of in these terms is something thing-like in its fixedness and discreteness.

Some theorists adopt the idea that human behaviours, and expressions, likewise assume a character akin to discrete, measurable properties like those of the natural sciences, which can be explained in terms of material, physical and dynamic forces and functions. Such a view of human behavior is illustrated in classical, Freudian meta-psychology. Here the image is explained in terms of the notion of `projection' as a defensive attempt on the part of the psyche to rid itself of unconscious material, and unwanted anxiety by projecting it, and/or binding it in sublimatory form. Each feature of the image, like the features in dreams, is then assumed to correspond, in disguised form, to inner psychic issues such as traumatic events, fantasies and wishes that demand expression under sway of a `repetition compulsion'.

In stricter empirical terms, the formulation and expression of this ontology of fixedness, and discreteness, has been problematic due to the type of epistemology it yields. There is a difficulty inherent in applying a method designed to investigate discrete, fixed states to areas such as human behaviour, which is complex, and in process. Part of the quest for the legitimation of psychology as a science has emerged as an attempt to translate what, in positivist terms, amounts to unobservable, unmeasurable, unverifiable inner states, or realities of human experience, into observable, discrete data, which can then be subjected to systematic investigation. This amounts to a de-contextualisation of the data from the processes of human life, in the belief that what is real and true is thing-like, and objectively determinable in the absence of the influences of human understanding. This belief has its roots in a particular interpretation, based on Cartesian foundations of that part of Plato's philosophy which held that true reality is immutable.

Legitimating the meaning of so-called expressions of human life, such as created images, by linking them to theoretical constructs and current behaviours, inner states, experiences, or historical influences, requires the demonstration of a correspondence between appearances,

and theory as the truth behind appearances. This necessitates a so-called detached observer, akin to a bias-free measuring instrument, who is required to make the connection, utilising scientifically legitimate means. In the interests of validity and reliability of its knowledge, the problem for the scientific approach has been one of demonstrating validity. This entails excluding observations, and presented meanings and experiences, which do not confirm to what is sought in an investigation. Here, demonstrable proof, and theory, provide a gate-keeping function in which only that which can be demonstrated, or explained by a particular theory, can make a legitimate claim to being real.

What this has suggested for art therapy, is that the meaning of the image is viewed, at best, as something akin to a symbolic equivalent of psychic reality, which corresponds to prior, determining events, and current psychological issues, and/or ideological principles and theory. The process dimension of psychic life, and Plato's path to knowledge, tend not to be factored in to how the patient, and his or her images, come to be understood in their meaning.

1.4.3Reality as existence and the coherence theory of truth

The continuing search for an understanding of the truth, and the nature of reality and meaning, has resulted in alternative ways of thinking, some of which continue the search for indubitability, and others which negotiate the issues of knowledge, truth, and method from an alternative perspective. Notions about the correctness of meaning, as something equivalent to reality, where meaning and the truth are viewed as timeless, and pre-existent, and the alternative view of meaning and truth as `coherence', and, as the `given possibilities of being', both have their roots in ancient Hellenic Greek thought. The Greek idea of knowledge as timeless essence, or existential truth, which assumes a relationship between the capacity to know and knowledge itself, in phenomenological- and philosophical-hermeneutic thought, for instance, translates into a notion of reality as the existential `possibilities of being', and `possibilities of meaning', given the nature of human understanding. Here too, the knower fully participates in the known, and in the discovery of it.

From the phenomenological- and philosophical-hermeneutic perspective, a concern with reality as the possibilities and expressions of existence (rather than reality as some verifiable actuality), departs from the assumption that true knowledge excludes the influences of the human dimensions of experience, understanding, and action, as well as the influences of context. This approach, like that of positivism’s quest for indubitability, has certain of its roots in Platonic philosophy in its acknowledgement of the necessity of human, cognitive modes for access to reality as the truth, and the assumption that knowledge of the truth is knowledge

from participation in a given world, which leads to effective living, and the exercise of true human potential.

This view calls into question the foundations upon which thinking about meaning in art therapy has tended to be based, by undermining the assumption that knowledge is possible in a form uninfluenced by the necessity and means of its dissemination. A knowledge based upon various cognitive modes, such as articulation, and interpretation, for its access (as proposed by the early Greeks), is not a subjective knowledge but a knowledge that is necessarily reliant upon human dissemination for its revelation: a dissemination relating to a concern with the meaning of life.

What this suggests for the discipline of art therapy is that, the search for knowledge occurs via a process of understanding involving various cognitive modes. Furthermore, meaning is not thing-like, but lies within the realms of a discovery which is ultimately to do with living life within the context of a given world. This suggestion about meaning thus relates to ontological concerns.

1.5INFLUENCES AND SUGGESTIONS FOR THINKING IN ART THERAPY

In summary, what ancient, Hellenic Greek thought seems to suggest for contemporary thinking in art therapy is that while meaning lies beyond taken-for-granted appearances, which are often deceptive, such appearances nevertheless point towards some reality as the truth: a reality which can become known provided that it is disseminated in an appropriate way. This approach is something akin to the bringing together of various cognitive modes of access to experience, and through active participation in the expressions (imitations) of life, by means of reflection, and interpretation, is a discovering of true meaning. Such meaning relates to the practical situation of how to live life, and occurs in a *chora* context or perspective.

The created image is both an imitation (thus a fiction), and a new being, which draws attention to reality by showing it in a particular and exaggerated light. It provides a means of access to some truth, which is expressed, but not apparent, yet may be re-discovered. This reality (as truth), exists prior to the expression of it in the image, and from it, the image receives its meaning. Nevertheless, such meaning lies beyond its presentation in a concrete form in the image, and beyond what is known about prior conditions. It comes to be understood in the form of a revelation or insight, or kind of intellectual vision.

In other words, when the image comes to be created, it emerges from within the context of

some kind of existing context of understanding, or vision, which influences the way the image comes to be construed. The shape and identity of the image is, however, not to be fully equated with this motivating, or anticipatory vision, which is different from the actual form the image takes. This form, nevertheless, points towards its meaning which is in need of being discovered, and can only be grasped from within a context, or perspective, and in an active work of meaning dissemination, or experiential participation. This work entails bringing a number of dimensions of experience together, for instance, sensation, perception, memory and thought, which then have an impact upon one other, until meaning lights up.

What is also suggested, is that the created image, as a representational form, serves a reminding function, and brings something into view. Furthermore, its plastic qualities, which relate to the medium within which it is constructed, cannot be fully reconciled with a mental vision, or meaning intention, because the image has a different ontological status from that which it imitates and portrays. As an actual thing (sensible particular), it cannot be fully equated with either the contributing influences which guided its creation, nor with what it generates as understanding, because the image is something real in terms of its plastic qualities, but not real in terms of its meaning. Here, the image, with its meaning, both escapes the sum of its determining and contributing parts, yet is related to them and reliant upon them for its being.

It is in this respect, that it can be said, that the discovery of the meaning of the image relates to what will be referred to, in philosophical-hermeneutic terms, as the principle of the `hermeneutic circle', which states that the contributory parts mediate an understanding of the whole, and the whole mediates an understanding of its parts. This principle, which is the central tenet of a contemporary hermeneutic epistemology, has its roots in the ancient world, where knowledge was deemed to be knowledge of the truth as a participation in the authentic expression of the *oneness* of existence, of which human existence is a part. The relationship of the part to the whole, here, is first and foremost the ontological relationship between the expressions or articulations of life (in the form of, for instance, actions, images, thoughts, and experience) and their possibilities of meaning, as the meaning of how to live life.

CHAPTER THREE
THE STATUS OF THE IMAGE AND NOTIONS ABOUT REALITY AND ITS UNDERSTANDING IN CONTEMPORARY THOUGHT

3.1INTRODUCTION

As J.L.Austin points out, the word 'real', and by implication 'reality' has no one meaning, and there are no criteria which can be laid down in general for distinguishing the real from the non-real:

> [The term] 'real'…does not have one single, specifiable, always-the-same- meaning….Nor does it have a large number of different meanings - it is not ambiguous, even 'systematically' (Trusted, 1981, cites Austin, p.8).

In order to understand the term 'reality', the particular context, paradigm of thought, and general historical tradition within which the term is being applied needs to be considered. Some uses of the term presuppose that (a) an image refers to what is real, as something fixed and separate from the beholder, which corresponds to the image and its perceived meaning. For instance, a horse is real, and its image denotes the meaning of 'horse' to the beholder. Other uses presuppose (b) reality to be something personal and unique, where the meaning of the image of a horse is personal to each beholder. Still others, presuppose the term to mean (c) something subject to conventional use, thus the meaning of the term 'horse' depends upon its use, which varies among different groups and communities. Further uses of the term 'reality' regard (d) reality as something underlying appearances. Here the meaning of 'horse' depends upon general, theoretical principles, or archetypal forms, which determine its appearance, nature and behavior. Other uses of the term see reality as (e) something which is revealed at the interface between humankind and the given world. Here the 'horse', or its image, is its meaning for the perceiving subject, who responds to its immediate qualities, and understands it in terms of his or her lived experience and current intentions. A related yet alternative use of the term regards reality as (f) something that is complex, and unknowable in its entirety and depths, and is necessarily perceived from one of a number of different possible vantage points, thus cannot be grasped in its entirety at any one time. The image of a horse is real in terms of what the beholder is able to recognize from a particular vantage point as its meaning at any given time.

What this says for issues to do with understanding the image and its meaning, is that there is no one approach to thinking about such matters. This is partially evident in the number of different theoretical paradigms that currently exist in psychology, and which have come to be

applied in psychotherapy and art therapy. Yet there is a level at which there tends to be some conformity of perspective and approach, in spite of such differences. What this does say, however, is that some or other assumption about reality is wittingly or unwittingly always present in any investigation into meaning. As discussed in the *General Introduction* of the thesis, such assumptions come into play in the art therapy situation by largely dictating what occurs there. As importantly, these assumptions dictate the nature of such meaning as emerges in art therapy, which then influences the way the patient comes to think about his or her situation. This in turn has some behavioral consequences which relate to this understanding.

In art therapy, a situation is typically created within which a patient is given the opportunity to utilize various media for the purpose of self expression in creating images. This may be in the nature of a group situation, or one in which only the therapist and patient are present. In some cases, the patient is permitted to create artwork at home, which is then brought to the therapist for interpretation. The therapist, typically, initially ascertains the nature of the patient's problems from the referral agency, or in an interview with the patient and/or his or her family, prior to the creation of images. Thereafter, a non-intrusive, quiet, containing environment is provided for the patient to ensure that he or she is given the opportunity to engage with the media provided, without distraction, and in the belief that the creative process requires concentration and involvement.

The therapist observes all aspects of the process, from the patient's initial reaction to the situation, as well as to the medium, with a view to understanding the way the patient typically approaches new tasks, and relates to his or her surrounding world, including the person of the therapist. Based upon these observations, and in conjunction with previous information about the patient, the therapist begins to formulate a clinical opinion. The therapist typically only intervenes in the creative process when the patient is having difficulty with the medium, or where the creative process is in threat of collapse, due either to the frustration, lack of confidence, aggression, or resistance of the patient.

Once the image has been created, the therapist typically encourages the patient to talk about the experience of creating images, and the nature of the images themselves, if necessary, by asking non-leading questions. Once the patient has responded, the therapist may also venture an opinion about what such images mean. Typically, a discussion then ensues. The nature of this discussion is dependent, in part, upon the theoretical and therapeutic stance taken by the therapist.

In certain quarters, based on the rationale of theory, meaning is sought from the patient's descriptions and explanations, free from the influence of the therapist's understanding, in the belief that only the patient's understanding is important, or is where true meaning lies. In other quarters, the therapist's meaning, in the form of expert knowledge, is regarded as true meaning. In reality, both patient and therapist tend to have something to say to each other about meaning, even where the therapist is not wanting to 'interpret', or to undermine, the patient's discovery of meaning. Where the therapist believes that it is in the therapeutic interests of the patient to withhold interpretations, so that the patient may discover meaning, or, in the belief that it is the patient's meaning which is the true meaning of the images, the responses of the therapist tend to be few, guarded, and carefully worded, or, tend to be reflective of what the patient has said. The therapist's understanding, on the other hand, tends to be regarded as an authoritative opinion by the patient. Differences of opinion do nevertheless occur within the same paradigm of thought. Naumberg (1966), for instance, working in a psychoanalytic tradition, advocates verbalization for 'making the unconscious conscious'. Kramer (1971:1979), on the other hand regards verbalization and interpretation as unnecessary, as creative 'sublimation' is viewed as the therapeutic goal of art therapy. Apart from whether it is the therapist's or patient's meaning that is sought, the effects of dialogue, and of verbalization itself upon meaning, tend not to have been acknowledged, let alone settled in art therapy.

This raises a question which is of concern to this thesis, to do with the proposal made by phenomenological- and philosophical-hermeneutics, that meaning is the outcome of an essentially dialogical and/or dialectical process. What this says for a situation where meaning is located in the opinion of the expert therapist or in the authorial intent of the patient, and

what it says about the relationship of meaning to a discussion between them, remains to be answered. With a view to attempting to answer such questions, it becomes necessary to find a way of addressing these therapeutic issues, which relate to 'understanding', 'interpretation' and 'meaning' in art therapy.

Having initiated this process in the *General Introduction,* with a consideration of existing assumptions in art therapy, and certain alternative proposals suggested by ancient Hellenic Greek thought (in *Chapter Two* of this thesis), it remains to consider the alternative contemporary approach to thinking, that addresses such issues directly. This alternative approach, in the form of phenomenological- and philosophical-hermeneutics, while having its

underpinnings in ancient Greek thought, nevertheless proceeds from an ontological foundation that assumes a notion of reality as articulated, appropriated meaning, given the context of the world[1]. This approach finds its more recent roots in thinkers such as Vico, Dilthey and Husserl, and comes to fruition in the thought of Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Gadamer and Ricoeur, who, each in his own way, establishes the priority of human understanding in all forms of knowledge (including ideas about reality, meaning and the image). The centrality of understanding, and how it occurs, forms the basis of this thought where it is assumed to occur at the interface between humankind and the given world.

From an objective perspective, understanding is revealed in human expressions of life such as action, thought, creative expression and verbal articulation. Subjectively, understanding occurs as an awareness of meaning. Based on the assumption of a relatedness between humankind and the finite world, the notion of 'understanding' as knowledge, proposes meaning as a realisation both in the form of an articulated, descriptive and/or explanatory account and in the form of an experience of meaning. As it was for the Greeks, in this thought, the understanding of meaning, as knowledge, is regarded as an understanding of what is significant for human life. In line with Plato's belief in a finite reality underlying taken-for-granted appearances, and beyond the prescription of human mind, yet requiring human cognitive modes for its access and realization, this contemporary thought proceeds from an assumption that human engagement, in the form of reflection, articulation and interpretation of the expressions of life, is a necessary means for revealing reality.

In philosophical-hermeneutic terms, `understanding' is an expression of reality itself. At this level, `understanding' is considered to be an existential mode of human being (or existence). Just as 'reasoning' for the Greeks was something akin to the natural expression of given potential (not only of human being, but as a universal expression of life, of 'oneness', or divine intelligence), so true understanding from this contemporary perspective is necessarily understanding that is possible, and probable, that emerges from the given meaning-

[1]While Plato believed mankind is born with archetypal knowledge that is forgotten, phenomenology, in disregarding the distinction between consciousness (awareness) and the world (Flew, 1979), accepts immediate human experience as the foundation for meaning, and in so doing has instated the thinking, perceiving subject as something transcendental and foundational as the source of all knowledge (Madison, 1988). This has amounted to knowledge viewed as the indubitable consciousness of self (Ricoeur, in Madison, 1988). With Heidegger, Gadamer, Merleau-Ponty and Ricoeur, however, the subject has become 'de-subjectivized' in the sense that meaning is conceived of as something thoroughly mediated, and 'appropriated' from within a dialectics of exchange, in the context of a given world (Madison, 1988). The ontological basis of meaning is the operation of the hermeneutic circle, in which experience and reflection, reality and imagination, question and answer, make sense out of the world.

prescribing context of the world within which it occurs.

From a phenomenological, as more methodological perspective, 'understanding' means taking into account the ground from which meaning emerges, as well as the implications it provides for certain future actions. This ground is ultimately the context of the given world that presents itself to human perception, and at the same time receives a response from it. In phenomenological-hermeneutic terms, this response includes considered ways of thinking about, and validating meaning, including its application in action.

From within a perspective of reality as meaning, which is both circumscribed by the possibilities of human understanding, and the context of a given world (with its paradigms of thought), the notion of 'reality' is a human construction, that is nevertheless grounded in, and applies to, lived experience within the world. Here, reality is not to be understood as something that is created *de novo* by humankind, but is rather something which emerges as understanding from within a context of what is both given and discovered, expressed, and created. As discussed, this idea harks back to the early Greek notion of knowledge as an understanding of the truth which has implications for human living. It links to the Greek notion of understanding as a form of contemplative, intuitive, linguistic and experiential engagement and action. In phenomenological- and philosophical-hermeneutic thought, these forms of understanding express dimensions of human existence, and are considered fundamental to the human quest to grasp, construe, and convey meaning. Furthermore, as intimated in Plato's notion of `participation', in which the real can only be known through a participation in its truth, and where, in Aristotle's terms, *techné* and *poisésis* are productive means for revealing reality, in this contemporary thought the notion of 'understanding' relates to both the means and method whereby reality is revealed.

Such means and methods are the subject of discussion of this thesis, in so far as they pertain to understanding the image in art therapy. They are the subject of debate for theorists and philosophers such as Vico, Dilthey, Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Gadamer and Ricoeur. All these philosophers recognize the importance of human understanding in all forms of knowledge. They acknowledge the necessity of human involvement for rendering the world intelligible and meaningful. They recognize that such involvement takes the form of experience and expression. Sensation, perception, action, reflection, imagination, articulation and interpretation, are all forms of this involvement which provides an articulated structure (formulation) of aspects of existence in the world. In being able to explain the nature, means and methods of understanding as the discovery and creation of meaning, the insights of these

philosophers have something to offer this thesis, in terms of providing a way of thinking about such issues in art therapy.

3.2UNDERSTANDING AS A MEANS OF ACCESS TO, AND STRUCTURING OF, REALITY

The idea that to know and comprehend the nature or meaning of reality means to understand it, is a taken-for-granted notion in today's world. However, in history and philosophy, the notion of understanding has been subject to various interpretations. As a self-conscious act of cognition aimed at discerning the truth, the term 'understanding' is used to refer to epistemological issues. As the product of what may be termed 'an imaginative reconstruction' of the world, the term applies to the creation and construction of meaning. Viewed as an existential of human living, the notion of 'understanding' is given an ontological status as a fundamental aspect of what it means to be human and to have knowledge. Furthermore, 'understanding' as a means of access to reality is given the status of a mediating ground. Such access is not necessarily forthcoming, however, in that 'understanding' can also be 'misunderstanding'.

3.2.1The contributions of Vico, to the notion of reality as imaginative, metaphorical, historical, and practical understanding

The art historian, Barasch (1990) points out that it was the Italian philosopher Giambattista Vico (1668-1744), who "virtually invented the concept of understanding" (p.15), of what Dilthey and others called *verstehen*, and what in certain quarters in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries became fully discernible as the existential basis of all knowledge. He introduced the notion of an imaginative, reconstructive, historical, cultural and practical form of understanding, and in so-doing heralded some of the basic tenets upon which phenomenological- and philosophical-hermeneutic thought came to be based.

Vico used the term '*poetics*' (aesthetics) to describe the basic human activity which seeks to articulate a vision of the world. He believed that early people spoke in 'poetic characters', as they understood the world less in verbal, than in visual, and corporeal form, and he claimed that ways of speaking were initially wholly metaphorical, "immersed in the senses, buffeted by the passions, buried in the body" (Barasch, 1990, p.11, cites Vico). Language proceeded from this basic activity as the innate capacity of humankind to contemplate ideas, and to use figurative ways of expression. These ways were initially essentially allegorical, analogical, and metaphorical in that the meaning of that which was being referred to was expressed in familiar terms, which were often related to sensory, bodily and emotional experience.

Thus Vico introduced, not only the notion of an existential basis to all understanding, but also the notion of an imaginative and reconstructive nature as well, a nature which serves to imaginatively construe what is being perceived, thought about, and investigated in terms of what is familiar.

Vico also understood that particular world views are imaginative, figurative constructions passed down through history. In other words, past ways of viewing the world become taken-for-granted ways that inform present understanding. These ways are passed on and adopted in the form of cultural tradition. Here, Vico used the term '*sensus communis'*, to refer to the 'common sense' employed by any community, as a common way of understanding the world. This notion relates to Aristotle's concept of practical knowledge, *phronesis*, which grasps lived 'circumstances', "in their infinite variety" (Gadamer, 1975, p.21). In other words, we understand in terms of our lived experience as a community, and, as practical beings we understand the practical significance of the circumstances we find ourselves in, in self-evident ways based upon experience.

In locating understanding within the context of culture, community, and practical living, Vico introduced understanding as something traditional, and cultural, as well as something grounded in every day life. Vico also understood that historical inquiry, which was about understanding human existence, could not be based upon the same suppositions as the physical universe, and should be understood and studied differently (Flew, 1979). He thus set the theoretical and methodological precedent for making a distinction between the human and physical sciences, a precedent that Dilthey was to actively follow.

3.2.2The contribution of Dilthey in seeking the reproduction of original conditions as the methodological primacy of understanding

Like Vico, the philosopher and historian Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911) believed in the reconstructive nature of understanding, the historicality of society, and the historicity of knowledge (Bleicher, 1980). Unlike Vico, who regarded understanding as an imaginative reconstruction, Dilthey regarded understanding as a methodological means, that made possible a direct and complete access to the subjective experience of others. These others, such as historians, artists or writers, through their creative expressions, such as images and texts provided an interpretation of their own lived experience, and could be understood in terms of these expressions.

Following nineteenth century philologist, and theologian, Friedrich Schleiermacher's concern with the principles for a correct interpretation of texts, as objective methods for deriving their meaning, and for the avoidance of misunderstanding, Dilthey sought a general method for understanding texts and human expressions of any kind, which would compete with that of the natural sciences. This method was to raise the understanding of meaning to the same levels of methodological clarity, predictability, generalizability, and validation, as the hard sciences. In other words, these methods, or *Geisteswissenschaften,* were to be devoid of subjective bias, repeatable, capable of explanations free from imaginative distortion, individual perspectives, and interpretative abilities (Warnke, 1987). They were intended to provide principles for the determination of correct meaning through a process of reconstruction of the conditions of life, within which such expressions came to be. This reconstruction was to occur by means of empathetic understanding, as a form of vicarious reliving of intention, and construction of meaning. The conditions for understanding entailed familiarity with the mental processes through which meaning was experienced and conveyed, knowledge of the particular concrete context in which the human expression occurred, and knowledge of the social and cultural systems that determined such expression (Edwards, 1967, p.406).

Dilthey believed that lived experience, *Erlebnis,* as an immediate givenness to, and responsiveness of human consciousness, made it possible to apprehend and understand such expressions directly, and in their totality. As will be discussed, a similar belief was to emerge in the thought of Husserl, although from a basis of the ontological primacy of understanding, rather than its methodological primacy.

What Dilthey's thought suggests for art therapy is, that both therapist and patient are capable of reconstructing the historically determined conditions of the patient's mind and life, through an understanding of his or her images, in a kind of empathic, vicarious, re-experiencing of such conditions. This speaks of a directness of expression in the images that can be communicated in a re-experiencing of their meaning, and a knowledge of the conditions in which they were created.

3.2.3The contents of consciousness as the ontological primacy of understanding, for Husserl

Like Dilthey's quest for a methodology for the human sciences, the German philosopher, Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), in his search for indubitable and objective truths, arrived at the conclusion that human consciousness is where all reality and meaning are to be found. He believed that "no distinction can be made between what is perceived and the perception of it"

(Flew, 1979, p.157). The description of the content of consciousness, called 'phenomenology', was a so-called new science, and was considered a method of discovery of true meaning.

After the failure of human reason and logic to prevent the scourges of the First World War, Husserl's continued search for indubitability of knowledge was evident in his quest to go back to life, 'to the things themselves', and to clear the mind of, suspend, or 'put in brackets', anything beyond immediate experience (Kruger, 1979; Pivcevi_, 1970). An understanding of the phenomena as they would naively present themselves to consciousness was what was required (Brooke, 1991), and a description of the contents of consciousness was believed to yield meaning. Consciousness was not just a passive registration of the world, but actively intended, or constituted it (Eagleton, 1983). C.E Scott (1982), explains the stance of phenomenology as follows:

> The discipline…involves a trust of the disclosiveness of things, patience in allowing a clearing of apparentness to occur in the midst of fogs of interference, and willingness not to expect much, not to anticipate rapidly, not to inject direction or directives (p.12).

What this suggests for art therapy is that the patient's images disclose their meaning in the consciousness that perceives them, provided that there is an attitude of openness, lack of anticipation of a particular kind of meaning, and willingness to be patient in receiving such meaning as is suggested by the image and occurs to the perceiver. In these terms, the therapist and patient ask of themselves what the image might possibly mean (Mook, 1991).

3.2.3.1Description as the epistemological primacy of understanding

Husserl believed that phenomenological description led to the discovery of essences, and was thus transcendental. In reducing the world to the content of consciousness alone, which became the absolute data point from which to proceed in the search for knowledge, phenomenology assumed that it is of the essence of objects to be correlative to states of mind, and that because no distinction can be made between perception, and that which is perceived (Flew,1979), description of objects, including objects of thought, is equivalent to knowledge of their essences. A further assumption was that, things and their meaning are already apparent when a consciousness turns to them. The very essence of things: what was given in pure perception, thus did not require to be interpreted, but merely to be described. Description was the method for gaining access to knowledge, human perception was the origin of meaning.

According to the literary theorist, Eagleton (1983), taken to its logical conclusion, this meant that the subject was not really part of the world, "since it brought the world to be in the first place", and, "the subject was to be seen as the source and origin of all meaning" (pp. 57-58). Therefore, description was to be equated with meaning, and interpretation was not deemed necessary, as reality was given in perception, and was not something beyond appearances, as it had been for the Greeks.

What this has suggested to art therapy is that the meaning of created images lies in the perception of the beholder, and that a detailed description of the image is a sufficient means for yielding its meaning (Betensky, 1973; 1977; Betensky & Nucho, 1979).

3.2.3.2Meaning as essence of thought common to different minds

Husserl later focused on the mind-world relationship, as a correlate of consciousness. He used the phenomenological term 'life-world' to denote, "the whole in which we live as historical creatures" (Gadamer,1975, p.218). In his terms, this world forms the universal ground of 'intentionality' as the understanding and consciousness of something: a ground which provides the subject with a historical horizon of meaning, and an objectifying means for thought (Bleicher, 1980). In this sense, the potential for meaning was already laid down.

> It is clear that the life-world is always at the same time a communal world and involves the existence of other people as well. It is a personal world, and in the natural attitude the validity of this personal world is always assumed (Gadamer, 1975, p.219).

For Husserl, it was not so much the act of consciousness as the object of consciousness that was considered the source of reference for meaning. Meaning lay in mental images as some kind of ideal objects. Here, knowledge of the real (essences) became knowledge of what was invariable (*noema*) in the givenness of consciousness about specific objects or situations (*noesis*). Phenomenology, as a scrupulous inspection of consciousness, thus became, "an a priori investigation of the essences of meanings common to the thought of different minds" (Flew, 1979, p.266). Understanding of meaning, in these terms, was grasping that towards which consciousness directed itself, as the 'intended' meaning given in life, which was also an absolute object that other minds could equally direct themselves towards. In Gadamer's (1975) terms, Husserl thus established the historical relativity of all understanding.

What this suggests for art therapy is that the patient and therapist share in a common (ideal) meaning, within a world of meanings, when viewing the image. To grasp the true meaning of an image is to grasp what is essential and unchanging about it: its *eidos*. The created image

represents meaning objectified (made into an object, or representation of being-in-the world) in so far as it can be regarded as a description of this being. Here, the assumption exists that objective meaning occurs as something self evident, which may be ascertained by gazing upon the image and noting its features. In Husserl's terms, "what it means, that objectivity is, and manifests itself cognitively as so being", and, "[its meaning] must precisely become evident purely from consciousness itself, and thereby it must become completely understandable" (Madison, 1988, pp.8-9, cites Husserl). The meaning of the image is its essence as it presents itself to consciousness.

This implies that it is important for the therapist and patient to focus on the image, to observe and describe it in an attitude of discovery which does not assume too much, or too quickly by actively interpreting it. Termed the `phenomenological reduction', the `bracketing of being', or *epoché*, as a clearing of the mind of presuppositions, this attitude seeks to ensure that there is a disconnection from a theoretical, or meaning-prescriptive attitude with its prejudices, which hinders access to true meaning as conscious awareness of what is given. Phenomenology, the science of pure phenomena, seeks to return to the concrete, lived, or actual, as opposed to the abstract, and in so doing seeks to `return to the things themselves' (Mook, 1991), as they manifest themselves (Kruger, 1988).

Language, for Husserl, was a means of expressing meaning, and meaning was an intentional object which could not be reduced to psychological processes of the creator or viewer, and, at the same time could not exist independently from them: It was neither subjective nor objective, yet it was fixed by the mental object the creator had in mind (Eagleton, 1983, pp.66-67). Language, was something post-dating meaning, and Husserl believed that an unprejudiced description of consciousness was possible.

What this suggests for art therapy is that the meaning of the patient's images cannot be reduced to the psychological disposition of the patient, or to the clinical disposition of the therapist, yet it also does not exist independently of them. It exists as conscious awareness, and does so before it comes to be articulated. Just as the disposition of patient and therapist do not 'cause' meaning, the expression in language of such meaning in description, or a discussion between them, does not change meaning in any way. Therefore, in describing and speaking about the image in art therapy, the meaning of the image stays the same in terms of what it can possibly mean for all who would openly engage in perceiving its actual qualities. As Madison (1988) explains, the act of consciousness is not the same as the 'object' of consciousness which the act intends, and many different conscious acts, such as that of the

therapist and patient, can intend the same object. In other words, "different conscious subjects can intend one and the same object" (Madison, 1988, p.7).

3.3THE NATURE OF 'UNDERSTANDING' IN A PHENOMENOLOGY OF PERCEPTION, AND IN PHENOMENOLOGICAL- AND PHILOSOPHICAL-HERMENEUTIC THOUGHT

What Husserl's phenomenology had served to do was to turn the gaze away from an almost total preoccupation with comparison and correctness, to the truth of the phenomenon itself as awareness. Having removed the concept of meaning from the notion of truth as correspondence with an independent real, and having established it as a correlate of consciousness, phenomenology had unwittingly caused a shift towards the notion of truth as something given in human experience.

The legacy of thought that had been left by the a-fore mentioned thinkers, is captured by the notion that understanding occurs in terms of life (Gadamer, 1975), where understanding is grounded in lived experience and emerges from it. This lived experience, considered to be the bedrock for the discovery and creation of meaning, proceeds, in the thought of Merleau-Ponty (1962), from a bodily experience of the world, and, in the phenomenological- and philosophical-hermeneutic thought of Heidegger, Gadamer and Ricoeur is essentially of a linguistic, and interpretative nature.

The German philosopher, Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), a pupil of Husserl's, continued to discard epistemological and logical constructions that make a distinction between consciousness and an external world (Flew, 1979) and instated a hermeneutical phenomenology, in distinction to Husserl's transcendental phenomenology, by partly de-centering the human subject in favour of an irreducible relationship between humankind, and a practical involvement in the material world. The French philosopher, Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961), also believed in a fundamental relationship between humankind and the world, which exists before its meaning becomes explicitly articulated or known. He conceived of meaning as an articulated understanding of an implicit, primordial, and bodily sense of being in the world. Lived, unarticulated meaning precedes explicit, articulated meaning (Brooke, 1991). Perception, in his terms, serves to co-constitute the world of experience, and is in turn co-constituted by experience.

Heidegger, his pupil the German philosopher, Hans-Georg Gadamer, and the French

philosopher, Paul Ricoeur, critiqued the Husserlian notion of language as something post-dating meaning, as well as the assumption that an unprejudiced description of consciousness is possible. They also criticized the view that meaning may be reduced to an ideal, intentional object. It was what Husserl had to say in the end, which was of particular interest to these philosophers, that, "apart from the interpretive consciousness, it is impossible to speak of the meaning of a text", and, "reality is independent not necessarily of thought in general, but only of what you or I…may think about it" (Madison, 1988, p.12, cites Husserl). In connecting reality to the interpretive consciousness, and to thought, in his notion of the `life-world', Husserl had prepared the ground for instating meaning as something hermeneutical, and phenomenology became transformed by his followers into a hermeneutic-phenomenology. Hermeneutics now became instated as something essential to meaning, a notion which Heidegger was to confirm in his theory of *Being*. "The hermeneutical object cannot be divorced from the hermeneutical experience", as Nietzsche was to say of it (Madison, 1988, p.14), and 'all being is interpreted being' was the position that came to be held by phenomenological- and philosophical-hermeneutic thought.

The term 'interpretation' (hermeneutics) has been used in different ways, depending upon the context in which it occurs. In psychotherapy, it refers to statements made by the therapist to the patient about the meaning of his or her symptoms or behavior. Historically, the concern with hermeneutics, as the "theory or philosophy of the interpretation of meaning" (Bleicher,1980, p.1), which concerns itself with ascertaining meaning, had originally been the domain of those seeking the correct interpretation of texts, such as the Bible. Here, hermeneutics, as the art or science of the interpretation of the texts, was regarded as the province of scholars and theologians seeking the correct meaning of any text. After Schleiermacher, however, who was concerned with devising principles which could guide any interpretation, particularly where meaning was obscure, and, who was the first person to attempt to analyze the process of understanding, and to inquire about its possibilities and limits (Bleicher, 1980, p.15), 'interpretation' became a term more widely applied across disciplines. It was only once the question of how meaning can be comprehended at all, and what the methods are that permit an objective understanding (not only of texts, but, of utterances of any kind), that hermeneutics became recognized by philosophers such as Heidegger and Gadamer, as something more than a method of investigation, and as a ontological dimension of life (Bleicher, 1980; Warnke, 1987).

Nevertheless, at the same time that philosophical-hermeneutics was gaining ground, there were others, such as E.D. Hirsch, who continued the search for the correct meaning, a search

which saw hermeneutics continue as an epistemological discipline in the tradition of Dilthey. Hirsch was concerned that, by instating interpretation within the realm of the ontological, this gave rise to "scepticism, relativism, subjectivism, and historicism" (Madison, 1988, p.3). He argued for a situation in which the most valid interpretation can be established. In his terms,

> Conflicting interpretations can be subjected to scrutiny in the light of the relevant evidence, and objective conclusions can be reached …. Devising subsidiary interpretative hypotheses capable of sponsoring probability decisions is not in principle different from devising experiments that can sponsor decisions between hypotheses in the natural sciences (Madison, 1988, p.5, cites Hirsch).

As Madison (1988) explains, this position is, "none other than the classical logic of physical science, that of first of all marshalling all the evidence and then constructing hypotheses and claims which will explain the phenomena" (pp.4-5). It is a position based upon the notion of 'objective knowledge' that, "*corresponds* to and *reflects* a fixed, independent entity [or reality]" (p.5). Hirsch believed true meaning to be the author's meaning, as something original, unchangeable, and reproducible. As such, he adopted something akin to Dilthey's notion of understanding, as a form or 're-cognition' of what the author meant. Such meaning was capable of being rediscovered and copied, by "putting oneself in the author's shoes" (Madison, 1988, p.6), and was assumed to correspond with a fixed reality as the truth.

This notion of meaning is widely evident in psychology and art therapy today, where it is assumed that the therapist can understand the patient and his or her images by virtue of a 'marshalling of all the evidence', 'constructing hypotheses', and 'observing' the patient's behaviour, and, based upon this evidence, `proving' an explanation of meaning.

None of the phenomenological- and philosophical-hermeneutic theorists believed in the dualistic model, with its foundations in Cartesian thought, which represents perceptual experience as the effects produced in the mind by external reality, which impinges itself upon a passive perceiver. For them, a totally extra-experiential reality becomes a meaningless notion, and science, "is to be understood as one way in which human beings interpret the world" (Madison, 1988, pp.15-16), rather than the correct way. As will be discussed, Ricoeur was nevertheless, to refer to the necessity of a logic of explanation, (as occurs in scientific thought) for the achievement of a deeper understanding, and in so doing saw the value of explanation for deepening an understanding of meaning. He, nevertheless, considered the necessity of a relatedness, and mediation, between the investigator and the investigated.

3.3.1 The role of articulation and interpretation for bringing the meaning of lived experience in the world to the fore

Phenomenological- and philosophical-hermeneutic thought believes that “our point of departure is always the collectively accepted meanings by which our world is, so to speak, "pre-evaluated." (Edwards, 1967, p. 281). Heidegger (1962) made the assumption that all our attempts to conceptualize, and understand the world, are ultimately dependent upon a primordial perceptual milieu of lived experience, which comes to be articulated. Ricoeur, was to adopt a related notion in speaking of a ‘pre-figured’ world that comes to be ‘configured’ in being expressed or understood in some way, and that is again re-figured in terms of these configurations needing to be interpreted and understood.

This `pre-figured' world is given primarily in language, which provides the means for reality to reveal itself as meaning. But language also serves a gate-keeping function, in that it objectifies reality in linguistic terms which are circumscribed by history, culture and tradition. Heidegger, Gadamer, and Ricoeur all adopt similar notions about the structuring nature of language, and Heidegger and Gadamer, in particular, regarded past experience (both historical and personal) in similar terms. Just as Heidegger saw understanding as an existential of human existence, so he saw language as a dimension within which human life moves: “that which brings the world to be in the first place. Only where there is language is there ‘world’ in the distinctively human sense” (Eagleton, 1983, p.63) and this sense it relates to the cultural, and practical realms of human existence. For Heidegger (1962) language is the place where reality "un-conceals" itself (p.63). He was to say ‘language is the house of *Being* (Kruger, 1991; Mook, 1991): it was not the totality of *Being* itself, yet *Being* required it for its revealing (Heidegger, 1962). In his terms, we as human beings are born into language, which is already made up of traditional and historically determined metaphors and paradigms of thought. We are also given to thinking (Heidegger, 1978), which occurs, not only, in language, but also in images, and in different paradigms of thought, which make possible the disclosure of reality. We are not, however, aware of the nature of reality, unless it is disclosed as such to us.

On-going, lived experience is not yet necessarily explicitly identified, thought about, or ‘configured’ experience. Neither is it yet necessarily an explicit awareness of meaning, in spite of the fact that what it means can be understood in a taken-for-granted way. It still has the potential of an undecided future in terms of its possibilities for future meaning. When such experience is ‘identified’ it is not being unreflectively lived, but is being thought or spoken about. As Plotinus had lamented in stating that a focus upon the `form' of something

precludes an awareness of its meaning, so unreflected upon perceptual experience is not yet true understanding.

For Heidegger, *Being* is not only that which presences, but is also that which is hidden and needs to be brought out. Interpretation, as the 'laying out' of what is already inherent in understanding (Heidegger, 1962), is a means for doing so. Similarly, for Merleau-Ponty (1962), understanding is an articulation of what is already lived as meaning. It is a making explicit and public of that which is implicit and unreflected upon. Both philosophers believed that we already understand by having an implicit understanding of how the world operates, which serves to orient us in the world. But, we do not already know until we have brought the implicit into the realm of the explicit. It is in this sense that Heidegger refers to 'lending a helping hand to being'.

> Man in thinking is called upon to lend a helping hand to Being…thinking is man's fundamental responding to whatever offers itself to him. Informed by recollection, it brings forth into awareness and efficacy whatever is presented to it to know. It … receives and holds and shapes everything that truly comes to be and to be known (Heidegger, 1977, in Lovitt p.xiv).

Memory, or recollection, was, for Heidegger (1978), the `gathering of thought'. Just as Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus drew attention to the necessity of 'contemplation' for receiving the *Form* (essence) of the object contemplated, and realized that to partake of, or participate, in the truth required reflective, receptive engagement, so Heidegger believed that, to search for sense, or meaning, was not the making conscious of something, but required reflection as a, "calm, self-possessed surrender to that which is worthy of questioning" (Heidegger, 1977, in Lovitt, p.180). To partake of, or participate in the truth required an act of participation in the sense of reflective, receptive engagement.

Just as Plato's *Forms* informed (gave true meaning to) everything that presented itself in existence, for Heidegger, true thinking could never be an activity performed in abstraction from reality (1997, in Lovitt). As 'being-in-the-world', reality is always contextual and historical, thus true thinking incorporates what is both given to consciousness, and what is already implicitly known as experience. Pre-understanding, action and knowledge were, for Heidegger, inseparably related. Unlike Plato, however, he considered spontaneous 'pre-understanding', which is usually connected to some practical project, to be more important than reason (Eagleton, 1983, p.64), and called his philosophy a "hermeneutic of Being"

(Eagleton, 1983, p.66). By this he meant that, what we already understand is reality as lived experience, although we may not yet know that understanding fully. We are part of the world, and understand it from the inside.

> The world is not an object 'out there' to be rationally analyzed, set over against a contemplative subject: it is never something we can get outside of and stand over against. We emerge as subjects from inside reality which we can never fully objectify, which encompasses both 'subject' and 'object', which is inexhaustible in its meanings and which constitutes us as much as we constitute it" (Eagleton, 1983, p.62).

For Heidegger, interpretation is not, as it was for Husserl, "a presuppositionless apprehending of something presented to us" (Heidegger, 1962, p.192) but is firstly a taken-for-granted assumption, a "fore-structure of understanding" (p.1). Just as various cognitive modes provided the means of access to the truth for Plato, in Heidegger's terms, reflection, articulation, interpretation, and theory are necessary means for explicitly revealing reality. They make understanding of it explicit, in that they serve to identify and formulate it. They are not to be reduced to reality, however, as they cannot grasp the depths and totality of *Being* at any one time. As awareness and experience are reflected upon and articulated, they take on a particular structure which reveals meaning. For Heidegger, this occurs in interpretation as, `the structure of something'. Seeing something as, "constitutes the interpretation" (Heidegger, 1962, p.189).

For Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, articulation and interpretation bring understanding from the realm of the implicit into the realm of the explicit and public. But they do more than this, they shift understanding in the direction of a recognition of essence. As it was for Plato, essence is both the ground of existence, and something arrived at as knowledge, so it was for Heidegger who says in Being and Time, that the truth, as essence, is not something we presuppose, it "is what first makes possible anything like presupposing" (Heidegger, 1962, p.270). Here, he squarely locates the truth in *Being* with its authentic possibilities of expression. As it was for the Greeks, to hear what the world has to say is to know its truth, which is what it says for us. In Heidegger's and Merleau-Ponty's terms, existence is being-in-relationship-to-the world, as thinking, articulating beings, who receive its truth.

> The Being of truth is connected primordially with Dasein. And only because Dasein is as constituted by disclosedness (that is by understanding), can anything like Being be understood; only so is it possible to understand Being.

> Being (not entities) is something which 'there is' only in so far as truth is. And truth is only in so far

> as and as long as Dasein is. Being and truth 'are' equiprimordially (Heidegger, 1962, p.272).

Articulation, as thinking and interpreting by means of theory is, for Heidegger, a process of objectification and abstraction, which brings reality into presence. He says,

> Theory identifies the real…and fixes it into one object-area. However, nature is always presencing of itself. Objectification, for its part, is directed toward nature as thus presencing…Theory never outstrips nature - nature that is already presencing - and in this sense theory never makes its way around nature …. Nature, in its objectness… is only one way in which what presences…reveals itself and sets itself in position for the refining characteristic of science…this objectness can never embrace the fullness of the coming to presence of nature (Heidegger, 1977, in Lovitt, pp.173-174).

Abstraction is thus the process of objectification which succeeds in clarifying, by simplifying, that which confronts humankind, but within a limited sphere, as reality is complex and cannot be grasped in its entirety. For Heidegger science is one such abstraction which he calls 'the theory of the real' (Heidegger, 1977, in Lovitt).

What this suggests for art therapy is that understanding the meaning of the patient's symptoms, and his or her images, occurs within the context of the patient and therapist 'being-in-relationship-to-the-world', and proceeds from an existing, level of implicit understanding based upon perceptual and lived experience, with its collectively accepted meanings. This implicit understanding becomes explicit, and public, by means of articulation and interpretation, and in being made explicit, moves the understanding of both patient and therapist in the direction of an awareness of meaning (essence). What constitutes such meaning is already implicitly, or potentially there before it becomes articulated and interpreted, but it requires to be structured (simplified and objectified) in some way, if it is to be grasped. Reflection, articulation and interpretation (including theoretical interpretation) are the means by which such a structuring occurs. Furthermore, the use of theory (for instance by the therapist) helps to identify, for instance, the issues of the patient, and the psychological nature of his or her images, and in so doing simplifies the complexity of the patient's reality, which renders it intelligible.

While these operations may be natural and spontaneous forms of human engagement in any situation, interpretation and theoretical explanation need to be actively pursued in art therapy, if an explicit understanding of the meaning of the patient's symptoms, and his or her situation is to occur.

3.3.2The historical, traditional and practical nature of understanding

Just as Vico had understood that figurative ways of viewing the world are adopted and passed on, and that interpretation serves to 'render something familiar', understanding, for Heidegger, and his follower Gadamer, is thoroughly temporal and historical, in that it is the following of a direction that we are already caught up in, in terms of ways of thinking and understanding. Understanding occurs within the context of what is anticipated, and familiar, where that which is being investigated becomes intelligible and meaningful. Heidegger's (1962) notions of 'fore-' knowledge, 'fore-structures of understanding', and 'historicity', all imply a sense of understanding in a certain traditional, historical and culturally given way, a way which he saw rooted in ancient Greek culture. As it was for Vico, understanding for Heidegger, is always an imaginative reconstruction within the confines of existing metaphors of understanding (which are historically, and culturally given).

Heidegger, provides the insight that our 'fore-structures of understanding', which are our taken for granted ways of understanding, not only denote the temporal prejudice of tradition and history, and our own past experience, but also provide us with the means with which to understand anything in the first place. We are 'thrown' into a world which has already been constituted in terms of its possibilities of meaning, and we 'project' our understanding in 'throwing it over', or upon, that which we perceive. Understanding, for Heidegger, is always a continuation, in that understanding occurs, and proceeds, in terms of where it has come from, and where it is logically, and necessarily (practically) directed.

> [T]hinking can never be a closed system. Rather it is a travelling of a road … it is the way and not the individual that assembles what is thought, that provides bounds and lets everything stand in relation to everything else (Lovitt, in Heidegger, 1977, p.xv).

> Through reflection so understood we actually arrive at the place where, without having experienced it and without having seen penetratingly into it, we have long been sojourning ….This sojourning is constantly a historical sojourning - i.e., one allotted to us…(Heidegger, 1977, in Lovitt, pp.180-181).

Like Vico, who assumed that knowledge proceeds from a community sense, human knowledge for Heidegger proceeds from, and moves, within what he calls 'pre-understanding', as tacit assumptions derived from a practical relationship with the world, assumptions which are like 'partial abstractions' (Heidegger, 1962), assumptions which require the working out of their possibilities in action and interpretation.

In continuing Vico's and Heidegger's understanding, Gadamer (1975) proposed that the knowledge that we have as an individual or community of a particular domain, "is not that

individual's or community's product alone but that of history" (Warnke, 1987, p.79). In other words, we find ourselves in the grip of a tradition which influences our thinking. This historical consciousness, that is passed down, limits the potential arbitrariness of understanding and prevents an entirely idiosyncratic interpretation being brought to bear on that which is in need of being understood. It is for this reason that the act of understanding should not be seen as a purely subjective act, but as feature of what Gadamer calls, effective history. Gadamer says,

> Long before we understand ourselves in retrospective reflection, we understand ourselves in self-evident ways in the family, society and state in which we live. The focus of subjectivity is a distorting mirror. The self-reflection of the individual is only a flicker in the closed circuits of historical life (Warnke,1987, p.80, cites Gadamer).

Effective-historical consciousness is already present in the kinds of questions we ask in life, and there is an existing pool of meaning which can be drawn on in any situation requiring understanding. Gadamer (1975) sees such meaning (as prejudice), occurring within the universal medium of practical reason, outside of which the meaning of experience does not exist. In Gadamer's terms, a "question places that which is questioned within a particular perspective", and, "to ask a question is to bring into the open" (p.326). In other words what something says to us will depend on the kind of questions which we are able to bring to it from our own vantage-point in history. It will also depend upon on our ability to reconstruct the question to which the thing itself seems to be an answer, because it itself is steeped in its own history.

In art therapy the kinds of questions asked of the image tend to be steeped in the historical and traditional paradigms of thought available to the disciplines of psychology and psychotherapy, such as psychoanalysis, or humanist psychology. Thus, the possibilities provided for answers are both made possible, and circumscribed by these paradigms, and their broader contexts of historical meaning. In providing a structure, these questions are already a form of interpretation. As a part of historical consciousness, they provide a context, as situation and relationship: a placing which has been made possible by history and tradition.

In Heidegger's terms, the assertion of meaning is also the `taking of a place', or a positioning, which occurs within the space of "that which withdraws", and by withdrawing, "in such a way precisely admits and 'makes place' for something else": a space within which we participate by "opening ourselves to the disclosure of a radically new way for us" (Heidegger, in Levin, 1985, pp.330-331). The space, or clearing, formerly called a *chora* by

the Greeks, may be construed as a receptacle for, or receptiveness to, what is presented. It may also be construed as a pre-emptive capacity for understanding in a certain kind of historical way, or be construed as a perspective which either makes meaning possible, or within which meaning can occur. Historical consciousness, anticipations of particular kinds of meaning, and the pre-emptiveness of questions, and paradigms of thought, `withdraw' into the background as that which is being investigated comes to light: yet, this has only been made possible by such pre-emptive features of the situation.

What this suggests for the way art therapy is conducted and approached, and the way images are understood, is that such pre-emptive approaches, which are rooted in tradition and history, provide a practical means for doing things, and thinking about such matters. As interpreters of images, whether art therapists, psychologists or laymen, we can never stand outside our own historical consciousness, or know it completely. For instance, when the patient arrives for art therapy for the first time, understanding already exists in the form of anticipation, and the ability to know, in a general sense, what is going on: a sense which is traditionally, culturally and historically given. When the art therapist is engaged in the task of art therapy, he or she moves within a whole tradition of therapeutic practice. Art therapy has its historical roots in three disciplines, namely, psychiatry, psychology and art education (Wilson, 1982), each of which bring an influence to bear in the form of ways of thinking and practice. These disciplines are themselves rooted in a history that extends back for centuries in time.

Gadamer (1975) was to develop this line of thought to mean that every act of understanding occurs within a situation and perspective, which he called a 'horizon', which mediates it. He says,

> …an essential part of the concept of situation is the concept of 'horizon'. The horizon is the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point (Gadamer, 1975, p.269).

It is this vantage point that often goes undetected, and that determines what will or will not be seen. Said differently, we cannot understand without the existence of an existing perspective, context, or situation, which provides a way of understanding and grasping meaning. Ricoeur, similarly, (1991, in Valdés) was to refer to paradigms of thought given by the world for thinking, each of which makes possible understanding in a particular light.

What this suggests for art therapy is that the therapist and patient, together, partake in a common community of meanings, and ways of construing, and responding to situations that

have developed from within history and tradition, when they understand what occurs in the art therapy situation. For this reason they understand each other, and what is said between them. Furthermore, the types of questions asked proceed from this implicit perspective. These questions relate to practical issues, and exist within a taken-for-granted, communal sense of what reality and existence in the world is all about.

On a more specific level, some questions and answers, that emerge in art therapy, relate to what it means to be a therapist and a patient, and, on a more particular level still, to the concerns of the person present. From the therapist's clinical perspective, questions tend to be based upon assumptions related to what is diagnostically and therapeutically relevant and significant in terms of mental health, a meaningful quality of life, acceptable conduct in the world, and/or what influences these dimensions in psychological, and management terms.

What this seems to suggest, in terms of meaning in art therapy, is that meaning is something related to the possibilities of meaning made available by the world that the therapist and the patient live in, and have come to know.

3.3.3The movement of prejudice in understanding

Heidegger, Gadamer and Ricoeur all understood that we are always already in a perspective (a way of understanding and configuring the world) when we understand ourselves and others, and that we necessarily bring ourselves (with our world experience as meaning-generating context), and step into situations, or into the world of the other. All self knowledge, according to Gadamer (1975), also "proceeds from what is historically pre-given" (p.269), as this horizon always has implications for us. Gadamer (1975) says,

> For what do we mean by 'placing ourselves' in a situation? Certainly not just disregarding ourselves. This is necessary, of course, in that we must imagine the other situation. But into this other situation we must also bring ourselves. Only this fulfils the meaning of 'placing ourselves'. If we place ourselves in the situation of someone else, for example, then we shall understand him, ie become aware of the otherness, the indissoluble individuality of the other person, by placing ourselves in his position (pp.271-272).

In fact, the horizon of the present is being continually formed, in that we have continually to `test our prejudices', and in so doing, adjust our understanding. The horizon of potential meaning in the present is something, "into which we move and that moves with us", as "horizons change for the person who is moving" (Gadamer, 1975, p.271).

In Gadamer's terms, we also understand the meaning of a work of art, text or historical event

"only in relation to our own situation and therefore in the light of our own concerns" (Warnke, 1987, p.68). The context, or situation we find ourselves in is therefore both personal, circumstantial, and historical.

While lived experience in the world provides ways of viewing and understanding based upon our past involvements with the world, Heidegger and Gadamer understood that the 'projection'[2] of this implicit understanding provides a horizon of potential meaning for understanding the world explicitly. The projecting of our understanding does not mean that we only see what we already know, because, while understanding is made possible through our own `pre-judice', or `fore-structure' of understanding, this is where understanding begins but does not end. That which is being investigated also 'places us in it's meaning'. This meaning is constituted by `reading' the situation, or context, in which it exists. The meeting of our prejudice, and it's meaning results, in Ricoeur's (1976) terms, in a 'clash of semantic fields', and in Gadamer's (1975) terms, a dialectics of exchange, which if understanding occurs, becomes a 'fusion of horizons'. This understanding is always 'understanding otherwise'. Realizing new potential in the text, artifact, or work of art, is making a difference to it. The event of understanding comes about when our own 'horizon' of historical meanings, and assumptions, 'fuses' with the horizon within which the work itself is placed. At such a moment, we enter the `alien world' of the artifact, but at the same time gather it into our own realm, reaching a more complete understanding of ourselves (Gadamer, 1975). Here, the subject and object, self and other, become connected within the encompassing context of existence with its possibilities of meaning.

While a 'fusion of horizons' succeeds in bringing together different aspects and dimensions of existence as a new articulation or vision, without some form of initial, existing understanding we would not be able to begin to understand at all, as we would not be able to project ourselves, by rendering the artifact familiar. Furthermore, we have to be prepared to be influenced in terms of its meaning. Gadamer (1975) says, "we must always already have a horizon [of understanding] in order to be able to place ourselves within a situation" (p.271). For Gadamer, the notion of `horizon' suggests itself, because,

> …it expresses the wide, superior vision that the person who is seeking to understand must have. To acquire a horizon means that one learns to look beyond what is close at hand - not in order to look away from it, but to see it better within a larger whole and in truer

[2]Projection in these terms is nothing like the psychoanalytic use of the term. Projection in Heidegger's terms makes the discovery of meaning possible, by bringing existing understanding to bear on something, and in that way rendering it familiar.

proportion (Gadamer, 1975, p.272).

Thus, for Gadamer, true understanding is understanding something within a context. Gadamer's notion of a 'fusion of horizons' suggests that true understanding is not that which is obvious, assumed or capable of being confirmed in a so-called objective way, neither is it finding the one, forever same meaning which is passed on from one person or situation to the next. It is instead something which emerges anew from the projection of a particular horizon, or prejudice, participation of the investigator in the meaning of that which is investigated, allowing the investigated to assert its own meaning horizon, and the subsequent removal of the original horizons both of the investigator and the investigated by a new horizon.

What this suggests for art therapy is that the therapist, the patient, the images created, and the art therapy situation each provide a particular kind of horizon, each of which prescribes certain possibilities of meaning. For instance, the patient, and his or her lived experience and problems, serve by their nature (as horizons of potential meaning), to direct meaning in a particular direction. The therapist too, has assumptions about the patient, and 'projects' him or herself into the patient's situation, imaginatively finding out what it is like being there (in the patient's horizon), and, in terms of this discovery, adjusts his or her own assumptions in coming to understand the patient.

This process of `a fusion of horizons', suggests that meaning emerges as something new, and is continually being formed. This forming is constituted out of the merging of the possibilities of meaning brought into the situation by each aspect of it, which makes its own contribution. Nevertheless, while the movement of prejudice in the discovery of meaning means that, "we have continually to test our prejudices" (Gadamer, 1975, p.273), we are, nevertheless, and in spite of the possibility of doing so, inextricably caught up in "a community of dialogue" (Bleicher, 1980. p. 157), which is a mode of social existence within the circumscribing bounds wherein all understanding comes to be.

What this suggests for art therapy is that although the therapist and patient understand the art therapy situation, and what occurs in it, within the bounds of the historical, and traditional situation they find themselves in, and in terms of their own particular prejudices, they can be open to what the image suggests in terms of its meaning, and open to what is said about it. In so doing they are given the opportunity to adjust their prejudices, and arrive at a greater understanding which is different from that which they had before. Nevertheless, they cannot

adjust the historical prejudice they find themselves in, as they are unaware of it.

Unlike Gadamer, Habermas believes in the possibility of catching sight of ourselves being caught up in prejudice, and in so doing being able to step outside of it by readjusting our thinking. In contrast to Gadamer, he believes in the possibility of rejecting the claims of tradition (Bleicher, 1980; Kelly, 1994; Warnke, 1987). In his development of a critical hermeneutics, he seeks to free interpretation from unreflective prejudice through discursive justification in the form of 'rational consensus'. As will be discussed, Ricoeur's notion of 'distanciation', and the necessity for explanation, also suggests that we are able to catch a sight of ourselves, but in very different terms, as these terms related to the capacity to hand ourselves over to a paradigmatic, or semantic logic, and the meaning autonomy of an objectification of life, before incorporating its meaning into the context of our own understanding.

3.3.4The recovery of meaning via engagement with the objectifications of life

Ricoeur uses the phrase "transcendence of reflection in the direction of existence" (Bleicher, 1980, p.253) to denote the way in which, through a work of interpretation, we are taken away from immediate, unreflective engagement in the world, to reflection and explanation as a means of recovering reality as meaning. This transcendence occurs by virtue of what Ricoeur (1976) calls a 'detour' via a 'heuristic fiction'. This fiction is anything that can be said, and thought about, and in the saying and thinking about, can be treated as something 'objectified'. What is meant here is that, as Heidegger (1962) understood, in 'thinking' about, or 'interpreting', something becomes the thought about, the 'objectified'. This objectification occurs when it has been lifted out of on-going, un-reflected upon experience and is identified, asserted, and in Ricoeur's terms, 'fixed' in being made 'thing-like'. Such

an objectification is a 'fiction', or 'representation' of lived experience, in spite of its devolving from, and representing that experience.

Just as Plato had recognized that the expressions of life, as appearances in the form of sensible particulars, devolved from the true potentials of existence and its meaning, but were mere imitations, so Ricoeur understands that a described event, articulation, expression, or example of life, derives from experience in life, but is like a fiction (what he refers to as a `text'), which is in need of being deciphered. It is a 'figuration', sign, objectification, representation, or imitation of the real, rather than reality or the truth itself. Just as the truth, as reality, was for Plato an experience of revelation, or intuition, consequent to an

engagement upon the path to knowledge, so for Ricoeur, it is an experienced event of meaning, as something that occurs in the present, as the outcome of a work of interpretation. In his terms, interpretation operates at the most basic level in life. Even language (as a sign or representative means), requires "a work of interpretation at the most elementary and banal level of conversation" (Ricoeur, 1981, in Thompson, p.44). This work of interpretation proceeds from an initial guess as to the meaning of something, which then requires some grounding through, for instance, the processes of explanation, as a form of re-contextualization, for its true meaning to be released.

In Ricoeur's terms, represented experience is like a 'text', or a 'figuration' which has its own possibilities for meaning, meaning which is not temporally tied to the experience itself. As a text, its meaning is something other than what preceded it, as either expressive, or communicative intention, or presiding determinant. Once experience is represented it has taken on a form or shape (in Plotinus's terms), or a structure (in Heidegger's terms), and become a `sign', `representation', or 'configuration' in Ricoeur's terms, or, in Plato's terms an `imitation', which points beyond itself. A text, in Ricoeur's terms, is not primarily a message addressed to a specific range of readers, or the expression of meaning of its author or creator inasmuch as "it is a kind of a-temporal object, which has, so to speak, cut its ties from all historical development" (Ricoeur, 1976, p.91). What is meant here is that, while it is already defined, and thing-like, in terms of its circumscribed identity with possibilities of meaning, that which it now points to is what comes to be appropriated as its meaning. Such meaning is released in a decipherment, or recognition as re-cognition, in understanding.

What a text means, occurs in a moment of reflection, or interpretation. In Ricoeur's terms, in order to understand (to glimpse existence as lived) we need to follow the meaning suggested by the text. The text, as text (rather than as expression of intention or prior determining condition), has its own possibilities for meaning which sets it free from prior influences. This freedom, however, is circumscribed by what is available and possible form the perspective of given paradigms of thought, with their possibilities of meaning provided by the world. A 'horse' and its image can only mean certain things, and the term can only be legitimately used in certain ways. Nevertheless, the true meaning of the image of a horse, like it was for Plato, is its meaning experienced in a particular context, and in relationship to ourselves, which is both its meaning for us, and its meaning in the context, ultimately, of the given world. Thus true meaning is not simply anything you or I might think it is, in the absence of context, but is itself the understanding of context. It is the position we, and the object, find ourselves in, in relation to the world.

In having been `alienated' from existence, as an expression of being, the created image in art therapy, as a 'text', may be viewed as a `distanciated' objectified 'other' in need of interpretation. The `semantic autonomy' of the image is its 'self-contained existence', which is ultimately grounded in the "objectivity of meaning of oral discourse itself" (Ricoeur, 1976, p.91). This objectivity is something already laid down in language, and in historically determined thinking. What the image can possibly mean for its viewers is thus limited (yet also freeing in the sense of opening up a way of understanding). Ricoeur understood that the 'predicament' of distance, or `alienation' of the text can be used as an epistemological instrument in the form of active methodological distanciation. The alienation of the text provides the opportunity for the application of a paradigmatic logic, as methodological explanation. He thus understood the importance of `objectivity' for the development of understanding, but only as one aspect in the development of meaning.

For understanding the image in art therapy, this suggests that it is the very fact of the image being an image, and what is said about it, existing as a particular, independent (alienated) object (or fictional text) in need of being understood, and which opens up possibilities of meaning by 'placing us' in its logical `meaning direction', that provides the opportunity for a work of interpretation to occur. And it is only in what Ricoeur refers to as the work of interpretation, as `discourse', with its `logic' of explanation, that the true meaning of the image, and what has been said about it, can be realised.

In other words, the true meaning of the image is not to be found in the immediacy of consciousness, as Husserl would have it, neither is it to be found purely in an imaginative, historically determined reconstruction, devoid of the necessity for a logic of explanation, as Vico and Dilthey would have it. It is not something purely past, or original, or to be found in the intentions of the patient as creator of the image, or in the prior conditions and events of his or her life, as Dilthey, or Hirsch would have it. It is also not to be found purely in the therapist's interpretation, as an empathetic re-cognition of the patient's experience. In Ricoeur's terms, it is the product of a work of interpretation, and the 'appropriation' of meaning that occurs within a dialectics of exchange, that sees an `event' of meaning occur. This work of exchange is what brings about a disclosure of meaning in the present. This is made possible by `distanciation', as 'a detour via a heuristic fiction' and a subsequent appropriation of meaning. A discourse, or logic of explanation, serves to place, not only the image in a particular meaning context, but also the patient and the therapist.

Madison (1988) explains Ricoeur's position as follows, "a text itself is not a self-contained, determinable meaning but is, rather, the "'promise' of meaning" (p.21). Likewise, "the meaning of a text is not a substantial entity" (p.21), but "what the text gives us to understand; it is an invitation and a call to interpretation, and interpretation is the effective realisation of a text's promise" (p.22). It is a "surplus of meaning" that actually "calls for and engenders an open-ended process of creative interpretation; a process which ultimately confirms the text in its own meaning"(p.22). At the same time, an appropriation of the meaning of the text, that is released in interpretative explanation, is an understanding of ourselves in terms of the text. In following the meaning of a text we enter the reference to a world, and in so doing we come to see things in a new light. As Ricoeur (1976) himself says, if the reference of the text is the project of a world, then it is not the reader who primarily projects himself. In Ricoeur's (1976) words,

> The reader rather is enlarged in his capacity of self projection by receiving a new mode of being from the text itself.

> Appropriation, in this way, ceases to appear as a kind of possession, as a way of taking hold of things; instead it implies a moment of dispossession of the egoistic and narcissistic ego. This process of 'dispossessing' is the work of the kind of universality and a-temporality emphasized in explanatory procedures. And this universality in its turn is linked to the disclosing power of the text as distinct from any ostensive reference. Only the interpretation which complies with the injunction of the text, that follows the "arrow" of the sense and that tries to think accordingly, initiates a new understanding …. It is the text, with its universal power of world disclosure, which gives a self to the ego (1976, pp.94-95).

What this suggests for art therapy is that understanding the patient and his or her psychological issues occurs in terms of the interpretation of created images (as heuristic fiction), or in terms of an interpretation of what is said in the situation, for instance in the form of a theoretical interpretation. It is only via this kind of 'heuristic fiction' that the patient, and his or her issues become re-cognized, in being seen in a different light, and in being seen and explained in terms of something else (the image and theory). This new way of seeing takes the therapist and patient away from what they already know and anticipate. In entering the 'the orient of the text', in being placed in a certain meaning direction, a world is opened up in imagination and thought, which has served to contextualize the patient and therapist differently, by placing them in a new perspective or horizon with its possibilities for being and meaning. Here, they receive, not only the opportunity of seeing in a new light, but a way of being differently, a way which becomes `appropriated' in a new understanding.

Thus, while Heidegger (1962) speaks of already finding oneself understanding in a certain kind of way, and who regards the discovery of meaning as something already implicitly given in this understanding: a meaning that needs to be lifted out in interpretation, and while Gadamer proposes that understanding, while inevitably historically prejudiced, is always productive in a 'fusion of horizons', Ricoeur's contribution places less of an emphasis upon the pre-determined nature of meaning (what he terms a 'prefigured' world in the form of existing possibilities of meaning), and more upon understanding as a creative and metaphorical redescription of these possibilities that occurs in a movement of interpretation. In an imaginative and creative restructuring, and an appropriation of meaning there is a discovery of reality.

In Ricoeur's terms (1991, in Valdés), a prefigured reality (which exists as existing paradigms of thought, and in the semantic autonomy of any object or text) is the already figured ground, or medium, from within which reality comes to be constructed. As expression in action and articulation, this prefigured reality becomes concretized. This concrete expression is itself a structuring (a configuration) of meaning. What has been configured in this way, is not, as it was for Husserl, or Aristotle, already meaning as a final truth. Meaning as the truth, for Ricoeur, as it was for Plato, is not something to be reduced to its objectification (configuration), but is something which comes to be released by means of an engagement on a path to knowledge, such as occurs in an explanatory procedure during an interpretation of that objectification. The release of meaning occurs in a meaning experience (or, in Plato's terms, as intuition or `reasoned' insight).

While Heidegger had said, "interpretation is grounded existentially in understanding; the latter does not arise from the former" (Heidegger, 1962, p.188), and Gadamer (1975) had recognized that understanding is not so much a replication as an imaginative production, in that it always produces something new, Ricoeur states that "understanding is entirely mediated by the whole of explanatory procedures that precede it and accompany it" (Ricoeur, 1991, in Blamey & Thompson, p.167). In other words, he grounded understanding within the active application of a context of thought made available by the world (in the form of paradigms of thought) in a present `work' of interpretation. These paradigms provide the necessary means for understanding, yet are not themselves the meaning of a situation. Understanding occurs in an `event of discourse', as the traversing of a particular ground in thought, opened up by means of a detour via a heuristic fiction (alienated, or distanciated object) that such paradigms, or semantic fields, provide. And in a further logic of

explanation, that occurs in `appropriating' such fictions, understanding occurs in an act of comprehension. This detour, while essentially imaginative and metaphorical in nature, results in a `metamorphosis' of reality.

What this suggests for art therapy, is that in entering the world opened up by the images, and what is said about them, and in an appropriation of their distanciated meaning, a metamorphosis of both patient and therapist occurs. They arrive at a new way of seeing, which relates not only to the images, but to the patient and his or her issues. These become understood differently, once they are understood in terms of an `other', as an objectification of life, with its own possibilities of meaning.

3.3.5Implications of theory for understanding in art therapy

As the above review of various contemporary theories and philosophies (particularly that of phenomenological- and philosophical-hermeneutics), suggests, there are different ways of understanding the image and its meaning, which are dependent upon the world view, theory, or notion about reality that is being implied. This raises a question for art therapy, which is currently practised and understood in a way that is based upon certain taken for granted conceptions of the meaning of reality and the image. In view of certain alternative, contemporary insights into the nature of reality and understanding, proposed by phenomenological- and philosophical- hermeneutics, such conceptions, based as they tend to be on Cartesian foundations, are in need of a revision as they form the basis of practice in art therapy. It now remains for this thesis to put certain of these alternative suggestions about the nature of understanding and meaning to the test, by attempting to consider them in the light of an actual experience.

PART TWO
THE EXPERIENCE OF CREATING AND UNDERSTANDING THE IMAGE

CHAPTER FOUR
METHOD

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The motivating concern of this study is to investigate the interpretative dimensions of creating and understanding the image in art therapy. Having considered various notions that are implicit in art therapy, and their related counterparts in certain historical and contemporary thought, various suggestions have emerged about the nature of understanding and meaning. This study now proceeds to its second part, *Part Two*, which is its own enquiry into the nature of understanding and meaning in art therapy itself. Here,the answers to questions will hopefully serve to address certain taken for granted assumptions, for instance, about the unilateral understanding of the patient and the therapist, which relate to the corresponding notions of meaning as something original, objective, thing-like and fixed. These questions are also raised with a view to considering the phenomenon of understanding from the alternative suggestion that it occurs in a dialectical exchange, and in a dialogical, interpretative work, or process, that occurs in a circular manner, and relates to ontological concerns within the context of a given world.

When a domain of enquiry is chosen to be researched it is automatically influenced by the research process itself. In general, in order to meet the requirements of a method that speaks of process yet provides the possibilities for a systematic analysis of a manageable data base from which to proceed, a situation needs to be created which calls forth various actions as approximations of the lived experience under review. By virtue of its investigative nature research requires a circumscribed domain of inquiry. Such circumscription and investigations, are themselves changing the nature of the domain being investigated as they are isolating it from its broader context in the world, and from the context of on-going, pre-reflective living. The domain becomes, in a sense, isolated, thus ‘fixed’ within the horizon of the investigation. It becomes a `representation', which is in a certain sense a fiction and a text, both requiring and making an interpretation possible. Before becoming a manageable data base from which to proceed with the analysis, the nature of the domain needs to be captured in an adequate representation of it. This representation may take the form of a verbal description of experience, or an example of the behaviour under review in a particular context.

4.2CHOOSING AN APPROPRIATE METHOD

Art therapy is situated in a tradition of practice and thought set against a background of

philosophical and theoretical presuppositions. Such suppositions dictate the way the image, and its creation, comes to be understood. This understanding in turn influences the way art therapy comes to be practised. An attempt to scrutinise this understanding, with a view to reviewing such practice, requires a method which retains what is pertinent to this practice. Furthermore such a method needs to be productive in terms of the specific questions asked by this research. As will be seen, these questions are essentially about the nature of understanding and meaning in art therapy practice. Thus a method capable of addressing these issues, is required.

Unlike the 'objective' posture, adopted by the natural sciences, which aims to eliminate personal bias, prejudice and preconception, and bases itself upon the premise that everything can "be treated as if its truth, existence, and reality were a "fact" without respect to some observer-participant" (Perrott, in Giorgi et al, 1979, p.98), phenomenological inquiry studies everyday life, and seeks to elucidate the meaning of human experience, and behaviour as it is lived in the everyday world. Hermeneutic enquiry, by contrast, studies language as discourse where such elucidation takes place in the form of texts, and it is the hermeneutic field which provides the horizon within which such meaning is given and disclosed (Titelman, in Giorgi, 1979, p.182). Phenomenology and hermeneutics, although different in their focus, with the former concerned with experience itself, and the latter concerned with articulated accounts, are both concerned with issues of meaning, phenomenology being more concerned with meaning as something given in experience, and hermeneutics with meaning something discovered in, and constructed from experience.

In phenomenological-hermeneutic terms, experience, and the perception of it, requires description, and description requires language if it is to be at all meaningful and capable of being understood and communicated. As human beings we are born into language, and speech is an existential aspect of our being human, thus descriptions of experience are a natural aspect of every day life. Speech, with its use of language, follows certain rules and regulations of expression, and is the place where, in Heidegger's (1962) terms, 'all being is uttered'. For Heidegger (1962), as soon as understanding is put into words it is already an interpretation. In language, experience takes on a particular shape and form in being brought to an articulated expression. It is this form that makes it possible to grasp experience in order to analyze and convey meaning. Here, experience is construed as articulated meaning. This means that experience can be understood by the research community, fellow research participants, and by the researcher.

Phenomenological-hermeneutic enquiry seeks meaning, and hopes to achieve an understanding of human experience. To this end it is not interested in a scientific approach concerned with discrete, observable, interpretation-free data, but rather an approach which focuses upon experience, action in context, texts, and text analogues. As art therapy practice is an example of such experience and action, and the images produced there, along with what is said of them, constitute text analogues for interpretation, phenomenological-hermeneutic enquiry provides a suitable approach. The starting place of such enquiry is usually a taken-for-granted understanding of practical involvement, such as knowledge about art therapy and its experience. A description of this experience can be used, for instance, as the textual ground from which interpretation can proceed. Frequently the character of such description takes the form of narrative accounts, and the analysis of such accounts is akin to the reading of texts, with a view to gaining information from them. This can be done in the light of taken-for-granted understanding and practices, or in the light of providing an interpretation which uncovers what is not obvious, and answers the motivating concerns of the research (Kvale, 1991; Packer & Addison, 1989).

In accepting the situatedness of all enquiry and the implied human significance of any study, phenomenological-hermeneutic enquiry chooses a method which, instead of avoiding the issues of human involvement and prior experience, builds them into its design. This affects not only the way the data is understood and interpreted, but the research questions themselves, the way the study is conducted, and the type of results made possible (Packer & Addison, 1989). The researcher proceeds from within a familiarity with the context of that which is being researched, and approaches it with a 'fore-structure' of understanding. This fore-structure has been shaped by gathered information on the topic of interest, expectations, and preconceptions obtained from lived experience, culture and tradition. This fore-structure is projected onto the area of interest, and provides an entry point for its understanding.

The process is not one of mere confirmation of fore-structures, but one of engagement, awareness and correction of such fore-structures in the light of information yielded by the investigation, and that which is investigated. For instance, engagement with the data, and an analysis of it, allows the fore-structures, and the area of interest, to be expanded and changed in terms of meaning. Investigation proceeds in a circular fashion with the fore-structures dictating understanding, and gathered information, from, for instance, the data and its analysis, influencing the fore-structures. The circular nature of understanding is one in which a new understanding emerges by virtue of the refinement (or changing) of the fore-structures, and an increasing transparency of the phenomenon under investigation. In Heidegger and

Gadamer's terms, understanding the nature of a phenomenon is the testing of our prejudices against the assertion of that which is to be investigated, which causes a kind of dialectical event. In Gadamer's (1975) terms this event is productive if it yields new meaning. In Ricoeur's (1976) terms, understanding of the phenomenon occurs within a movement from guessing its meaning to a questioning of such guesses by means of explanation, and in this way constructing its meaning. The outcome of this process yields an interpretation as understanding, provided that there are no contradictions. (Ricoeur, (1976) says,

> …it is not true that all interpretations are equal. The text presents a limited field of possible constructions. The logic of validation allows us to move between the two limits of dogmatism and scepticism. It is always possible to argue for or against an interpretation, to confront interpretations, to arbitrate between them and to seek agreement, even if this agreement remains beyond our immediate reach (p.79).

If it is not possible to reach an agreement then the investigation has come to nought (Gadamer, 1975). For Ricoeur, the true meaning of the phenomenon under investigation is the outcome of the interpretative event which results in a comprehension of the meaning of the phenomenon. The assertion of meaning is not merely a product of confirmed projection, neither is it merely an opening of the investigator to what the text asserts, but involves a kind of `judgement'. In Ricoeur's (1976) terms interpretation entails the dialectical processes of understanding (as guess) to explanation, and explanation to comprehension. This entails a dialectic of productive 'distanciation' and 'appropriation', where meaning becomes self-understanding in the form of comprehending new forms of life, or a different mode of being in the world opened up. In Ricoeur's (1976) words,

> Far from saying that a subject already mastering his own way of being in the world projects the a priori of his self understanding on the text and reads it into the text, I say that interpretation is the process by which disclosure of new modes of being…gives the subject a new way of knowing himself (p.94).

The outcome of the research in these terms is an interpretation which aims to do justice to both the motivating concerns of the research, and the data in all its complexity. The interpretation is an offering of possibilities that is a presented understanding of the nature of the researched. It is, in Heidegger's terms, an 'uncovering' of the phenomenon through the research process, an 'uncovering' which answers the `practical or existential concern' that motivated the enquiry in the first place (Packer & Addison, 1989). Through the dialectic of question and answer, the horizon of understanding is enlarged. In Ricoeur's terms (1991, in Valdés), meaning is a new representation, or 'configuration' that emerges from within

interpretation, and is always the meaning of a phenomenon as its meaning for us, in that it (as it did for Plato), expands and changes our vision of reality. Once the 'configuration' of meaning, as the outcome of an interpretive process, has been established, it has its own unity of identity. This representation, or unity, requires, in turn, a new dialectical event of guess and explanation for its meaning to be understood, an understanding which results in a further work of interpretation, and further meaning 'configuration'. This is the evolutionary nature, and undecidability and unsettledness of meaning, which has to be ascertained every time anew with each new situation and circumstance, as each new consideration of meaning provides its own motivating concern.

As an integral part of the interpretative dimension of the entire process, all aspects of the thesis should be viewed as constituents of the interpretative process. The researcher's fore-structures of understanding, and the requirements of thesis writing, both as history, tradition and situational demand, provide a horizon which guides the initial orientation of the research. They also guide the action events in it, as well as its outcome as data, and its literature reviews, all of which provide their own orientations, and generate further questions and new directions. The employment of various approaches, not only as research questions and/or fore-structures of understanding, but as ways of making sense of, and representing what has emerged, becomes evident. The attempt to answer the initial research questions may result in the questions themselves being modified and extended, and the attempt to find an answer provides the questions with a certain meaning. The outcome of the approaches applied are presented as the results of the investigation.

While aspects of the literature review may have been specifically chosen in terms of the researcher's own predilections, as horizon intentionality (the direction of meaning he or she finds him or herself engaged in), others will have been called forth by the analysis of the data itself, which asserts its own meaning. A dialogue, between these aspects of the literature, and the data tends to be explicitly presented in a discussion phase of a piece of research. The discussion phase of the analysis may be regarded as a contextualizing means, or a 'gathering of meaning' (to coin a phrase from the early Greeks), which is a discovery of meaning, given all that has emerged in the investigation, and all that comes to bear some influence upon the understanding of the researcher, given the restraints of the research methods employed. In Ricoeur's (1976) terms questions are themselves guesses, which may or may not prove to be fruitful in terms of what they make possible for understanding. In his terms, guess and validation are processes that occur throughout interpretive enquiry, and are circularly related as `subjective' and `objective' approaches to the text. Validation is the means by which we

test our guesses in terms of something akin to "juridical procedures used in legal interpretation" (Ricoeur, 1976, p.78). In interpretative research, validity should not be confused with empirical validation in the sense of verification as 'objective' proof, but is rather a matter of, what Ricoeur (1976) calls, the `method of converging indices', or, `the logic of subjective probability' (p.79), and of one interpretation being 'more probable' than another. Thus "validation is not verification" (p.78) but is rather, `an argumentative discipline'[1].

Having outlined the way in which method may be thought about from a phenomenological-hermeneutic perspective, it remains to describe its phases in relation to the actual investigation of the piece of art therapy research employed in this study. In line with Gadamer's (1975) prescription for the hermeneutical and methodological priority of the question for any kind of understanding, six research questions were posed which served to guide the second part, *Part Two*, of the research. These questions were posed as follows:

4.2RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What occurs at the level of understanding during the process of creating an image in art therapy?
2. How do patients arrive at an understanding of the image in art therapy?
3. How do therapists arrive at an understanding of the image in art therapy?
4. What is the nature of the understanding that emerges through dialogue, between therapist and patient?
5. What phenomenological- and philosophical-hermeneutic principles are evident in the above understanding of images in art therapy?
6. What implications does this have for thinking and practice in art therapy?

4.3RESEARCHER'S FORE-STRUCTURES OF UNDERSTANDING

The researcher had done an Master's degree in Psychology with the thesis title, The use of art in the diagnosis and treatment of body boundary disturbance in schizophrenia. She had also done an Master's degree in Art Therapy which entailed 1000 hours of internship, which focused on art therapy theory, process and practice. Furthermore, she had had several years of private practice experience at the time of conducting the research, mostly in the field of psychotherapy, but which had incorporated some art therapy. This academic, and field experience had resulted in the researcher coming to regard the image as an objectification of

[1]Here we are reminded of the use of rhetoric, and dialectic, used by the ancient Greeks as a means of ascertaining and conveying the truth.

inner experience, and its meaning as symbolic of psychological meaning, and as a projection of the psyche. She was initially unaware of any role played by the process of understanding itself upon meaning, yet understood that the patient's explanation of his or her images provided a useful clue to their meaning.

Having studied various different psychotherapeutic modalities during her Honours year in Psychology, the researcher was aware that different models existed that proposed different therapeutic approaches. This awareness became heightened with further exposure to different theoretical models in psychotherapy, during a course-work year for a PhD in Psychotherapy. At the time, it seemed that each theoretical model opened a new, or different, possibility for a particular kind of understanding of therapeutic experience, and that it was not a matter of one model being better than another so much as each providing a qualitatively different, yet significant appreciation of the meaning of such experience. The researcher was thus left with a question as to how such different orientations could each seem so viable, plausible and fruitful in terms of therapeutic understanding and practice. Exposure to phenomenology and philosophical hermeneutics, as part of the PhD course-work, introduced the researcher to a form of thinking hitherto unknown to her. Through exploring the avenues of thought opened up by this exposure, and based upon her experience of having adopted different therapeutic lenses for the purpose of understanding psychotherapy, she embarked upon a quest to deepen her understanding, which saw the inception of this investigation and thesis.

4.4SUBJECT AND THERAPIST SELECTION

As the research was concerned with the nature of understanding and meaning in a therapeutic setting, it sought articulate psychlologised respondents and therapists who would be readily able to give voice to their understanding of the art therapy process, and the meaning of images.

The researcher informed various students and members of staff in a psychology department at a university that she planned to conduct research in art therapy. Those interested in art therapy approached the researcher about being potential participants. Out of those who had shown an interest, two practising psychotherapists were chosen for their experience and interest in using art media in therapy, to be therapists in the study. Three post-graduate students, and one undergraduate student were also selected for their interest to be respondents in the study.

All of these respondents were highly articulate, had had some experience with creating their own artwork, were familiar with psychological thinking, and wished to engage in the study as they were interested in art therapy. All four respondents were studying for degrees, ranging from B.A degrees to PhD degrees. Three of the degrees were in the social sciences and one was in the arts. Three of the respondents had had a fairly extensive exposure to their own personal psychotherapy, and were studying in the area. The fourth subject had had less exposure, had studied less in the area, but was married to a psychotherapist. All four respondents and both therapists were interested in the creative process.

The two therapists used in the study were both practising psychotherapists, familiar with the use of art, images, and narratives about images, mainly from their own psychotherapeutic work, but also from their research and teaching interests. The researcher, a practising psychotherapist, having obtained a Master's degree in Art Therapy, related some of the general procedures used in art therapy to the therapists. As the therapists had themselves used art media in their practices, and were familiar with the projective assessment of patients, using tests such as the Goodenough, Draw-A-Person Test, and the Kinetic-Family-Drawing Test, they readily understood the intepretative principles underlying art therapy.

The researcher discussed the intended research procedure with each respondent and the therapist, and all of those selected gave their consent to participate in the planned procedures, which included being audio- and video- recorded. Each participant was told that the aim of the research was to investigate the process of creating and understanding the image in art therapy. They were reassured that artistic talent was not a requirement, and that some confidentiality would be maintained by disguising identifying data, but that they should be willing to disclose some personal information about themselves. Furthermore each respondent was told that they should indicate to the therapist any information that was to remain confidential. It was explained to them that they would be creating images in clay, that the production process would be viewed by therapists from behind a one way mirror and by the researcher in the room, that it would be video-recorded, and that their description and discussion of the process would be audio-recorded.

The researcher's, therapists' and respondents' interests and experience in the field, far from being considered hindrances in terms of researcher, or participant bias, were regarded as important for the research, in that the adequate articulation and development of understanding can only occur from within the perspective of an existing understanding and experience. Furthermore, in line with the assumption that the constituents of human life are events and

entities, which have a significance and status value by virtue of their involvement in human practices, it was believed that these constituents needed to be investigated in such a way as to retain their character of relatedness, and should not be depleted of either context, or relationship to such involvement (Packer & Addison,1989). What was to be avoided was the separation of action and context, as well as action, process, and purpose.

4.5THE METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

The temporal and contextual aspects of the constituents of interest, being those related to the interpretative dimensions of creating and understanding the image in art therapy, can be captured in their complexity by the use of what shall be termed here as 'a slice-of-life technique'. This technique, utilises a segment of human life (in this case the actual creating and understanding of images in an art therapy setting), involves the constituents of interest in action and in process (the understanding of the respondents (patients) and therapists), and is itself a typical example of human therapeutic practice.

Investigating an ongoing, ever evolving process of understanding and experience, with its multiple and implicit dimensions, is akin to a grounded theory approach (Addison in Packer & Addison, 1989; Kvale, 1991). This approach, with its continual interplay between conceptualisation, field work, analyses, and new contacts with the field, is itself related to a grounded hermeneutic approach, which seeks to investigate meaning in terms of lived practice, the implications of thought for such practice, and/or the development of thought from such practice. Both approaches conform to dimensions of human life concerned with creative expression, and understanding the meaning of such expression, and are thus capable of providing a rationale for doing research in a particular way. These approaches, while strictly speaking not always uniform and specific in their prescriptions, nevertheless offer potentially useful guidelines in terms of methodology for research such as this, in its concern with the experiential, interpretative dimensions of art therapy. A grounded approach promises to do justice to lived practice (in the form of art therapy), as well to make possible a way of scrutinising such thought, that influences and evolves from such practice.

4.5.1Preliminary procedure

Initial interview

A specific time was arranged for each therapist to conduct a separate interview with each of two of the respondents. Each interview lasted approximately one, to one-and-a-half hours, in length. The purpose of the interview was to enable the therapist to gain sufficient knowledge about each respondent's psychological issues. This procedure is typical in psychotherapy, and

common in art therapy, where, either an initial 'intake' interview is conducted before proceeding with the therapeutic process, or, where the patient has been referred, and a report (written or verbal) is obtained from another professional. Either way, information about the patient is derived from one source or another and tends to precede, or accompany a patient when they present themselves for art therapy.

As the research aimed to remain close to the phenomenon of actual experience, it sought to create a situation which would be analogous to the way art therapy tends to be practised, but, at the same time, it sought to circumvent certain practical problems related to having to build up sufficient rapport to gain pertinent information. Using psychologized respondents, and experienced therapists, meant that the obtaining of information could occur readily and quickly. Due to the time constraints of the research, given the day to day academic commitments of all concerned, the images to be created would need to be readily understood in therapeutic terms. The information gleaned in the initial interview was not made explicit, nor was it captured as data. In line with a grounded theory approach, it served to ground the therapist in the respondent's psychological world, and served to ground the respondent in the psychological and therapeutic nature of the situation prior to the first procedure.

Unlike a typical art therapy situation, where the context and setting are usually part of a mental health, health care facility, hospital, or private practise setting, in which the patient is not necessarily aware of the diagnostic value of images, research has its own horizon intentionality. This means that the research situation intends to gain particular information related to its motivating concerns, which, in this case, were less to do with therapeutics than to do with issues of meaning and understanding. The use of therapists and respondents who are aware of the nature of the therapeutic interview, the nature of therapeutic interpretation, and the nature and purpose of research studies, creates a situation which, perhaps, inflates the interpretative aspects of art therapy but sees to it that what is being investigated does occur, and that it occurs efficiently. It ensures that what is being investigated is readily available and easily accessible. In terms of grounded theory, the more information, knowledge, and exposure the researcher and participants have at their disposal, including information about the purposes of the research, and what is required of them, the better, in that they are able to respond meaningfully (Addison, in Packer & Addison 1989; Kvale, 1991).

4.5.2Procedure One

To provide a context within which inhibitions could quickly be overcome it was decided to introduce the first procedure with a warm-up, relaxation exercise.

4.5.2.1Warm-up relaxation

All the participants were requested to meet at a certain venue, at a particular time. Coffee and biscuits were offered, and questions were answered. The purpose of this was to enable the respondents to once again familiarise themselves with the procedures and context within which they would be working. Although all concerned had an idea of the nature of the research, and they knew each other casually before its onset, the researcher anticipated a certain amount of tension and anxiety relating to having to make images in front of others. In order to create a relaxed atmosphere, and to entice the respondents into a creative, and playful mode of behaviour, taped music was played, and the respondents were requested to dance for about fifteen minutes to the music with their eyes closed. As the researcher was to be present in the room during the image-production process, she too joined in the dancing. It was suggested to the respondents that they try to get in touch with their inner experience, such as thoughts and feelings, as it was this experience that they would need to be able to account for in the following procedures. The purpose of this instruction was to ensure that the respondents took note of their experiences, which they might otherwise not have purposefully registered. While this introduces an unusual set of circumstances to the beginning phase of an art therapy situation, relaxation, awareness and understanding is often openly encouraged during the course of therapy where the patient is required to concentrate on images, and to disclose feelings and thoughts as a means of communicating inner experience to the therapist.

The respondents were reminded that they would be video-recorded and observed by the therapists from behind a one-way mirror. They were further informed that the researcher would be using a portable video-camera to focus upon aspects of the process in the room while the respondents were working. Thereafter the respondents were seated at a table upon which lumps of clay had already been positioned on boards. This table was positioned alongside a one-way mirror, behind which stood a video-camera and two chairs for the therapists.

4.5.2.2Image production

The therapists, who had been previously told to observe the production procedure from behind the one-way mirror, and to note the manner of engagement, and the kinds of images that were produced by each of the two respondents assigned to them, positioned themselves behind the one-way mirror. The purpose of this was to ensure that the therapists took explicit note of what was occurring during the production process, which is what art therapists typically do, so that they could provide an account of what they observed.

The respondents, as a group, were given the following instruction by the researcher:
"Take your time. Manipulate the clay for a while without being in too much of a hurry to come up with an image".

This instruction was intended to help the respondents relax, and to make them more open to the different possibilities inherent in the clay. To ensure that the respondents were given the opportunity to move easily from the dancing to the art therapy process, the music was continued for a short while in the background. The researcher made herself as inconspicuous as possible, and did not interrupt the respondents as they worked, until later on in the procedure, and then only to tell them how much time was left over. It was decided that an hour and a half would be assigned to the process as this was usually sufficient time to work one idea to completion. It would also provide a time frame within which the respondents needed to work. This is typical of any art therapy situation which, like psychotherapy, tends to have a specific time allotted for sessions.

The respondents were told that if they needed help with technical questions relating to the use of the clay they could ask for it from the researcher. This is typical of an art therapy situation in which the therapist assists with problems encountered in using a medium, or when the creative process is in threat of being disrupted. However, the therapist does not interfere with the choice, or meaning of the images created, until they have been completed. The respondents were also told that they could talk if they wished, but that they should refrain from distracting others too much. As it turned out, the respondents chose not to speak to each other as they worked. The therapists behind the one-way mirror spontaneously recorded their observations in note-form on paper.

The procedure was audio-video-recorded by cameras from behind the one-way mirror, and the researcher video-recorded specific aspects of the working process in the room. The purpose of this was to have a visual record of the *in situ* production process for future reference in case something was not clear, or visually evident, in retrospect, or needed to be understood in terms of the emerging details of the images in the clay. This recording introduced an extraneous element into the typical art therapy situation. Nevertheless, the respondents quickly forgot that they were being recorded. Furthermore, they were fairly familiar with such procedures from their experiences in other research situations.

Once the production process had been completed, each respondent was requested to arrange a specific time with the researcher later in the same day for the purpose of viewing the video-recording of the image production process (*Procedure One*). This was done to ensure that the experience was still fresh in the minds of the respondents, so that they would be able to give an account for it.

Photographs were then taken of the clay images for inclusion as a reference in the thesis.

4.5.3Procedure Two

As the aim of the research was to understand the interpretative dimensions of the process of creating and understanding the image in art therapy it sought a description of the understanding of each therapist and patient.

4.5.3.1Articulating awareness and observations

At the conclusion of the image production procedure the therapists referred to their notes made during the observation from behind the mirror, and each formulated a summary account of the observed process, engaged in by each of their two assigned respondents. The purpose of this was to provide the researcher with an articulated account of the observations made by each of the therapists. In presenting their understanding of the image creation process to the researcher, the therapists explained their notes to her.

At an agreed time, each respondent met individually with the researcher to review the video-recording. Each respondent was instructed to describe what they had remembered doing, thinking and feeling while they had engaged in the process of creating their images. They conveyed this information to the researcher as they watched the recording. The purpose of this was to obtain an account of the respondents' understanding of the process. The researcher clarified what each respondent seemed to be saying by confirming with the respondent what she had heard them to mean at any given moment. Each respondent's description of the process, including the researcher's comments were audio-recorded.

The researcher had attempted to adopt a `phenomenological' attitude in listening to what each respondent had to say about their experience. This entailed a stance of wishing to learn from the respondent about the nature of his or her experience, as opposed to too readily jumping to conclusions. The researcher wished to be open to the respondents' meaning of the experience, and did this by approaching the phenomenon with the implicit question 'what is this, and what does it mean?' in terms of the respondents' intended meaning. The expression of meaning

conveyed in each respondent's articulation of their experience, was a starting point for the ensuing discovery of meaning.

4.5.4Procedure Three

As the image in art therapy comes to be understood in a situation shared by a therapist and patient, who frequently discuss issues of meaning between them, a situation needed to be created within which shared meaning occurred, that could be articulated and made explicit. While the second procedure had served to elicit the participants' descriptions of experience

as meaning, *Procedure Three* sought to elicit the lived exchange of meaning between therapist and patient.

4.5.4.1Therapist-subject dialogue

Each therapist negotiated a suitable time with each of their assigned respondents, for the same, or the next day, to meet privately to discuss the image production process, and the meaning of the respondent's images. Prior to the onset of the discussion the therapists had been told to give an instruction to each of the respondents as follows:

> It is often assumed that an artwork says something about the person who made it. I wonder what your image means? Lets discuss its possible meanings together.

The purpose of this instruction was also to be able consider the idea that true understanding occurs in a dialogical exchange, and in a reaching of agreement about meaning. The instruction also implicitly sanctioned the articulation, and an exchange of meaning, for the therapists who may have been used to deferring to only their patient's meaning. The ensuing dialogue was audio-recorded.

4.6THE DATA

4.6.1Data Sources

The procedures adopted in the methodology yielded several possible data sources, namely: the therapist's understanding from the initial therapist-respondent interview, the video-recording of the process of creating the images, the respondent's audio-taped description of the process to the researcher that was prompted by the video-recording, the therapists' notes taken while watching the process from behind the one-way mirror, and their subsequent description of their observations to the researcher, and the tape-recorded dialogue between each therapist and respondent pair.

4.6.2Data selection and preparation

Those data sources which yielded specific information about the therapists' and respondents' understanding of the creative process, and the meaning of the images, in line with the research questions, were included for analysis. Data from the initial interview between respondent and therapist was not included, neither was the video-recording, as the research sought data relevant to the interpretative dimensions of the art therapy process itself, which entails the creation, and understanding of images.

As the intention was to retain the personal, experiential and particular nature, and content of each participants' experience, the audio-recordings from the second and third procedures (*Procedure One* and *Procedure Two)* were initially transcribed verbatim.

4.6.3Conversion of the data into written accounts

As notes and written speech, the information gathered was not always clear, as it was riddled with redundancies such as incomplete, broken and repeated sentences and phrases, intonations, pauses and interjections. This detracted from the sense and intelligibility of the respondents' and therapists' accounts. Unlike the possibilities for a clarification of meaning that does occur in the speech between hearer and speaker, such writing, as communication, had lost certain clues to the speaker's intended meaning. The sense and meaning of the speech events needed to be conveyed rather than the manner in which the event of speaking itself occurred. A rearrangement of the structural elements of speech was thus made, for the purpose of conveying its sense more effectively. The removal of redundancies and repetitions in the transcribed speech was a first step in this process. The rearrangement of the transcribed speech elements, to facilitate meaningful written expression was a further step.

While the data of this research, in written form, is not rinsed free of the researcher's understanding of a verbally reported or notational account, it nevertheless remains faithful to the content and wording used by the protagonists. It thus remains close to the way the phenomenon of interest originally presented itself, as either the subjectively lived process of creating and understanding the image, the subjectively lived process of observing and understanding the creation of the image, or, the inter-subjective process of sharing understanding that the respondents and therapists participated in together. Such a conversion should itself be seen as a type of `alienation' or `objectification' from pre-reflective, on-going experience, in that it required decisions about what was relevant and what was redundant, as well as how to translate speaking into grammatically accurate, written language. For the

purposes of `fixing' the data in communicable form in the thesis, it became written language freed from the interpretative aids of a way of speaking, the tone of voice, the tempo, and significant pauses, silences and emphases. It was also freed from the context within which it was originally spoken. Now it required to be read for its meaning to be released. In the words of Gadamer (1975),

> All writing is…a kind of alienated speech, and its signs need to be transformed back into speech and meaning. Because the meaning has undergone a kind of self-alienation through being written down, this transformation back is the real hermeneutical task. The meaning of what has been said is to be stated anew, simply on the basis of the words passed on by means of the written signs (pp.354-355).

What is meant by this, in Ricoeur's (1976) terms is that,

> With writing, the verbal meaning of the text no longer coincides with the mental meaning or intention of the text. This intention is both fulfilled and abolished by the text, which is no longer the voice of someone present. The text is mute. An asymmetric relation obtains between text and reader, in which only one of the partners speaks for the two. The text is like a musical score and the reader like the orchestra conductor who obeys the instructions of the notation. Consequently, to understand is not merely to repeat the speech event in a similar event, it is to generate a new event beginning from the text in which the initial event has been objectified.

In these terms, the written description of the event of creating an image, and a speaking about it, needs to be distinguished from it as a lived experience. Once the event had been translated into a written description it took on the identity of a text, and could be understood differently from the way it was originally intended by the protagonists. The written message has its own finite possibilities of meaning. What was done and said in a speech event, and what was meant by the participants, does not wholly coincide with the written account of it. Similarly, once an event has been reduced to writing, it is no longer tied to a particular temporal or historical context, but takes on a new identity as a text, which can be deciphered from a new perspective. In Ricoeur's (1976) terms,

> …it may be said…that understanding is to reading what the event of discourse is to the utterance of discourse and that explanation is to reading what the verbal and textual autonomy is to the objective meaning of discourse. A dialectical structure of reading therefore corresponds to the dialectical structure of discourse (pp.71-72).

What is said and what is meant inform one another, in that, to "understand the utterer's meaning and to understand the utterance meaning constitute a circular process" (Ricoeur,

1976, p.74). What the respondents and therapists said about the creation and meaning of the images did not constitute some kind of absolute, or final meaning, but constituted the `subjective' pole of the research which needed to be questioned and deciphered by being explained. Interpretation needed to occur in order that the meaning and relevance of the respondents' and therapists' accounts of their experience for the motivating concerns of the research could be ascertained.

4.6.4Grouping of the data

The data was grouped into three data bases which roughly coincided with the procedural sequences. The first data base was derived from a recounting of the experience of creating and understanding the image by the respondents. This constituted *Data Base 1*. The understanding derived from the observations of the image production process made by the therapists from behind the one-way mirror constituted *Data Base 2*. The discussions between each therapist-respondent pair, after the images had been created, was captured in a transcribed dialogue form, and constituted *Data Base 3* (see *Appendix)*.

In seeking to answer the first research question: What occurs at the level of understanding during the process of creating an image in art therapy? it will be seen that all the data sources were ultimately covered. In seeking to answer the second and third research questions: How do patients (respondents) arrive at an understanding of the image in art therapy?, and, How do therapists arrive at an understanding of the image in art therapy?, it will be seen that the respondents' experience-near descriptions (*Data Base 1*) and the therapists' observations (*Data Base 2*), as well as certain re-descriptions of the image production process in the first part of the dialogues (*Data Base 3)* were covered. The third research question: What is the nature of the understanding that emerges through dialogue, between the patient and therapist?, the dialogues were covered (*Data Base 3*). The fifth research question: What phenomenological-and philosophical- hermeneutic principles are evident in the above understanding of the image in art therapy? was answered in the way the researcher was able to formulate a method of investigation, and was able to understand the data. More specifically it was answered throughout the *Discussion* phase of the analysis in the types of explanation given, except where specific reference was made to other theoretical approaches. The sixth, and final question What implications does this have for art therapy? was answered in the *Conclusions* section of the thesis.

4.6.5Conveying the experiential nature of the data

For the purpose of addressing the research questions, by capturing the experiential dimension

of the image production process in its lived aspects, with all its uniqueness, richness, and in its various dimensions, and for the purpose of conveying this to the reader, the respondents' accounts were presented as present tense, experience-near, first person descriptions. It was decided that a first order, present tense account engages the reader differently by presenting the data as if it were currently being lived. It thus highlights the experiential aspects of the data. Furthermore, conveying the data in the present tense made it possible for the researcher, and now reader, to have a better opportunity to follow, and more effectively engage with the lived aspects of the process, in spite of the experience having been converted, or `fixed', in the form of a written account. The understanding of the therapists. on the other hand, was put into the third person in order to convey its nature as an observation.

4.6.6Converting the recorded data into a written account

The conversion of experience into a written account involved a transformation of that experience. Converting lived experience influences the meaning status of original experience in various ways. For instance, while the use of a video-recording of the process of creating the image served both to capture on record what would otherwise have been lost as lived action, and more importantly served to prompt the memory of the respondents, the video recording itself presented the experience of creating images in a visually objectified form. This should be seen as something different from the here-and-now, lived-in-the-present experience of the process. Furthermore, while it was evident from the recorded and transcribed data that the respondents and therapists were able to describe the experience after the event, it was not the event, as event, which was available for analysis. It was the speech events converted into written descriptions which were analysed. As Ricoeur (1991) explains in his 'model of a text', once a description of experience is written down in a sensible, communicable, readable form, it becomes a text, which is something tangible, fixed, and circumscribed in terms of its possibilities of meaning. It also becomes a unit as something which has a beginning, a middle, and an end, unlike lived experience. This text requires a decoding in the form of a reading, if sense is to be made of it. As a text it becomes capable of investigation and analysis.

In the research, what originally belonged to the respondents and therapists, in the form of a subjectively lived experience, became spoken and heard, then written down. In this way it provided the opportunity for communication and transmission of information from one context to the next. What had once been a lived experience became something `fixed' and tangible, and thus capable of analysis.

The expressive intentions of the participants to convey a certain understanding was surpassed by what the written words could now possibly mean to the researcher and the reader. This conversion entailed the researcher making sense of the words of the participants by understanding what they might possibly refer to. This understanding was the researcher's rather than that of the participants. Yet the two are closely related as they shared a common experience, and a common language, in a common world with its circumscribed possibilities for meaning.

Articulation as description, in `fixed' form, is a first and necessary phase in the analysis of meaning process, and is already a type of interpretation. The descriptive accounts by the respondents and therapists, as the data, for instance, was an interpretative outcome. This outcome was, however, not yet true meaning. In needing to take its place within the particular context of this research, and ultimately the world of art therapy, this meaning (as the descriptive accounts of experience), while remaining faithful to the form of expression of the respondents and therapists in terms of descriptive words, had yet to be `interrogated' in terms of its possibilities of meaning for the research, and for art therapy in general. This means that the questions brought to bare on the descriptive accounts, and their features, were not questions the respondents and therapists would have posed, or could best answer. As meaning for art therapy, meaning in the descriptive accounts was not something already self evident, but was in need of discovery. The creation of meaning through an application and mediation of the descriptive accounts by the research questions, and by other related suggestions of meaning would be the meaning for this study, and ultimately art therapy in general.

4.6.7Phases of textual interpretation

Ricoeur divides hermeneutical investigation into two distinct phases, the first he terms the `semantic' stage, and the second the `reflective stage' (Ricoeur, in Bleicher, 1980, p.250). In terms of the methodological procedures employed in this study it would serve well to consider what Ricoeur himself has to say about the analysis of the data (as text). In speaking of the initial phase of understanding as, ‘a naive grasping of the text as a whole’, the text (data) needs to be grasped as a `unity', albeit a `unity' made up of different parts. These parts appear as `primary and secondary topics', that have a relationship to one another and to the whole. There is already an assumption of a certain kind of whole implied in the recognition and construing of the parts, and reciprocally, in construing the parts, the whole is construed. In his terms, “there is no necessity, no evidence, concerning what is important and what is unimportant. The judgement of importance is itself a guess” (Ricoeur, 1976, p.77). The process of discovery of the parts, and discovery of the whole, is itself the construction of a

text as an ‘individual’: as a unique construction. Even where such construction is produced, “according to generic (and genetic) rules” (p.78), the structure produced has its own `individuality'. Deciding on the structure is a process of definition. This means that deciding what the parts are, of the whole, is itself a construction rather than a mere discovery of what is already there. “Concretely, the work of discourse, as this unique work, can only be reached by a process of narrowing down the scope of generic concepts”, (Ricoeur, 1976, p.78) which according to Ricoeur, is deciding what the phenomenon under investigation is, and what it is made up of, and in so doing circumscribing its possibilities of meaning. Ricoeur refers to this as a ‘localization’ and ‘individualization’ of the text which he maintains is also a guess. He says, “The text as a whole and as a singular whole may be compared to an object, which may be viewed from several sides, but never from all sides at once” (Ricoeur, 1976, p.77).

In reconstructing the whole, implicit to this construction, in Ricoeur's (1976) terms, is some or other perspectival aspect. He refers to a ‘onesidedness’ implied in the act of reading, which serves to ‘ground’ the guess character of interpretation. Furthermore, a text involves, “potential horizons of meaning, which may be actualised in different ways” (p.78). The horizons of potential meaning, which surrounds all perceived objects, opens the text to several ‘readings’, but these readings are “ruled by the prescriptions of meaning belonging to the margins of potential meaning surrounding the semantic nucleus of the work” (p.78). In other words, there is a context of potential meaning, that surrounds, and circumscribes the semantic meaning, yet such potentials are confined by the particular work itself. These prescriptions also have to be ‘guessed’ before they can “rule the work of interpretation” (Ricoeur, 1976, p.78).

In terms of this investigation, the image may be viewed from a variety of visual, theoretical, and philosophical perspectives, and thus has different potentials for meaning, yet these are confined by the prescrptions of meaning belonging to art therapy, and to the questions posed in the research situation.

4.6.8Stages of analysis

As a first stage of analysis the data was read through several times in order to get a sense of its meaning as a whole. This is typical of an approach to analysis based upon the principle of the hermeneutic circle which, “involves a circular consideration of both the whole and its parts” (Brown, et al, in Packer & Addison, 1989, p.144). Thereafter the data was read with a view to ascertaining its particular features. During this second reading, various features,

aspects and dimensions were noticed in the data, including what appeared to be a developmental sequence, or process. In line with Ricoeur's (1976) proposal, that the process of reading entails a dialectical relationship between `guess' and `validation', what had occurred to the researcher in this reading, needed to be identified and formulated. It, then, either needed to be applied as a perspective or way of approaching, or reading the data, by looking at it again with the particular feature in mind, or it needed to be related to existing understanding, theory, or paradigms of thought for its `validation'.

In order to explore the particularities of the nature of the data, the first two data sources were initially broken up into categories, dimensions or themes which were underlined as they emerged as discrete aspects, or features, in the reading of the data. Underlined aspects were compared to each other with a view to deciding upon their particular nature. Category names were devised to identify the common features of groups of underlined aspects that had emerged out of this process. The features and dimensions that became isolated in this way, and thus highlighted, were those that had occurred to the researcher, as her `guess' about the constituents of the data, and which she was now able to name. These constituents were compared across the respondents' and therapists' descriptive accounts to see whether they were applicable across cases, and whether the names and types of categories decided upon were comprehensive enough to capture the data as a whole, and in terms of its nature. In this way it became apparent that there were numerous aspects to the descriptive data that needed to be accounted for in answering the research questions. While, upon consideration, these identified categories appeared to have some kind of relationship to one another, the nature of this relationship had not yet been worked out.

While the underlining and identification of themes and dimensions had served to alert the researcher to the complexity of the data, and made possible an isolation of its individual aspects and parts, it was clear that choosing a category and naming it was itself an interpretative act which had served to colour the particularities of the data in one way rather than another. This had thus pre-empted the suggestion and emergence of a certain kind of meaning, while downplaying others. Categories became meaningful, not only in their capacity to capture and convey dimensions in the data, but also in their capacity to stimulate thoughts about how they might relate to issues that were raised in the first part of the thesis. Thus, once these categories became established as they started to become recognised in terms of their relationship to one another, and in terms of their theoretical relevance, as well as in their meaning in terms of the researcher's fore-structures of understanding. While the process of determining themes and dimensions was a necessary part of a structural analysis, had these

themes not been brought back to the theoretical concerns of the research, there was a danger of the division of the data into its constituent parts becoming "a sterile game, a divisive algebra," (Ricoeur, 1976, p.87).

What had emerged from this phase of the analysis was the possibility of seeing in the data something relevant to both lived experience and to various theoretical issues. On the part of the respondents, what had been discovered across cases and over the course of the process of image production (*Data Base 1a,b,c,d*), included various phases, such as: experiencing the situation; discovering unsolicited images in thought and in the clay; becoming aware of personally relevant issues; a deepening of engagement with a certain realisation of meaning; and self-identification with the image. What occurred across cases on the part of the therapists *(Data Base 2a,b,c,d*) was a process of observing actions, images, and the nature of the respondents' engagement, and making connections between such observations and what was already known about the respondents from the initial, therapeutic interview, and from the perspective of clinical experience and theory.

4.6.8.1The phenomenological phase of the analysis

This first stage of the analysis may be called the phenomenological phase, as it sought to allow the data, as descriptions of lived experience, to largely dictate what seemed relevant as part of its own constitution. This phase can be seen to answer the implicit question of what constituted the data, in terms of both its nature and dimensions, rather than the question of what it meant for art therapy. Although phenomenological, in the sense of being descriptive of actual lived experience, this phase does not adhere to the methodological steps advocated by phenomenologists such as Giorgi (1975), who seek to develop situated and general structures from meaning units derived from a description of the phenomenon under investigation (de Koning, 1979, in Giorgi, Knowles & Smith). As discussed in *Part One* of this thesis, such procedures, or steps, develop from the belief that meaning is already given in experience, and its articulation, and is to be equated with the structure of a phenomenon as that which is common in the perception of different minds, or common in the descriptions of different people's experiences of a particular phenomenon (in other words that which is already given and invariable as *noema*). In making a different assumption, that the means of description such as words and categories, in this first phase of analysis, are themselves configurating structures which show experience in a particular way, and that understanding these structures requires a further work of interpretation of their meaning (if meaning is to be released), then meaning units, as components of the experience of a phenomenon, cannot be regarded as equivalent to lived experience, or as ultimate meaning. Meaning units are

interpretations reliant upon the structure of language which is `plurivocal' (Ricoeur, 1991, in Blamey and Thompson). A further work of interpretaton is required to decide what is meant, given the context of the investigation, if meaning units are to be understood in the light of the motivating concerns of the research.

4.6.8.2The hermeneutic-phenomenological phase of the analysis

An approach to the data in terms of its meaning for the research, and ultimately for art therapy, constitutes the hermeneutic-phenomenological phase, or the discussion and conclusion phases of the analysis which follow on from the phenomenological phase. It is in this phase, that the analysis attempts to explain, rather than merely describe and categorise the data, this time in terms of its meaning for the research questions, and in the light of what has emerged as philosophical or theoretical meaning, and the data. It does so, both in terms of what has become evident through the first phase of the analysis, and in terms of issues raised in the first part (*Part One)* of the thesis.

The overall understanding of the data, in terms of theory and the research questions, will be seen to have evolved with each subsequent procedure and its analysis, and, is ultimately derived from a synthesis of various sources of information, reflection, and the construction of meaning. As such, the outcome of the research can be termed `grounded hermeneutic research' in that the researcher exposed herself to various sources of meaning prior to, within, and during the process while formulating an account, and continually reworked the account in her understanding of it. The presented account should thus be seen as the outcome of a whole interpretative work that occurred during the process of understanding, that, it can be argued, is never final, as the data can be continually reworked in the light of philosophical, theoretical, and practical concerns. This account, as thesis, occurred both in terms of the kinds of questions posed to the data and in terms of the researcher's understanding, which changed with continuing exposure, synthesis and reformulation. Furthermore, the understanding of the future readers of this thesis, will also change its meaning. As readers change, and the context surrounding their interest in the material changes, so will the way the understanding of this piece of research, change.

The discussion phase of the analysis proceeds from the assumption that establishing true meaning is an interpretative exercise, which enables experience to take on meaning in thought, and thought to open up experience in terms of suggesting possibilities for future action. By grounding theory in lived experience, theory becomes concretized and meaningful. By grounding experience in theory, it takes on a deeper meaning. In other words, by setting

up a dialectic between theory (as a means of thinking), and experience (as something lived), a grounded understanding of both occurs. It was within the reverberation between what was given to the researcher for understanding, in the form of reported experience, what was made available by modes of thought in *Part One* of the thesis, and what became possible in terms of meaning in the interchange of the two, that understanding occurred.

4.7DECIDING THE VALIDITY OF MEANING AS OUTCOME

The presented meaning of this thesis will require a further reading, as a mediating synthesis of reader and thesis text, for its meaning to be released. This meaning is not the meaning intended by the researcher, except in so far as the reader and researcher share in a community of meaning, but is the meaning for the reader and his or her concerns.

What is presented in the conclusion phase of the research, should be seen as a configuration, or product of a 'mediating synthesis', as a creative gathering of meaning into a form, or composition, with its own structure. In other words, the conclusion is a product, as outcome, of the articulation of understanding that occurs in this thesis. This is one of numerous possible meaning constructions, given the material and the means for its dissemination. This does not mean that its meaning is the researcher's reading, or construction, as a subjective expression of meaning. True meaning is not a purely solipsistic account, but necessarily takes a place in the coherence of context both known and created, and the surrounding context of the given world which includes existing knowledge and acceptable ways of thinking and constructing meaning. Furthermore, meaning here, also lies in its reception by a broader research community who ultimately decides its plausibility.

This is not to say that true meaning foregoes being able to think differently from what has already been thought before, as constructed meaning given in the world. True meaning is a new synthesis that enables a community of readers to locate themselves in that which is presented for thought, without contradiction. It relates to the capacity of a construct of meaning to fit into both a particular and a general context, which includes what is given as the world, what is known about it in thought, but also, and most importantly, what is possible as the yet to be seen. Here, the notion of the discovery and understanding of a phenomenon that has a place in an all encompassing context, in which everything relates to

everything else, is implied. In reality this is not possible, due to the limitations of a vision which cannot think everything at once: a vision that is multi-dimensional.

A phenomenological-hermeneutic investigation gives credence both to experience and what it can possibly mean. It is thus necessary to ensure that a true dialogue exists between what is given in experience, and what is possible in thought. Events and their meaning constitute a dialectic in which event informs meaning, and meaning informs event, without the one being overridden by the other. Collapsing the dialectic in the direction of experience might mean, that having identified the experience, the discovery and creation of a deeper (or hidden) meaning are sacrificed. Collapsing the dialectic in the direction of thought might mean insufficiently grounding thought, or theory, in concrete, lived experience. It may also mean adopting too prescriptive a theoretical approach that blindly forces the data into its anticipated categories of meaning. What is accepted here, is that a danger lies in foreclosing on what perception and experience have to teach, as well as foreclosing on what reflection and theory may generate in terms of a deeper, truer understanding of meaning.

An awareness of the types of issues, complexities, and implications of different approaches for the discovery and construction of meaning, forearms and forewarns the researcher, and now reader, of the possibility of the outcome of this research becoming the product of either an incomplete, or a vicious circle, where discovery does not sufficiently inform thought (in which case the investigation will not be taken far enough), or alternatively, where theoretical prejudice will be merely confirmed (in which case the investigation stands in danger of being implausible). The phenomenological pole of the dialectic, will be protected by attempting to remain faithful to the reported experience of the therapists and respondents in this study. The hermeneutic pole will be instated by interrogating this described experience from the point of view of selected theory (referred to in *Part One* of the thesis), particularly that of phenomenological- and philosophical-hermeneutic thought, and interrogating it from the perspective of the researcher's evolving ideas which set up their own interpretative framework.

By setting up a dialectic between chosen paradigms of thought, and the particularities and details of lived experience, a ground for the discovery and creation of true meaning becomes possible. The meeting of the particular with the general, the concrete with the paradigmatic, provides the opportunity for the discovery of meaning, which, while grounded, and thus more readily grasped, opens up possibilities for thought and action. What is to be discovered is not only the meaning of what is given as understanding of the experience under review, but how this understanding may itself come to be thought about, and thus employed for future action. In other words, it is not only the respondents' and therapists' descriptions and observations, as articulated understanding, that is of importance for this study, but also what they could

possibly mean beyond what the respondents and therapists thought, and had to say about them. The importance of meaning ultimately lies in how art therapy may be fruitfully thought about and conducted. It is only in this sense that meaning can be true meaning, as that which finds its rightful place in the context and expressions of life.

CHAPTER FIVE
RESULTS

5.1INTRODUCTION

5.1.1The outcome of the methodological procedures

The research process yielded descriptive accounts of each respondent's memories, thoughts and actions while in the process of creating images in clay in an art therapy situation. It also yielded an account of each therapist's observations and understanding of what they had seen in watching the respondents produce their images. Furthermore, it yielded a variety of clay images, and the disclosure of personal issues and concerns pertaining to each of the respondents. It also resulted in the discovery of a meaningful relationship between such issues, concerns and the clay images: a discovery which led to an understanding of how the respondents related to the situations they found themselves in, both in the research and outside it, and to the discovery of certain possibilities for future action and relationship to themselves and the world. This seemed to come about as a result of the respondents and therapists coming to understand the respondents' situations in terms of the particular issues and images that had emerged in the research: an understanding which accrued over the course of all the methodological procedures.

Outcome, as data, analysis of data, and interpretation of data, has the capacity to inform and change understanding of the phenomenon under investigation, as well as the capacity to inform theory. Identifying and determining the nature of the particular givens of the art therapy situation set up by the research, by identifying them in the *Results*, and explaining them in the *Discussion*, by determining their relationship to one another with the help of theory, sets the ground for answering the research questions. Description of the phenomenon under review, and its interpretation, serves to determine meaning, and meaning in turn informs the understanding of action, both past and future. Understanding the interpretative dimensions of art therapy can thus be informed by the research action adopted, which has served to make it possible to discover and articulate meaning.

The validity of the results takes the form of probability given the context from which they emerge, and their replication is expected to be approximate. Approximation is considered to be the only level of reliability available to qualitative research methods as events are comprehended somewhat differently by different inquirers (Fischer & Wertz, 1979, in Giorgi, Knowles & Smith). The results, like everything else in the research are, in Ricoeur's terms,

party to guesswork in that there is no one way to approach the data. The fruitfulness of this guesswork lies in a capacity to do justice to the data and what it suggests.

In terms of the phenomenological-hermeneutic focus of the analysis these results remain grounded in descriptive accounts, and serve as a link between the data, philosophical thought, and theory for the purpose of answering the research questions. As previously stated, it is necessary to ground thought in experience and experience in thought in order that the meaning of both thought and experience may become clearer. A description of lived process thus needs to be mediated by what is suggested as meaning. Furthermore, as features of each of the research procedures are to be found in the others, there could be unnecessary duplications of suggestions of meaning. It becomes necessary, therefore, to extract what is salient and to treat the results with as little duplication as possible.

The results can be readily organized into three areas which correspond to the methodological procedures, namely 1) the process of image production, 2) the articulation process, and 3) the dialogical process. The results attempt to be descriptive of the particularities of described experience, expressed meaning, action content, and the evolution of understanding articulated by the respondents and therapists, as well as suggestions for meaning in terms of the researcher's understanding. As the results need to be largely descriptive of the complex phenomenology of an interpretative experience, what occurs at the meta, and theoretical level, will be explained in the discussion phase of the analysis. What is important is that what has emerged as the outcome of certain research procedures, can be described in its multi-levelled, or multi-dimensional, evolutionary nature which will be seen to have certain roots in a time before the research itself was implemented, and which extends beyond it into the future, in terms of its continued possibilities for meaning and potential influence upon action.

5.2UNDERSTANDING DURING THE PROCESS OF IMAGE PRODUCTION

5.2.1The respondent's perspective

How the respondents experienced the image production process became known through their subsequent articulations of what had happened. These articulations describe in detail what the respondents were thinking and feeling during the process of producing clay images. They were prompted by a video-recording of that process, and were clarified with the researcher, through a process of questioning and verification of what the respondents had to say about it. The substance of this articulation is conveyed in the experience-near descriptions in *Appendix One* of the thesis.

5.2.1.1Experiencing the situation

The respondents had been told they should first experience the clay and not decide on an image too quickly. This they were clearly able to do. Each respondent was to describe the qualities of the clay in relation to its experienced sensations, and they were able to describe their own actions and wishes. One respondent, for instance, referred to the clay being cold, clammy and wet, as he embedded his fingers into it. He was able to describe his desire to immerse all sides of his hands, and to give the clay a good squeeze.

At this phase in the process, the respondents did not have an explicit sense of meaning beyond an awareness of the physical sensations and tactile qualities they were experiencing, and an awareness of the group situation they found themselves in. The clay was simply clay, which, for instance, felt cold, seemed resistant, or soothing and yielding. The presence of others in the group was either an imposition to be ignored, or at times, an inspiration for further ideas and images to create.

This seems to suggest that the respondents were aware of the expectations of the situation, understood its injunctions, and oriented themselves accordingly. What was made available to them appeared to be readily co-opted by them in terms of their own capacities for response, whether that was the instruction given, the medium of the clay, or what they perceived around them, such as the others in the group, and others' emerging images. Thus, what was a situation common to all the respondents, became adopted and personalized for each of them in terms of their particular responses to it, and within it.

5.2.1.2Discovering unsolicited images in thought and in the clay

As they manipulated the clay, the respondents found various unsolicited images emerging in thought, memory, and in the clay. These included remembered former events, current issues, and imaginative situations, and experiences of a bodily nature. For instance, one respondent imagined his whole body being enveloped by the clay as he stuck his fingers into it, and also remembered an image he had made in a former clay workshop. He discovered that the rounded clay form he was working on first looked like a mushroom or pizza, with a phallic knob on it, then like a flower-shape, and thereafter an enveloping female, genital form. Another discovered a shape like a spine with two wings, which at moments looked like a frog, and at others like a bird or a mask. He found a round base, and then thought of a little chamber within which to keep the small forms he had made. After looking at someone else's image, he thought of a wooden sculpture, a boomerang-shape he had previously seen which he now wished to create. Another, after finding herself wanting to wedge the clay as she had

done before when making pottery, noticed an aspect of the clay which looked like an elephant trunk. This reminded her of a clay elephant at her home, and another on television. This helped her decide that she wanted to make an elephant-like form in the clay. A fourth, after bumping her hands against the cold clay, trying to make it warm, found herself suddenly thinking of a volcano shape she wanted to make.

This suggests that both the physical manipulations of the clay, and perceptions of the tactile, visual and formative qualities of the clay, brought forth memories and associations, and an awareness of similar, and familiar responses, shapes and situations, as well as improbable imaginative scenarios, related to the bodily experience of the respondents. The respondents thus seemed to discover, and were somehow reminded of, what was both familiar, and what was possible. This discovery included being able to identify actions, shapes, and situations, as something unanticipated, yet familiar, and which related to themselves and their lives. It also included being able to utilise what had been identified as a suggestion for further action.

5.2.1.3Becoming aware of personally relevant issues

During the process of manipulating the clay, thoughts about various issues seemed to also emerge spontaneously. One respondent, while creating a phallic knob in the clay, felt uncomfortable with it, and was reminded about a current, personal issue relating to a friend who had recently died of AIDS. He remembered their student days together, and he found himself disturbed by the thought that someone who had previously been close to him, and been heterosexual, could become homosexual, contract AIDS and die. This brought up the prospect of an unknown future, and the potential for change of the self. Another, after using bits of clay, and finding lots of different little, non-significant forms, thought about his own creative process, both in relationship to a thesis he was currently writing, and in relationship to what he felt to be unsatisfactory about his own personal creative style. A third, thought of wanting to be by herself so that others would not see what she was making. She realized she wanted something `worthwhile' that would be worthy of interpretation, yet remembered that she was being watched, and thought of the negative things that were being seen which related to a sexual abuse experience in the past. A fourth thought of how past experience returns and re-emerges in the present, and of how time constraints interfered in her life, which she experienced as always being in a rush.

5.2.1.4Responding at a pre-reflective level of engagement

Rather than orchestrating what was occurring, the respondents had found themselves caught up in particular memories, and thoughts about issues. It was as though they had discovered

what they felt concerned about in association with their actions upon, and perceptions of, the clay. There was a sense of being a spectator in a process of discovery that emerged as if involuntarily. While they knew it was they themselves who were thinking about such issues, and feeling and acting upon the clay, they seemed to be mere witnesses to their own actions, and to the emergence of images, and thoughts.

What this suggests is that at this stage in the process there was no conscious intention, or awareness of agency for the respondents, in the sense of actively knowing what they wanted to think, express, or create. They found themselves already perceiving and responding in a certain way, before actively thinking about it. This way, while unintended, and unanticipated (at least in particular terms) was, nevertheless, meaningful and familiar in certain respects to them, and they knew it to be their own. This suggests a level of intention or understanding that was occurring at an unconscious, or implicit level, in a manner suggestive of a pre-reflective level of engagement. Alternatively, it suggests that it was not possible for them to

grasp and understand their experience before being confronted by its concrete details in the form of identified awareness.

5.2.1.5A deepening of engagement with a certain realization of meaning

The respondents' engagement in the process seemed to deepen once they became aware of the situation in terms of their own thoughts and actions, and aware that some kind of connection existed between what they had found themselves creating, and what they were thinking and feeling. This took the form of seeing the clay respond to their actions and thoughts, and discovering a particular image that appeared meaningful to them in terms of expressing something significant in their lives. Having made this connection, the respondents, became more seriously engaged in the process, and were actively concerned about getting the image to show and express what it seemed to suggest as being of importance to them. They began to feel a sense of agency, intention and responsibility for what was emerging, and were disappointed and frustrated when the clay would not comply with their expectations and efforts.

One respondent, having at first stood back from the clay, and having used only his finger tips, rolled up his sleeves, took off his ring, and began to use the entire surface of his hands. He had come to realise that the little images he had made were something akin to `early elaborations', with little grounding or direction, that signified the way he tended to set out in relation to all the creative projects in his life. He realized that these treasured 'frills' could be

of some value to the end creative product. Another, having manipulated the clay, and suddenly knowing what she wanted to make, felt she had become `one' with the clay. A third, having recognised the effects of her hands' imprints upon the clay discovered a strong need to create a naturalness. A fourth, having imagined himself enveloped in the clay, wanted to create a `big' enfolding form to express a sense of peace and containment.

What this suggests is that the respondents began to find themselves drawn into a situation where they became increasingly aware of a sense of significance about that which they were creating, and the expression of it became important to them. A certain urgency now seemed to develop. What this suggests is that the respondents had given themselves over to some or other meaningful experience, that fully engaged them in the task of its expression.

5.2.1.6Self-identification with the image

At a early stage in the production process, the respondents had been aware of their actions, thoughts and images from a more emotionally removed, or observational position of interest, but had then come to feel wholly and personally implicated in all that was occurring, and in terms of how the image looked, and what it seemed to suggest. When the respondents' focus of attention had been entirely engaged by the clay, or their memories and thoughts, they had not been aware of feeling responsible for what was occurring as they lost themselves in the clay, memory or observation. In a sense they were their images, and, likewise their images were them, and together they partook in the quality of feeling and expression that seemed to have been provided by the situation, rather than having been caused by them. At such moments there was no sense of being able to account for themselves. They were completely absorbed by whatever their attention was focused on. However, when they caught sight of themselves in action, and when they remembered that they were instrumental in what was occurring, and that the images were interpretable, they found themselves adopting the position of a judging, interpreting audience. As one respondent said, she was aware of all the `images' the therapist would be thinking about, and that others could `see' these shameful things in her image. As a result she felt ashamed and exposed, and that her image was `unhideable' and `not right'.

Having discovered something significant in their experience that seemed related to the images, and related to themselves, the respondents now felt thoroughly invested in, and identified with the process and with the images that were emerging out of it. The way they felt about themselves tended to relate to what they thought about the images. Furthermore, the way they thought others saw these images now related to what they thought about themselves.

A non-compliance of the clay, for instance, and a failure of the image to look right, resulted in a frustration with the self, a sense of exposure, and, in one case, a total disruption of the creative process with the wish to leave. Similarly, a pleasing impression of the clay, or image, was accompanied by a sense of satisfaction, pleasure and pride. In her identification with the image, one respondent, for instance, was to leave the situation with a strong sense of having left part of herself behind. The other respondents, by contrast, ended the process with a sense of satisfaction, and a feeling of having accomplished something meaningful which related to themselves.

This suggests that the respondents were momentarily taken over by whatever managed to grasp their attention in the situation, whether that was the clay, the image, or their own thoughts and feelings. At this time they did not have the sense of being agents who generated actions and intentions, which were then directed towards the inert clay, but instead, had a sense of being the recipients of an experience that had spontaneously emerged in spite of themselves. At other moments, they were aware of their own thoughts, actions, and feelings in relationship to the clay, and this served to make them feel implicated, and served to draw them into its expressiveness. Once again, what seemed to be occurring in the clay had served to remind them of how they were feeling and doing, but also gave a value to it, in terms of the context of significance attached to it by the world.

5.2.1.7Detachment from the Image

At other times the respondents felt detached from their images, which then seemed unfamiliar to them. For instance, when the clay did not do what one respondent intended, she had the following to say, "I started to feel very separate, as if it was almost someone else's, and I became quite frustrated." Another respondent found he was not sure what to do when he had built a foundation with the clay. He remarked, "there is nothing that wants to be built on further."

This suggests that the respondents at times felt removed from the clay and its images, in particular when these either did not comply with their intentions, or no longer seemed to suggest what was in need of further doing. The respondents were then forced to recognise that the clay had its own qualities and intentions, and that it could not, or did not always comply with what they imagined their intentions to be.

5.2.2The therapist's perspective

What the therapists observed during the production procedure became known by means of

notes they had taken during the process, which they formed into a summary description of what had occurred. A verbalised explanation of this description had been conveyed to the researcher to ensure that she understood it. These observations are conveyed as therapist observations in Data Base 2 (a,b,c,d) in the *Appendix One* of this thesis.

As they observed the process of image production, the therapists noticed particular actions and approaches to the clay, as well as shapes that emerged. They also observed changes in the respondent's behaviour. This initial awareness tended to focus both upon what the clay represented as meaning, and also upon the meaning of each respondent's approach to the situation, both in terms of what the therapists already knew about each respondent's history, issues, and mode of engagement in the world.

This suggests that the therapists were able to take a clinical perspective in their response to the situation from early on in the observation process.

5.2.2.1Making connections between observations and previously gained information

One therapist saw a mound of clay being 'yanked open', and then becoming like a `cup-like container', or `castle'. Thereafter she observed the respondent destroy her image and 'shutting down' her engagement with the clay. She thought of the respondent playing quite nicely with the clay, and then of her creativity being `stifled', as had occurred in the respondent's childhood, as the result of a sexual abuse experience. She noticed another respondent at first being quite controlling in working 'on', and not 'with', the clay, and in using only little bits of it. She remembered that he tended to go into a situation in an ordered, controlling, calculating, or 'noisy' way at first. She thought of his tendency to thereafter become more engaged, and reflective, in his approach to things. A third respondent seemed, in the observations of the second therapist, to `not really be there', in his distant and reflective demeanour. She identified images he was making, then recognised a `phallic' shape which reminded her of a current problematic issue he was dealing with. She noticed a fourth respondent getting immediately involved in squeezing, touching, feeling and smoothing the clay, yet the respondent seemed unsure, which reminded the therapist of what she knew about the respondent's lack of confidence in the face of the many directions and possibilities to be negotiated in her life.

This suggests that the therapists' attention, although focused upon details of action and particular images, was of a more psychologically interpretative kind, which sought the possibilities of a psychological meaning from such actions and images. It suggests further,

that it was in being reminded of what they implicitly knew about the patient, his or her issues, the context of art therapy, and their clinical knowledge, and own lived experience, that enabled the therapists to respond to the situation as they did.

5.3UNDERSTANDING DURING THE ARTICULATION PROCESS

5.3.1The respondents' description of the production process

At the stage of viewing and explaining the video-recording of the productive process, what was experienced in his or her own way by each respondent, became exposed, not only in its uniqueness but, as importantly, in a form that conveyed meaning by virtue of a particular use of language.

In trying to express themselves in formulating an account of their experience, the respondents showed an awareness of the need to be understood, and an awareness of how what was being conveyed was being received by the researcher. This formulation also both seemed to express an existing sense of meaning, and served to construe meaning from the details of the respondents' remembered experience. Upon hearing the researcher's clarifying comments and questions in response to what had been said, the respondents seemed to find themselves both affirmed in terms of what they had experienced, and found themselves reconsidering it. While questions from the researcher tended to pursue a train of thought opened up by the respondent, they also served to direct a particular kind of focus to certain areas of their experience. The meaning that emerged, during the articulation process, cannot therefore, be viewed as simply each respondent's intended meaning.

This suggests that, in terms of wishing to communicate, and convey, remembered experience by means of speech and language, and in the light of the researcher's clarifying comments, a process of communication took place that conveyed something different from the former experience as it had been lived, and served to shift aspects of its meaning in the direction of what was possible in language, and what related to current expressive concerns.

5.3.2Articulation as a separate process from lived action

Although the respondents could readily remember, describe, and thus confirm an awareness of the lived experience of producing images, the formative process of the articulation itself, with its tentativeness, and the respondents' searching for words, as ways of saying something, suggests that the experience the respondents remembered was in a form that required a work of articulation before it could be fruitfully grasped and conveyed both to themselves and to the researcher. Speaking about the experience was something different from living it. Although

the respondents were aware of what they had experienced, it was not yet clear to them, until it came to be thought about, put into words, and spoken about.

5.3.3The translation of a lived sense of meaning into a verbal account of it

The respondents seemed to grapple both with whether or not particular words conveyed the sense of the production experience as they remembered it, or whether the experience itself met the words spoken in terms of their possibilities of meaning. In other words, the articulation process seemed to be a dialectical process of trying to meet a remembered felt sense with words, and in so doing discovering something else about the experience. This is exemplified in the following excerpt from the verbatim transcriptions:

> Over there was just the front right, um, became a spiral, an upward movement thing. Um, ja, a spiral. And I wasn't thinking…at the time. I was thinking of growth, um, of movement upwards. Oh, just before that, ja, in the face of the wave, that was a kind of attempt to be quite a heart-like shape. Um, ja, which…putting something into it now, which I didn't think of at the time, coming with two issues: of the two values that are the most important to me, are, those of growth and love. Um, so it wasn't a valentine's heart, it was definitely a …tended to be a heart. Um, it was …I think, ja, perhaps the love was there, and then the spiral was, was upwards. It was growth. Quite good to be…to think of, or judge what's happening in my own life in terms of those two, um, those two processes.

Here the respondent found the word 'spiral' to be appropriate for what he both remembered and saw in the video image, a word he had not thought of at the time of physically engaging with the clay. He had remembered the sense of an upward movement in the clay, and thoughts about growth. He had also remembered his attempt to create a heart-like shape in the face of a wave-like form. What he understood now, but had not understood then, was that these aspects of the image represented two 'issues' and 'values' he held dear, namely `growth' and `love'. Having recognized this, he could judge his present life situation in terms of these 'two processes'. Thus, what he had discovered as meaning, by virtue of the words used to describe a remembered awareness, became a means for understanding that experience differently, which amounted to understanding something new about it.

5.3.4The articulation of meaning as a discovery, and means of grasping, and furthering understanding

The respondents' descriptions of their experience seemed to relate not only to the experience itself, and to what they wanted to say about it, but to what they thought the researcher wanted, or needed to hear, given the situation. It also related to what they reflexively came to

think about in hearing their own words spoken. This suggests that while an existing understanding of the situation influences what occurs in an articulation of it, what occurs as articulation in turn influences the understanding of meaning.

What occurred during the articulation process was that a series of definitive statements about a previous production procedure were made. These statements, while partly founded on memories of something past, were present attempts, at the time they were made, to convey and to grasp meaning. This is clear from the way the respondents actively considered what they were trying to say, and what words seemed acceptable in this regard. The statements made, were both statements expressing a remembered experience, and statements heard in the present, and thus, as such, they suggested their own kind of meaning. It was nevertheless understood by both respondents and researcher alike that what the respondents had to say related to a past experience. Only certain of the particularities of that experience, however, came to be focused on between them while others were ignored. What was chosen was not only a feature of what the respondents themselves found meaningful, or wished to convey, but what was dictated to by the sense of the meaning of the articulation itself as it occurred.

What the excerpt above about a spiral heart and wave illustrates, is a process of clarification and formulation of an existing unarticulated sense of what had occurred, and in the process discovering something both specific, and new about it. There was a shift from lived experience, with its implicit sense of meaning, to a discovery of meaning as something recognisable. This explicit meaning could then be utilised to explain something related, but different. A remembered sense of upward movement, for instance, became an observable spiral, and then an expression of growth, as a life value. In other words, what was already understood implicitly in a certain way gained in its meaning as its meaning for the current situation, once it became explicitly articulated. This shift, while serving to make implicit meaning explicit and specific (for instance a felt sense of an upward movement becomes a spiral), also saw articulated meaning (for instance a `spiral' and `heart') gain in meaning in being understood, or contextualized differently. In being understood in symbolic form as abstract principles of growth and love, which were values dear to the heart of the respondent, the meaning of a spiral and heart became something both personal and universal, in that it now belonged to both the respondent's life, and to the possibilities of human life in general, rather than to just a clay image, or to a research procedure. The discovery of important life values in a clay spiral and heart, provided the means with which to understand a respondent’s

current life situation. Thus, in being identified in their meaning, shapes in the clay escaped their original and surface appearance (of an upward movement, a spiral, and a heart), and gained a meaning which saw the respondent finding himself differently located, in being located within the context of life's values. This meaning had presented him with certain new possibilities for understanding himself as a person in relationship to a world. In conveying this meaning to the researcher, the respondent also found himself located in an interpersonal world, in which he came to feel understood.

What this may suggest is that, identifying and interpreting aspects of a concrete, and remembered situation, such as a production process, with its images, thoughts and actions during a process of articulation and communication, means to discover it as familiar, and contextually grounded meaning. Articulation does not only serve to convey information, but serves to create it and contextualize it. Identifying experience, and in so doing discovering its meaning in relationship to a specific and general context, means that meaning is not to be found as something original or intentional, but is something prospective which comes to be created anew with every attempt at its dissemination.

5.3.5 Discovering agency as the locus of action and point of reference for meaning

In contrast to the production process, where the respondents seemed to have become engrossed in the dictates of an experience, the observation of themselves from a more detached, visual perspective while viewing the video-recording, helped the respondents recognise themselves as persons in action, and in terms of what they were doing. This reminded them of what they already knew about being practically involved in the world. As a description of action, based on memory, and on a video recording, the articulations showed a frequent use of the first person, and references to the self. For instance, one respondent began this description with, "I remember, there I was trying to get it into a ball, and I remember once it was in a shape, I wanted to throw it down". Thus, what came to be conveyed in these descriptions was a scenario which clearly involved an acting, thinking, intending subject from whom, and towards whom actions, thoughts, and images were attributed. The articulated accounts thus had a strong self-referential, and action component to them. The respondents discovered what they wanted to do, how they wanted the clay to look, what they thought, and what impact something had had on them, by articulating their experience. In the articulations the subjects thus came to see themselves as the source of all action, intention, and influence upon the clay. This was not only due to the observed action on the video-recording, but was a

customary way in which descriptions of experience come to be articulated.

The experience of the respondents, which had at first occurred on a bodily, sensory, and reflective level, from an `inside' awareness of the situation, so to speak, became construed and conveyed, and understood in terms of a verbal consensually meaningful structure, which conveyed a sense of agency and influence. This suggests that it was not only the viewing of themselves in action, but the verbalization process itself, and taken for granted ways of thinking about action and experience that influenced the way a remembered experience came to be construed.

An analysis of the content of the respondents' articulations showed them to be made up of numerous self-references, which described qualities of experience as follows: being aware and unaware, having expectations, feeling competent, vulnerable, ashamed, or insecure, feeling critical, or pleased, imagining images (own, and others), having intentions, performing actions, understanding, observing, and experiencing, having a sense of knowing and not knowing, experiencing a sense of frustration or resolution, having an awareness of time, the past and present, finding comparisons, deciding between options, making analogies, explaining, and experiencing a sense of realisation. This suggests that the respondents existed in relationship to their worlds as thinking, feeling responding beings.

5.3.6Discovering a disjunction between observation and awareness

The respondents occasionally observed something on the video recording that seemed to have entirely escaped their former awareness. This suggests that not all aspects of the experience had entered the respondents' awareness, or were capable of being remembered or articulated. There were also often times when the respondents saw something in the recorded action that served to remind them of something they could now identify and remember. At other times the respondents had difficulty knowing what they were looking at, in terms of their visual experience. At other times they could remember feeling the need to do something without understanding it. For instance, one respondent referred to being 'unable to see' what she was doing, and at another time, 'thought' she was doing something but was not sure. Another respondent remembered feeling compelled to both cover the board in clay, and to roll and put down the clay in a ritualistic manner, yet did not know why this seemed so important.

This suggests that a disjunction can be recognised between the memory of a lived experience,

and of having engaged in a particular kind of action, and the current recognition, or understanding of the experience. It suggests, alternatively, that there may be an unconscious dimension, or aspect, to lived experience, that is not readily capable of being articulated, or that part of the respondents' experience had either escaped their attention, or could not be brought to an articulated meaning. In addition, observed actions on a video-recording did not readily make sense in terms of a bodily experience of them, and/or in terms of some or other meaning scenario currently holding sway in thought, during a description of the process.

5.3.7The use of language as a different situation from lived experience

It did seem from the articulations in language that the respondents' attention had moved from one feature, or topic to another, in the sense of shifting from a description of action, to a description of thought or feeling, and/or to the image, and an explanation of one or another of these. The articulated accounts had a segmented, or disjointed quality to them suggestive of a shifting focus of attention on the part of the respondents. The notes made by the therapists were also initially disjointed, which is equally suggestive of an oscillating perception, and/or the constraints of having to note down what was being observed in a language form. This may suggest either that, the verbal expression of a bodily, lived experience cannot do full justice to the complexities of a felt sense, or perception, or that perception is indeed an oscillating one, that shifts from seeing, to feeling, to experiencing and thinking, about the details of experience.

From the perspective of articulation being an event in which experience is constructed in linear terms in language, and in the grammatical terms of a subject and object, the requirements of the second articulation procedure were different from those of the first production experience when the therapists and respondents were simply engaged in what was happening. The limitations of using language, in distinction to a more direct, engrossing, and all encompassing lived experience, suggests that the difficulty the respondents were having in articulating their experience was to do, in part, with the shift that had occurred between one mode of experience to the next, and one situation and the next, or from the medium of a receptive, active perception, to that of an expressive, yet circumscribed form of verbal articulation.

5.3.8The priority of meaning over the particular use of language

The disjointedness of the verbatim articulations did not prevent the researcher from

understanding what was being said, or written about in note form. An excerpt from one therapist's notes, for instance, reads as follows:

> Round ball. Then squeeze. Taken whole. Not sure. Squeezing and pounding. Involved. Holding up in air. Reforms and reworks. Got into the medium. Smoothes pieces out. Done away with rough edges. Perseverance, and involvement. Engrossed. Used water to smooth different edges. Moving in various directions. Precariousness. Base spreading out. Pieces all jutting out. Using spoon. Crevices, has holes, pieces jutting out. Hair flowing - flowing nature.

A mere reading of these notes, like a hearing of the respondents' disjointed phrases, sees some form of coherence in understanding start to occur, as it did for the researcher as listener. The researcher was able to assume the existence of some relationship between the different points made in the therapists' notes, and was able to understand the meaning of the incomplete phrases of the respondents' spoken accounts. A reading of the words written down, and hearing of the respondents' speech was understood both in temporal and unitary terms by the researcher who could make sense of them in terms of what they referred to and in a manner that related not only to her own, but to a common form of understanding. This understanding related to what is commonly expected of descriptions of experience, and occurs in terms of narrative accounts. This occurred even when there was an absence of an explicit narrative form to the ideas conveyed. In other words, the researcher, as hearer and reader, co-constituted the sense of what was conveyed by discovering in it a certain narrative coherence of meaning.

In terms of the data, this co-constitution emerged at first in the form of narrative fragments. These fragments related a story about the clay images, how they were identified, developed, and came to have a particular meaning. They also related to a story about each respondent as a person in the world, with his or her own particular history, experiences and issues, as well as to a story about each respondent's experience of the art therapy situation. Information conveyed was thus constructed, in imagination, into a meaningful scenario.

This suggests that the researcher was able to understand what each respondent and therapist had to say, not necessarily in their terms, but in terms of what the words spoken could mean to the researcher herself, and in terms of what was common, and available as a means for rendering something intelligible. This suggests that meaning is not something existing in final form prior to articulation, or in the articulation itself, but is something imaginatively released both by the words heard and read, and the hearer and reader's own experience and imagination.

5.4UNDERSTANDING DURING THE DIALOGICAL PROCESS

5.4.1The transportation of meaning from one situation to the next

During the third procedure, the respondents and therapists had met privately together, in their assigned pairs, to share the understanding they had each gleaned so far, and to specifically discuss the meaning of the images. What became exposed during these dialogues was the contribution of each participant towards what would emerge as a complexity of information gathered together in understanding.

Once the respondents had been told by the therapists that they would be discussing the meaning of their images together, the respondents tended to proceed with a summary version of what they had previously articulated to the researcher during the former procedure. In one instance the therapist provided her understanding first. This second account, although not tied to the same sequences or details of former action, thought and emerging images, as had occurred in the description of experience prompted by a video-recording, it nevertheless still adhered significantly to this earlier description.

Having construed their experience in the previous procedure in a certain sequenced and descriptive way, and having arrived at some understanding of what it meant, the participants sought now to repeat this to one another, although the respondents did so more actively, than did the therapists. The manner in which they did this appeared to be similar in terms of detail and words chosen during the previous articulations. This second account was, nevertheless, a more succinct and summary account that included fewer details. The purpose seemed to be to convey only certain relevant information, and a specific meaning about the production process, in order that the other might understand what the speaker already understood.

In this way, certain aspects of an already formulated, and previously voiced understanding were carried over into the dialogical situation. Some consistency and continuity thus came to be established between what was said about a past experience across different occasions of its discussion. This suggests that once an experience has been identified in a certain way, it comes to be regarded as something given, and is taken for granted.

The summary repeat account of what the respondents and therapists had come to understand from their earlier articulations, tended, at first, to be delivered in monologue, on the part of either therapist or respondent. These accounts also came to be listened to with very little, or

no interruption by the other, and what was said became grasped as something akin to a factual account, that was not explicitly challenged, or contradicted.

5.4.2The establishment of a common ground for understanding

Once a certain amount of information had been conveyed by either the therapist or respondent, the other began to follow up on what had been said, with either a question, or a confirming, or elaborating remark. The process now shifted onto the level of a more interactive dialogue in which numerous interjections began to occur. These served to either confirm, or to add something to the content and meaning of what had already been conveyed. The dialogues thus increasingly became a process of mutual collaboration, in the construction of meaning. The dialogues fluctuated in terms of moments of interjections to moments of what appeared to be more considered explanations. The latter tended to occur when the therapists, and more occasionally, the respondents, asked a question.

What this suggests is that, in listening to the other's account, and during a mutual confirmation of meaning, there was a gathering of the other's meaning into the ambit of own understanding. An assumption of agreement tended to hold sway during this confirmation of meaning, and this meaning - elaboration process only came to be disrupted when the way something was posed could not readily be adopted, or incorporated, into the presiding train of thought currently being engaged in by the listener. At such moments the listener tended to ask a question about what had been said, and in so doing suspended their own train of thought, seemingly in order to follow the meaning of the other. In this way the respondents and therapists appeared to co-operate with one another in the discovery of meaning. This, however, went beyond the bounds of seeking to ensure a common ground for an existing understanding. The process of mutual discovery and construction of meaning increasingly saw the respondents and therapists extend their understanding.

5.4.3The accrual of information in the continuing dialogues

As the dialogues continued, more information and ideas accrued around each respondent's issues and the images. The respondents and therapists found themselves increasingly caught up in a process which sought to discover a symbolic meaning in the images. The images, associations to them, and thoughts about issues began to actively influence one another. What the participants were able to see in the images seemed to increasingly suggest things about the respondent and his or her life with its issues. Once this kind of interest in seeing different things in the images occurred, this served to draw the respondents and therapists deeper into a symbolic process. Here, the images and their creation increasingly came to be related to other

things, and to mean something in terms of the respondent's life, with its history, and concerns. New ways of seeing the images, and understanding psychological issues, served to continually inspire the participants in their quest to discover further meaning. They seemed less concerned to confirm what the other had said (although, in one form or another, this continued to occur throughout the rest of the dialogical process), and became increasingly absorbed in the kinds of meaning opened up.

Far from merely confirming and building upon their understanding of a former event, the implications for meaning of new associations to the images, or to something said, heard and thought about, resulted in forays into new areas and scenarios, in an imaginative engagement with what was being discovered there. For instance, one respondent spoke about dreams he had had, and he and the therapist tried to understand the meaning of these dreams. Another, spoke about wanting to cover and protect her image of a mound, and she and the therapist discussed what this could possibly mean.

5.4.4Mis-communication in the continuing dialogue

At times, the respondents and therapists, although unaware of it, were not necessarily talking about the same thing. The dialogue, nevertheless, continued unimpeded. Each party seemed oblivious to the differences in meaning of the statements made by the other.

What this suggests is that the two people in dialogue can be engaged in their own lines of thought, oblivious to the fact that the other is speaking about something else. It may also suggest that they are able to assume the agreement of the other, in the absence of an actual confirmation of the literal meaning of the words spoken and heard. Furthermore, provided there is no awareness of a conflict or disconfirmation of meaning in their respective understanding, this process continues with each participant being oblivious to their own partiality, and the differences in meaning being simultaneously employed by the other. Particular assumptions about meaning continue unabated, and the possibility of becoming aware, not only of the difference in each other's perspective, but aware of the nature of own perspective, does not occur until something happens to cause the realisation that the position adopted has been a particular one, which may have alternatives, or may not be shared. Furthermore, a particular perspective could be adopted, in the absence of a realisation that this had occurred.

In one case, for instance, in telling a respondent that her approach to creating the image illustrated her history in terms of `free play becoming beset by defendedness', where ‘the

creative stuff got closed down', the therapist wished to convey that the respondent's actions mirrored the disruptive effects upon her of a sexual abuse experience. The respondent, instead of recognizing and acknowledging this, launched into a description of how she had been previously feeling and enjoying the clay, and had then become quite frustrated with her image, as it did not look the way she wanted it to be. She then described being aware of the type of interpretations the therapist would be making, which caused her to feel exposed, and to want to break the image down, and to leave. There was no acknowledgement on the part of the respondent that she had even heard, let alone understood, what the therapist had said, yet her actions and feelings seemed to illustrate the therapists very words, even in the absence of an awareness of their meaning and relevance for the situation. This suggests that, given knowledge of a particular context, one person in dialogue may be better able to understand the meaning of the other's expressions, or experience, than they are themselves. Yet, given a particular context of potential meaning, all that is said and done, nevertheless becomes intelligible within it.

5.4.5Productive versus unproductive interpretations

As the respondents and therapists talked to one another they became engaged in the various possibilities of meaning that emerged, yet only some of these proved to be productive in terms of yielding a new insight. In one example, when the therapist referred to a shape she had seen in the clay as, 'an oil lamp that burned', this meaning was not taken up by the respondent, and did not become raised between them again except that the therapist had realised, that, in spite of this interpretation having been `inaccurate' in relation to the respondent's understanding, it had shown the therapist that there could be different ways of looking at the same situation. This insight seemed to assist the therapist, not only in becoming aware of possible alternatives, but in being able to actively voice them without fearing contradiction.

An awareness of different meaning appeared to depend upon whether the respondents and therapists were able to use an interpretation made in such a way as to understand something in the situation differently. In other words, if they applied something said about the image to the respondent's issues, or visa versa, and, having done so, succeeded in seeing the image or issues differently, then the interpretation became productive in the sense of changing former understanding. Where a new way of seeing did not occur, an interpretation remained unproductive and abandoned. For instance, one therapist had asked the respondent in what way a particular image, that looked like an elephant, related to her, and had received an explanation from the respondent which related to the image rather than to herself. The therapist, persisting, then intimated that the `heaviness, fragility and precariousness', the

`peaks' and `crevices' of the image, and the `solidity and movement' in it signified the different directions that the respondent's life was taking. She also thought that, just as the respondent had been able to persevere with her image, she seemed able to persist with decisions about her life. This interpretation again fell on deaf ears, and was not entertained in its meaning, as it once again came to be understood in terms of the image rather than the respondent herself. Here the respondent did not either want to, or could not recognize that the therapist was speaking about something other than the image, and the interpretation, at this stage, did not become a productive one. Later in the dialogue, the respondent then made the statement that she `liked to have a range of possibilities'. This suggests that she may now have been able to take up the therapist's previously made interpretation. But, the therapist, instead of endorsing this reference to the respondent's self, just as the respondent had previously done, related it back to the image rather than to the respondent herself. The interpretation, once again proved to be unproductive.

Here we see the respondent and therapist seemingly wedded to a particular, implicit decision or perspective, that chose to focus almost exclusively on the image rather than on the respondent's issues. Consequently, very little symbolic exchange of meaning occurred between a semantic field which related to the respondent and her issues, and one that related to the image. This resulted in a failure in the development of significant new insights in this particular dialogue. In a sense, the dialogue had served to collapse the interpretative, psychological brief of the art therapy situation, in favour of the respondent's focus which was primarily based upon the aesthetic dimensions of her image, suggesting her interest in adopting an artistic focus, rather than a psychological one. Her expressed intentions to create a sense of naturalness and balance in her image which, although aspects she wanted to develop in her own life, were not really fully explored in terms of how they might relate to herself.

This suggests that, both parties in a dialogue can choose to follow their own perspectives, and ignore suggested implications of meaning, either as a means of avoidance, or in the interests of wanting to, or not being able to, to engage with another's perspective. In other words, in terms of the exchange of meaning, a true dialogue does not necessarily occur, unless a common perspective on issues of meaning can be established.

In being able to follow the possibilities and implications of meaning opened up by a newly heard interpretation, the respondents were able to suspend their assumptions, or adopted perspective on meaning, for the moment at least, and were able to engage with a different

scenario. Here, not only the images but the respondent's issues could be rearranged and construed in a new way in terms of how they were able to appear. Where one of the parties did not engage with a particular interpretation made, or where an interpretation was similar to the way they were already understanding something, a new way of seeing tended not to occur: what had been said was not taken up in imagination and thought, and did not become 'lived' imaginatively, and incorporated as meaning into the current situation. Here, the respondents or therapists did not find themselves understanding their current situation in terms of an interpretation made, so did not come to understand it differently.

Where an interpretation was productive, its implications were not only understood, but it appeared to evoke an insightful experience. For instance, in one of the dialogues, the therapist made reference to a `fence' which she saw as a `protection' around the respondent's clay mound. She said she saw this mound as a `vulnerable bud', or seed, `pushing up' from the ground. She said that for her it expressed the current vulnerability of the respondent, which was `in need of protection'. Upon hearing this, the respondent made reference to the walls having 'cracked open' as the clay dried, and found herself saying, "Who was going to be following me? It felt like a dream. Once again my one instinct was to fix it". Clearly the symbolic world of the clay, with its broken, protective walls, had exposed her to old feelings of being sexually invaded. Then, in thinking about the (symbolic) bud, she said, 'its almost a presurge to a world', 'like wanting the guardian, or protectors to come'. She also found herself 'feeling strange', and 'different' from before as she looked at the image, yet she felt that this was part of what she treasured and 'held' within. She recognized that previously she had felt the mound to be 'ugly', like a 'sore full of pus', that she had wanted to 'break down' in anger with herself, because it had exposed the issue of her sexual abuse to all who could see the image. Now, having seen the mound as an `emerging vulnerability' she recognized that she felt responsible, not only for having created this exposing image, but also for everything she had witnessed in the former abuse itself. She also discovered that she 'missed part of herself', as she also missed her image, in having to leave it behind. She wondered whether she should `go away' and 'take everything with her', or whether she needed to 'give everything' in order to try to 'fix it up'.

Here, we see an example of how a therapist's way of seeing was meaningfully adopted by the respondent, which resulted in a new way of understanding, of not only the image, but also of herself, and the issue of how she had related to a sexual abuse. This understanding had occurred in a present situation that was different from one that had been experienced in the past, but which had become related to it, through what had been said and done in the

situation. Furthermore, this new awareness presented the respondent with various possibilities for action. In having initially felt that she had been ‘really stuck’ with her issue, she now found herself having come a step forward, `having changed somehow', and able to consider taking her issue to her therapist, so that it could be further dealt with.

What this suggests is that, an interpretation proves to be productive, and a dialogue occurs, when a person is able to hear something said and understand it, and is able to relate this to their own situation, which causes them to think differently from the way they had thought before. This means that they are able to engage with the meaning of what has been said, as a meaning different from their own existing, taken-for-granted understanding. This also implies, not only being able to understand it superficially, but being able to understand its deeper meaning implications for own future action. This suggests further, that productive interpretations in art therapy are those which serve to contextualize the image differently, and in terms of the patient's world with its concerns, and that the realisation of meaning is a productive process.

5.4.6The multi-layered nature of meaning that developed in the dialogues

Once the therapists and respondents found themselves imaginatively caught up in different ways of seeing the images, and understanding their suggested meanings in terms of the respondent’s issues, new insights emerged. With the grounding of understanding in the different contexts of images, issues, and imaginative scenarios, the meaning of the created images came to signify a number of different things at once. A mound, for instance, represented a vulnerability in need of protection, a childhood memory of a beach scenario, a sore full of pus, and a vital, new emergence. A sexual abuse became an arrest in creative engagement, a vulnerability, an opportunity for a new beginning, and an emergence of potential. A woman in a kimono became an interesting landscape, a partnership such as a man and his dog, a gaping, screaming mouth, an organic shape like a fish or a bird with a tail, the unique, creative `frills’ of an individual psyche, and something spiritual. This suggests that there was a syncretistic nature to the images that developed from the dialogues, in that the images came to signify a number of different things.

In their enthusiasm to capture their new experiences in relationship to the new found meaning of the images, and in wishing to construe and convey their understanding, the respondents and therapists also said things which could signify, or refer to many things at once. The meaning of words consequently became over determined. For example, having referred to a former friend who had recently died of AIDS, and then having made a piece of `paper’ in the clay,

one respondent remarked, “There was a life becoming increasingly fragile, which I want to, or could almost throw into a waste paper basket: Life just crumpled up and gone”. A clear cut distinction between the image, the issue, the self, the present, the past, action, thought, feeling and word, seemed to become blurred. At times, words spoken, like the images, became syncretistic in that they served to telescope together various narrative threads by figuratively implying more than one meaning. For instance, a ‘digging out’ of a clay crater in the image of a volcano extended beyond its literal meaning, as a particular action performed on the clay. In relationship to the context of meaning that had come to hold sway, through the gathering together of meaning in all that had been said and done, and in a perspective in which the images related to the issues, `digging out’ also implied an aggressive sexual violation, a painful disclosure, a taking away of something formerly held within, a violation of self-worth, and a failure of both an intention of how the image should look, and a wish to create something worthwhile. Similarly, the clay volcano became a ‘mistake’ with the collapse of its walls, and in its rendering of a past event as an ‘unhideable’ form that everyone could see in the present, thus embarrassing the respondent, and evoking a sense of shame and vulnerability in her.

Thus words, like images, seemed to became like multi-determined symbols in that they referred to many levels of experience at once, levels that all seemed related to one another in terms of meaning. In so doing they succeeded in bridging the divide between the different worlds of the clay, the issues, and the respondents' past and present experiences. Furthermore in their symbolic richness, they seemed to be more like poetic, expressive gestures rather than something which conveyed clear, rational and linear thought, or consensual meaning. For instance, one therapist had described the crater of a clay volcano being ‘yanked open’ with the ‘insertion of a foreign object’ (a spoon) within the context of a ‘violent penetration’ which the respondent had experienced, which had seen the ‘creative stuff’ close down and the ‘defendedness’ come. The respondent, in turn described how she had felt that it had ‘been a mistake’, that others could ‘see’ what she had ‘broken down’, yet she wanted the therapist to ‘see’ what she ‘held’, but, the ‘whole hangover’ was ‘too much’. This referred to both the image collapsing and the feelings she had been left with (in the past and now the present). Thereafter, having found herself feeling compelled to make a mound surrounded by a wall, the respondent described feeling ‘safe’. However, the walls had then ‘cracked’, and she was left wondering ‘who would be following her’. Here the respondent is clearly speaking about two things at once, namely what was happening to the image and what she was experiencing in the moment as happening to her, even if it logically related to some past event. In this sense she found herself caught up in a dramatic event, akin to a waking dream, in which she

felt a sense of 'incompleteness', which related both to the 'old thing' (the bodily abuse), to her image (with its incomplete walls), and to herself. In leaving the image behind she felt as if she was leaving 'a part of herself behind', a part that she 'missed', and she wondered how she was going to 'get it back'. She also wondered whether she should 'completely go away and take everything with her', or whether she should 'give everything' and just 'try and fix it up'. Clearly words such as 'yanked open', 'mistake', 'broken down', 'whole hangover', 'missed' and 'getting it back' have a complexity of meaning that make sense within the overall meaning context which had been developed, with its narrative about the clay, narrative about the abuse, and narrative about how the respondent was feeling during the research process.

What this suggests is that something akin to a syncretistic process occurs during the process of understanding and the development of true meaning.

5.5THE PRODUCTIVITY OF ARTICULATION AND DIALOGUE IN TERMS OF THE DISCOVERY OF MEANING

While The multi-determined meaning of certain words had made it possible to express and convey different layers of meaning, which in the example of a clay volcano, for instance, related to a past event, a present situation, and the experience of the respondent, and therapist, it can also be said that the sense and perception of incompleteness, loss, and new beginning, that came to prevail in the dialogue, was also created and discovered by the clay images, and words used to describe them. Such qualities of experience, amongst a range of possible others, came into presence as a result of what was seen and said about particular events, actions and images, and their relationship to one another. The expression in images and words, of something lived through in the past, and now influencing the present, gained a meaning that became available to the respondent and therapist through the process of understanding such articulations themselves. The sense of loss, while arguably implicit to the respondent's life, consequent to a sexual abuse, had been unavailable to her, in realised form, until it emerged in the research as something akin to a 'stuckness'. Violation, exposure and vulnerability, while not explicitly present at the outset of the research process, had become explicit aspects of the respondent's experience only once she and the therapist had perceived her image of a volcano to be inadequate, and as a symbolic representation of a former sexual abuse. The discovery of meaning occurred when certain ideas emerged in relation to something concrete (images, memories and described experiences), and when actual words had been spoken and heard in the dialogues. The meaning of such images and words did not exist in the absence of what surrounded them, in the form of memories, actions and thoughts, and all that had led up to them, including knowledge about the respondent's history and felt

experience.

It cannot be said that the images and words spoken conveyed a sense of meaning in the absence of perception, understanding and context, and in the absence of an accrual of information, with its developing, and meaning-generating context. Furthermore, words and images appeared to serve both an expressive and a constructive function. In what had been an attempt to capture and convey perceptions, images and words had seemed to lose their specific signifying bearings in coming to refer to more than one time period, spatial location and dimension of experience at once, yet at the same time these images and words had served to show, and bring meaning to these experienced dimensions for the respondents and therapists.

Meaning seemed to occur at the interface between known experience, expression, and the formulations of meaning, and what was suggested by the concrete images created, and words spoken. What came to be known about the respondent, and his or her life, with its issues, what was perceived in his or her actions and images, and what the words spoken about these were able to introduce as ways of understanding, came to weave a context in which meaning could be both discovered and created. The particular images, and choice of words spoken, appeared both to dictate, and be dictated to, by the perceptions and memories of the respondents and therapists. The context they had discovered and built up between them, and all that had occurred in the process, including what had become known from beyond the research situation about the respondents' worlds, and about what the therapists understood to be psychologically meaningful, had made the discovery of new meaning possible.

5.5.1The imaginative quality of the dialogues

The dialogical process had been more imaginative and creative than the earlier articulations, in terms of yielding different possibilities for meaning: possibilities which did not belong to either the respondents or to the therapists, but to the overriding form of understanding within which they found themselves. What was said between them was provided with its meaning, forged out of what had been gathered together in what seems to have been an acceptance that everything in the situation was potentially meaningful in terms of being able to throw some light on the respondent's situation.

What this suggests, is that the brief of the art therapy situation, and the purpose of the particular dialogical procedure, which was to understand each other's meaning, made it possible for a particular kind of understanding occur. This seems to have been the result of

the issues being understood in terms of the images, and the images being understood in terms of the issues, with a consequent deepening in the understanding of both. The dialogues thus came across as a productive, rather than a reproductive event, in that the understanding the respondents and therapists developed, during the dialogical process, was not confined to understanding what had occurred in the research process itself, but became an understanding, or representation, of each respondent's quality of personal being in the world.

Within the dialogical process, what had initially been meaning which belonged to other contexts, such as that of the production procedure, with its actions, thoughts, and images, succeeded in being converted into something meaningful about each respondent. While the experience of producing images, set in motion by the methodological procedures, had seen the production of spontaneous thoughts and memories emerge alongside the production of images, and while the articulation experience had made possible the establishment of an account of this as descriptive meaning, the dialogues had served to convert such descriptive meaning, by explaining its relationship to the respondents, their images, and in their lives. This occurred as a process which saw certain dimensions of the original production experience being highlighted and explained, forgotten, and/or transformed. Thereafter, in developing a context of understanding, which accepted that images and associations had the potential to throw light on the respondent's situation, thoughts about meaning became an experiential event of meaning in the dialogues, which was revelatory in nature. It was revelatory in the sense that it provided a new way of seeing, not only the images, but a way of being belonging to the respondents. This understanding was something shared by both the respondents and therapists.

This suggests that the articulations and dialogues served to contextualize the details of the productive procedures, whether images, actions and thought, in terms of broader issues related to art therapy, and to a quality of life. Such understanding, as a transformation, in turn, served to clarify the particular situation of each respondent, and to clarify the particular images and issues that had emerged in the situation.

Certain features of the production process, and the images, the respondents' thoughts and issues, previously identified and described in the articulation process, having been brought into the dialogues, seemed to provide something akin to given facts, which formed a basis for creating a context of meaning which belonged to each respondent. While some of these details

came to be passed on from the one situation to the next, it was in being imaginatively related to one another, and reconstrued differently according to the context of meaning which was holding sway at the time, that their significance lay. What appeared to be significant about such details, was not only their ability to represent certain known lived events, both in the respondent's past, and in the original production procedure, but to provide an argument, or a concrete ground for what the respondents and therapists were able to creatively discover to be meaningful. As the discussions developed, the former meaning of articulated details of experience, receded into the background, and lost their particular identity in favour of what had emerged as important life issues, related to the lives of the respondents.

5.5.2The experience of meaning

Within their dialogical exchange, the respondents and therapists did not appear to be concerned with differentiating between words and experience, themselves and the other, and the different aspects of the situation. What seemed more important was what they were experiencing in terms of some or other discovered meaning that confronted them. For instance, while looking at the image of a mound again after the end of the production process, the therapist found that what had previously looked as if 'something was being taken away' (the removal of clay from the mound) now looked as if it was 'emerging'. In seeing this 'emergence', it became possible for both the respondent and therapist to understand that the respondent's experience of the research process had heralded something new, which was a new beginning for what the sexual violation had previously succeeded in taking away. What had been 'blocked and angry', and a 'stuckness', yet a 'wanting to be seen' that felt 'barely alive', had become changed into an image and expression of new growth: what the respondent now referred to as 'the presurge to a world'. The use of certain words had resulted in a different way of seeing the image, which now saw the respondent feeling very 'strange', as she realized that 'every scene she had 'actually watched', every scene she had 'had to take', she felt 'responsible for'. Thus the use of the word 'emerging' became a new way, not only of seeing, but a new way of being, and of experiencing the self, as well as the expression of a growing understanding of the meaning of a former event, as the self's relationship to it. This had been made possible initially by the therapist being able to perceive and interpret the image differently, and in finding the right words to describe the way she now saw it. In so doing, and because of the context of meaning that had developed, a new meaning had come to bear, not only on the image, but on the respondent and her situation, and the respondent came to experience herself differently. This suggests that, provided it is possible for a suggested new meaning to explain a deeply felt experience, a revelatory experience can occur, in which not only the experience, but the self, comes to be seen in a transformed light.

CHAPTER SIX
DISCUSSION

6.1INTRODUCTION

Like every other phase of the analysis of meaning conducted so far, this discussion requires a kind of a judgement on the part of the researcher. Approaching the findings of the analysis from the perspective of thought amounts to pursuing leads suggested by the researcher's fore-structures of understanding developed in *Part One* of this thesis, as well as following leads presented by what has emerged as the particular quality of the data. It also entails following leads suggested by the circumscribing focus and direction provided by the research questions. In other words, it will be within the possibilities of meaning provided in a dialectics of exchange between questions, the researcher's existing understanding, the data, its analysis, and theory, that the further discovery of meaning will be found. This discovery of meaning forms the basis for drawing conclusions, and should be seen as one of a number of possible explanations that could do justice to questions about the phenomenology of understanding in art therapy.

An analysis of the data has served to convey the structure of the lived experience of creating and understanding the image in art therapy by configurating it into a number of descriptive categories contained under various headings in the *Results* (see Chapter Five). This structural configuration should be seen as one account of the reality of the situation, which can be construed in various different ways. It should also be seen as one phase in an on-going process of meaning generation and meaning discovery. This reality, as structure, amounts largely to descriptive meaning, and should not be confined to something pre-existent, or original, or to that which has been identified in the absence of the influences of the respondents', therapists', researcher's and reader's understanding, and the use of language and thought as configurating means at their disposal. Instead, meaning as the outcome of a data analysis, as descriptive reality, needs to be viewed as something arrived at through participation, reflection and articulation.

An explanation of what this configured structure of experience means in theoretical terms, is largely the subject of this discussion chapter which should be seen as a further stage in the process of meaning formulation, discovery and development. This development has occurred, so far, in a movement from the consideration of existing ways of thinking about meaning,

both in art therapy, and in philosophy, through to a consideration of a lived experience of the discovery of meaning in art therapy in a research situation. What remains for the *Conclusion* is to further develop an understanding that relates to art therapy in general.

What the *Results* indicate is that the understanding of meaning can be seen to have occurred throughout the research process. It will also be seen to have operated on various levels and in different ways. At a responsive level, meaning emerged in the form of spontaneous actions and thoughts that occurred in response to the situation as the respondents' and therapists' pre-reflective understanding. At an implicit, or meta level, which may be called the generative ground of understanding, a potential for meaning existed that made possible, and influenced, the formulation and expression of meaning that emerged on a more explicit level. At the generative level, different ingredients of the situation, with their potential for meaning, also came to mediate and dialectically inform one another. The potential for meaning became realised at the explicit level during a phase of image production, reflection and verbal articulation which may be called the level of formulated, or articulated understanding. Another level, which may be termed the discursive, or transformative level of understanding was the level at which existing understanding became transformed, and replaced by new understanding.

These levels of understanding operated together in the constitution of meaning in relation to the respondents' images and issues, and ultimately the research process itself. In dealing with some of these different levels in this discussion, it becomes possible to understand what contribution each made. These contributions paralleled and intersected one another, and occurred in differing degrees, throughout the process. The meaning-generating ground, for instance, as a given potential for meaning, while ever present, seemed to speak particularly of how images, issues and thoughts emerged spontaneously and became recognised during the production of images process. Meaning emerged as an explicit realization in the articulation process, in the form of particular images created, and particular descriptions made of the process. Furthermore, the meaning-generating ground, made up of a residue of meaning realizations from the past (as former understanding, memories, education, and traditional ways of thinking), continually influenced, and became influenced in turn, by formulated understanding that evolved in the situation. The transformation of meaning from the level of the implicit to the explicit occurred throughout the situation in a discovery, formulation, and negotiation of meaning. A hearing of interpretations, and an engagement with different meanings, on the other hand, saw the most obvious transformation in understanding occur.

Understanding will be seen to have related to a time before and after the respondents and therapists found themselves part of a research situation. At the meta level, understanding will be seen to have occurred from within a generative ground of potential for meaning provided by various meaning generating contexts which were present from the beginning of the research situation, with each context providing its own unique contribution to the development of meaning that occurred at the articulated level. At this articulated level, understanding will be seen to have occurred as an instatement of the reality of the situation in which the potential for meaning had become realised in particular images and verbalizations. The descriptions of meaning that emerged at this level formed a ground for the further dissemination of meaning.

Ultimately the discovery and creation of meaning will be seen to have related to the discovery of a relationship between the respondents' past, present and future, and his or her actions, memories, images and issues. This relationship will be seen to have developed from an initial identification of discrete particularities of awareness, to the accrual and synthesis, firstly of information, and secondly of meaning. This accrual and synthesis will be seen to have shifted meaning in the direction of an understanding of the relationship between particular images and psychological issues as part of an overall context that constituted each respondent's world. It was this context that ultimately decided the meaning of the images, which by the end of the research process had come to represent the possibilities of being the respondent, as a certain kind of person, with particular concerns, and having possibilities for certain future actions in the world.

6.2THE GENERATIVE LEVEL OF UNDERSTANDING MEANING

6.2.1The meaning-generating contexts that circumscribe understanding, anticipate meaning, and make it possible

From the perspective of philosophical- and phenomenological-hermeneutic thought, human action, experience and understanding always occur within a relationship to the world: a world with its symbolic order, which provides the means for rendering lived experience not only meaningful but also communicable. What presents itself as the world is understood as meaning, which is not only given in perception and experience, but also in articulation and thought. In other words, what presents itself as the world is something thought and spoken about, that comes to be understood. In the absence of its meaning for us, which is its meaning for the world as we have come to know it, the quality and meaning of experience cannot readily be understood. Nevertheless, as will be discussed, in the light of the findings of the research, understanding is productive and progressive.

It has been argued in *Part One* of this thesis, given ways exist in which we come to identify, think about and understand our existence. As discussed, such ways have been described by thinkers such as Vico, Heidegger, Gadamer and Ricoeur as metaphorical forms of thinking, or tendencies to construe meaning in a certain paradigmatic way, passed down by culture and history. Such given ways have been described as the 'intentionality'[1] of consciousness by phenomenologists such as Husserl. In philosophical-hermeneutic terms, notions such as `historicity', `fore-structures of understanding', `horizons of potential meaning', and/or `semantic fields' of meaning which exist in language, have all been used to denote the tendency to construe meaning in terms of what has already been understood, and formulated, and thus serves to direct and circumscribe the kind of meaning that can be discovered. While each of these notions has its own specific meaning, together they denote what will be termed here as `meaning-generating contexts'. This term has been chosen in preference to those above, as it does not exclude the influence of the relationship of bodily being to the world, a relationship which is not initially given in cultural history, or tradition, or in language, or given paradigms of thought, yet which plays a fundamental, implicit, and influential role in understanding, and becomes evident in the creation of images in art therapy. The role of the body in understanding serves to ground knowledge in lived experience, making it both personally meaningful and significant in terms of guiding action.

We have seen in *Part One* of this thesis that there are various ways of thinking about meaning and reality, which have come to influence how we understand and live in the world: ways which inform art therapy, and how it has come to be thought about and practised. Bearing this in mind, we proceed now to what has emerged from the research findings so far, where we see that for the respondents and therapists meaning took the form of a process of discovery and creation which had various stages and dimensions to it.

What had occurred during the image production procedure was that the participants had found themselves responding to a particular situation which they were able to understand in general terms, yet which they responded to in particular terms. What they had understood in general terms was what they had anticipated, and what was expected of them given the nature of the situation. They were duly able to comply to such expectations and anticipations by disclosing and discovering psychologically pertinent information, producing images, and observing and

[1] `Intentionality' in Husserl's terms refers to something which is, "descriptive of all mental acts in which we direct outselves to something in some way or other; as descriptive of experiences (intellectual or emotional) in which we stand in a relation to the object" (Piv_evi_, 1970, p. 45).

thinking about what had occurred during this process. The participants were also able to articulate and communicate their understanding. In particular terms they were able to recognize the details of various actions, thoughts, observations, memories and impressions in the clay, which had both a personal significance, and a relevance in the situation, as well as a general, consensual meaning, and ultimately a meaning given each respondent's life situation.

What had made this understanding possible was the means the participants had at their disposal for responding as they did to the situation, what was already provided to them as existing understanding and possibilities of meaning, and what presented itself to them during their current experience. The respondents' understanding occurred at both the experiential, bodily level of perceptual awareness, and the conceptual level of being able to identify, and think about this experience. At the articulate, communicable level they were able to construe and convey an understanding of this experience in consensually meaningful terms. The means the respondents and therapists had had at their disposal for doing so were means common to their human capacities for existence and its expression. As responsive, perceiving, thinking, articulating beings, who lived in relationship to a given world with its already constituted possibilities of meaning, the participants were able to grasp, and give an intelligible, descriptive account of their experience.

The experiential awareness of the participants, although particular to themselves in the form of memories, actions, and perceptions of the clay, occurred within the context of an art therapy research situation. This situation was itself a particular kind of context that served to circumscribe, in a general sense, the actions and meaning that emerged in response to the situation. Each participant had, nevertheless, drawn upon their own specific knowledge and experience in responding. However, this knowledge also belonged to the context of the art therapy situation and the context of a shared world, in which the possibilities of meaning were already laid down in the general sense. In other words, what had emerged as the particular experience of each participant could be described and understood as their own, yet it was understood in certain consensually valid terms. For instance, once the respondents' actions upon the clay had been identified by the participants during the articulation process, it became possible to provide experiential and observational accounts of the creative process (in *Appendix One*), in terms of the consensually meaningful descriptive properties of language.

Understanding in terms of the language used to describe experience is an understanding which enables meaning to be grasped and shared. What the participants also shared was what they had in common in terms of what it means to be human, and in a world with its known

contexts and given possibilities of meaning. Ways of construing and thinking about experience, were the means available to the respondents and therapists as they sought to establish, through the use of language, the nature of their experience and observations. They had already accrued a form of knowledge that existed for them on an implicit level in their understanding, which served to both anticipate the discovery of a certain kind of meaning, and made it possible to define experience in this consensual kind of way. This way was the instatement of a descriptive reality in terms of the symbolic order, by means of given possibilities of thought and language. This took a place parallel to, and grounded in the unarticulated vicissitudes, and subtleties, of what was a lived bodily experience provided by each respondent's lived history. During the production procedure, this historical experience came to be remembered.

What the participants came to understand in their articulations of experience was not only lived experience, qua experience, but formulated meaning as the taken for granted knowledge of the meaning of familiar contexts, with their implications for action in the world. The use of language, and familiar ways of thinking, brought with it education and cultural tradition, ways of construing meaning, and a consequent influence upon further awareness and understanding. The familiarity with such contexts, given by the world, and own experience in it, provided the participants with an existing, implicit knowledge about how to respond to, and think about the situation within which they found themselves. It also provided them with a means for understanding their own, and the other's responses.

Without the existence of an already circumscribed means for understanding, in the form of meaning-generating contexts, or given horizons of potential meaning, it would not have been possible for the respondents and therapists to locate, and think about, what had presented itself to their awareness for understanding. The particular identity, for instance, of the respondents' and therapists' experience, its perceived and named qualities, identified nature, meaning implications, and significance for action was both the world's and their own, in the sense that it spoke of what had been lived in familiar, communal, historical, and traditional terms. Nevertheless, while thinking and language had served to render experience intelligible, such intelligibility could not yield its true meaning without a complimentary grounding within the context of the vicissitudes of the body, with its primordial knowledge of the meaning of being, a knowledge that existed beyond the limits of thought and speech. It was within a dialects of exchange between bodily lived experience, means of articulation, and the anticipation of a certain kind of meaning, given the familiar, known contexts that make up the world, that the discovery and creation of true meaning occurred.

In Gadamer's (1975) terms,

> Every experience is taken out of the continuity of life and at the same time [is] related to the whole of one's life. It is not simply that it remains a living experience only until it is fully integrated into the context of one's life-consciousness, but the very way in which it is `preserved' through its being worked into the whole of life-consciousness, goes far beyond any `significance' it might be thought to have. Because it is itself within the whole of life, in it too the whole of life is present (p.62)

6.2.1.1The context of the research as ground for generating meaning

In terms of their lived experience, what the respondents and therapists knew they were faced with upon entering the art therapy research situation was a particular context which they would have to respond to appropriately. This they each did in their own terms. The brief of the situation within which they found themselves, and which they understood in terms of its demands, served to open up, and highlight certain possibilities of action and thought to them, rather than others.

For the respondents and therapists, who were all familiar with the nature of academic research, there existed an awareness that as research participants they needed to conform to the stipulated procedures and instructions given. Their understanding of this context enabled them to respond appropriately. They also knew that what they provided, in the form of a response, would be scrutinized in psychological terms. In spite of any reticence they may have felt about exposing their issues, the respondents and therapists also felt committed to engaging fully in the process, and found themselves responding openly and appropriately. A dialectics of exchange had thus occurred between what was demanded by the situation, and what was possible and desirable in terms of a response to it.

While the research demands of the situation had ensured that certain actions rather than others were carried out, the understanding that eventually emerged cannot entirely be explained by such demands. It is evident that much of what occurred as understanding drew upon prior lived experience, and familiar ways of thinking about, and construing meaning that lay outside these situational demands. Furthermore, as will be seen, the process of discovery and articulating meaning, the medium used (whether clay or language), and the particular creation process itself, which had not been known, or anticipated, prior to the time of the research, also influenced meaning.

6.2.1.2The art therapy situation as a ground for generating meaning

The art-therapy situation provides a meaning-generating context within which images and the patient's actions come to be created, viewed and understood in terms of one another and in terms of psychological meaning. This context anticipates that images will be created out of visual media, such as, for example clay, and that the therapist will understand these images in terms of his or her clinical knowledge, and the patient's psychological issues. Were the situation to be different, its requirements would be different. For instance, in an art class the demands of the situation require that attention be paid to the formal structures of images, rather than to their meaning as psychological expression, and this influences the way the image comes to be understood.

While an art therapy situation does dictate the types of action that should occur, and what should be understood from these in terms of deciding their meaning, it nevertheless cannot dictate the particularities of action, thought, and images that can, and do emerge within its brief. As occurred in the research, these particularities rely upon the persons present in the situation, as well as the unanticipated outcome of certain actions upon the medium. The common knowledge that an art therapy situation entails psychological interpretation, predisposes the therapist (and sometimes the patient) to be attuned to this requirement, and to the possibility of discovering psychological meaning. It cannot, however, dictate what psychological material will actually emerge, or what interpretations will be made. These rely upon the patient and therapist present in the situation, what information and experience they have at their disposal, and what has emerged spontaneously or by chance, as well as from the interaction between these various ingredients in the situation.

6.2.1.3The respondents' disclosures of personal information as ground for generating meaning

Prior to producing their images the respondents had been interviewed by the therapists. Certain, particular disclosures were made, and during this process certain issues pertaining to the respondents' lives were communicated and discussed. The respondents and therapists thus already had some kind of understanding of what psychological issues were currently important for the respondents at the time of the production of images. This knowledge was brought into the production procedure as an implicit knowledge in the anticipation of its being relevant, and in the expectation that it would influence the situation. This information thus contributed towards the meaning-generating ground, or context of understanding, within which the respondents' images and issues would come to be understood. The anticipation that this personal and psychological information was to be relevant for the discovery of meaning,

belongs to the traditional context of art therapy, and psychotherapy, as disciplines. Ultimately it belongs to what is possible in terms of a relationship to the world in which these contexts of behaviour and meaning are part of the fabric of human existence.

6.2.1.4The experienced therapists as ground for generating meaning

In the research, the therapists arrived at the observation situation anticipating, or pre-prepared, to observe the respondent's actions and images in a certain way, as part of a traditional diagnostic and therapeutic stance pertaining to their professions and clinical experience. They had come to think clinically and therapeutically, and were thus already inclined to approach and explain what they observed in such terms.

Theory, or perspective, as ground for generating meaning

An important aspect of the therapists' stance was their theoretical knowledge, which predisposed them to a certain kind of understanding and explanation of what they observed. The therapists, for instance, noticed a change in the quality and course of the respondents' ways of engagement with the clay. This they explained in terms of different developmental phases, or conditions, in the respondents' lives. In being able to think in terms of the effects of personal history, the development of psychic structure, and the tendency of the past to play itself out in the present (as a form of theoretical thinking about human behaviour), it had been possible to understand the respondents' behaviour in psychologically meaningful terms.

Had the images, and their creation, not been assumed to represent a typical, or psychologically significant response of the respondents, which had become enacted and imposed on the clay, such actions and impressions on the clay may well have been construed differently. In giving credence to psychological aspects, as determinants of meaning, the therapists' understanding made it possible to view the images and respondents' behavior in terms of what it means to be a psychological person with a determining history, personality, and capable of engaging in a particular way in the world: a way that might be problematic for the self and others. Thus the perspective adopted by the therapists, when viewing and

thinking about each respondent and their images, served to help constitute reality in terms of its psychological meaning.

The use of theory made it possible, in Heidegger's (1962) terms, to show an aspect of *Being* in a certain light, which in turn served to bring it into presence. In Gadamer's (1975) terms, the adoption of a clinical perspective opened a horizon of meaning that would otherwise not

have been available to the participants.

6.2.1.5The clay as formative ground for generating meaning

The possibilities of a certain kind of meaning being generated did not only belong to given modes of understanding. The influence upon meaning was also provided by the plastic medium of the clay. The clay's assertion of particular qualities, such as smoothness, dynamic tension, volume and mass, informed the way the clay came to be perceived. Perceptions related to visual and sensual qualities in the clay, and also to particular forms (rather than others), which emerged for the participants as a result of becoming aware of the clay's being in their manipulation of it.

The clay also provided the opportunity for images to be more or less fruitfully executed. For instance, most of the images executed in the clay had a substantial, three-dimensional form. Where they did not, the clay, as construction medium, faltered, and ideas could not be fully realised. For instance, a clay `fence' that was supposed to have a `roof' on it, cracked and could not be made high, or substantial enough, and the crater of a clay volcano, that became too thin and wide, collapsed. It was the given potential of the clay that asserted itself upon the expectations of the respondents and caused them to recognise its independent existence and qualities, and to adjust their anticipations of it accordingly.

6.2.1.6The historical respondent as ground for generating meaning

What the respondents had at their disposal for understanding meaning took the form of an existing knowledge, and an anticipation of a certain kind of meaning provided by their own past, and recent experiences in the world. This experience had made it possible to understand, and relate meaningfully to the context within which they found themselves. It also provided them with a tendency to view their situations in a particular familiar light, and to anticipate a certain kind of outcome to their actions. What they expected to find, and had been able to anticipate in a general sense, they discovered in a particular, concrete form in the situation. Each respondent, for instance, discovered memories and experiences from the past, which found their significance in the present. One respondent had recently heard of the death of a friend by Aids. He remembered what they used to get up to as students, and, during the research, came to question the fragility of life, and the way people change, even in their sexual orientation. He also wondered about the unknown future personality attributes of himself. Another, having experienced a sexual abuse as a child, found herself feeling anxious about her clay image exposing her in this. A third, was reminded of his mode of approaching creative tasks in his life, and of his interest in nature and landscape as places to explore,

which found him wishing to create a ‘unique geography’ in his image. A fourth, found herself remembering making pottery in her past, and feeling compelled to ‘wedge’ and ‘slap’ down the clay as she had done before. She also remembered an elephant on TV, and a clay elephant someone else had made, and knew she wanted to create something similar.
In their response to the clay the respondents had brought themselves as beings with a world into a dialectical exchange with the clay and what it offered. Understanding the clay meant understanding the self in the clay by making the clay speak (Gadamer, 1975).

What the respondents had not been able to anticipate was the particular thoughts and images that emerged, and the particular self disclosures that were made, and how they would understand and react to these. For instance, the respondent who had made a volcano had wanted to make something `worthwhile' that could be `seen'. In feeling that its crater was too wide, and in remembering that it was being interpreted along the lines of her previous disclosure of a sexual abuse, she felt frustrated and ashamed, and that her image was ‘unhideable’. This caused her to destroy the image and want to leave. Her original intention to create something worthwhile had been frustrated by the particularities of what had seemingly emerged spontaneously, and by the non-compliance of the clay. However, what she had actually succeeded in doing was to convey a meaning to the therapist that she herself had not yet been aware of, or able to understand.

Apart from creating images, and having introduced remembered experiences, interests and concerns into the situation, which emanated from their histories and situations outside of the research, the respondents had brought into the current situation a context of meaning that was personal. In so doing they had been able to co-opt the situation in terms of their own interests and prior knowledge. Thus began a process in which the ingredients of a situation began to find a place within the context of each respondent's world.

6.2.1.7Lived experience as ground for generating meaning

What the respondents and therapists discovered in the situation, and in each respondent's action, with its effects upon the clay, became entirely meaningful in terms of each participant's own lived experience. The anticipations of a certain kind of meaning had provided a general orientation which had now been fulfilled in being concretised as the particular details of what had emerged: details which they were able to recognise in their meaningfulness. This included what was available to them in terms of familiar ways of identifying, and thinking about what they perceived. In this sense the participants participated

in the discovery of meaning by bringing themselves into the situation, responding to it, and by discovering that its meaning related to themselves. Thus what had initially seemed to be only clay in need of manipulation, and a group art therapy research situation within which they found themselves, became co-opted, and made meaningful in being discovered in it's familiarity, relevance and significance, not only for each participant's world, and the world in general, but, for their understanding of the art therapy research situation. What had made this possible was their own capacities for an understanding of that which had emerged.

Bodily experience as ground for generating meaning

To be able to effectively create and/or understand a three-dimensional clay image, knowledge about what it means to be a three-dimensional body in space is necessary. This knowledge comes from lived, bodily experience. As a body, we experience the quality of substantiveness and gravity as our own sense of mass and volume on the earth, and in the spatial world. We experience a verticality and horizontality through our sense of being perpendicular beings, with a head and feet which are respectively up and down. We experience a sense of space and extension through our ability to move around, reach out, pull towards ourselves, and draw away from. We experience an interiority in our capacity to keep our thoughts and feelings to ourselves. We experience shape and texture by means of our capacity for touch and sight. We experience, excitement, peace, quietness, business, anxiety, and agitation as a bodily way of feeling, and of being. All these dimensions of experience, although identifiable in part by language, are fundamental to what it means to be human as a body. This bodily experience occurs in the absence of articulation in language and thought, although, upon reflection, it is capable of some form of articulation: a form, nevertheless that cannot capture the vicissitudes, subtleties and depths of this experience, except in a metaphorical and abstract, thus distanced form. Bodily being is physically and emotionally sensed rather than readily thought about and articulated.

The responses of the participants in this study emanated from within the meaning-generating contexts of their own bodily being, with its history, and anticipation. In this sense, it conformed to that which Vico had understood to be a corporeally based understanding of the world, an understanding which rendered their experience familiar in terms of the vicissitudes of the body.

Bodily being as the meaning-generating ground of perception

In line with the thought of Merleau-Ponty (1962; 1967; Kwant, 1963; Madison, 1988; Wild, 1964), it becomes possible to understand that as human beings we are able to engage with our

world and notice ourselves engaging, and are thus able to assume the objectivity both of our own and the world's existence. We are also able to recall our experience and so bring to mind what is physically not present, and can thus assume the continued existence of things in the absence of immediate and direct perception. We have a sense of our own continuity and consistency over time and space, and can thus assume the continued existence, and stability of ourselves and other things in the world. We are aware of different qualities of perception, lived action, thought, and feeling in different situations, and over time, and can also thus assume the differentiation, within time, and space, and in different situations, of ourselves and other things in the world. We can thus assume different ways of being, and qualities of experience including our own demise. All this is not pursuant to the acquisition of language but is pursuant to the possibilities of meaning exerted by our awareness of being a body (bodily being) in the world.

The relevance of this explanation for the research is evident in the way the respondents and therapists were able to make various assumptions about what they were aware of. For instance, they assumed the 'objectivity' of what they remembered in the form of previously lived scenarios and issues, which pertained to their lives outside the research situation. They were aware of their images conveying particular qualities of being that they could themselves experience. In being understood, on one level, as the body's equivalent of being, these images, with their particular representative nature, were also accepted and treated as discrete objects in their own right, as something to be relied upon in their actuality, and which could exert a meaning, and influence, and be investigated in terms of these. They could also be returned to in their physical form, continuity, and consistency over time, for the purpose of determining such meaning.

Similarly, the memory, for instance, of a previous clay workshop, or an elephant on television, a relationship with a friend who had died, and a sexual abuse, were all accepted as something real that bore a meaningful, and determining relationship to each respondent, to his or her concerns, and to the images in the situation. Like actual things in the world, that impart some influence upon perception, action and thought could be regarded as having the possibility of being real, significant, and able to exert some influence. The existence of this kind of assumption, of a particular sense of what it means to be a body in relationship to the world, occurs in the absence of articulation and consensual thought, and constitutes what may be termed the pre-reflective level of human existence, as bodily experience that is lived and known beyond the level of an explicit awareness, thought and verbal articulation. It is also at this level that the respondents and therapists were able to intuitively grasp the significance and

importance of what was occurring in the situation.

6.2.1.8 Imagination as ground for generating meaning

The participants in the research were able to engage with the symbolic meaning of the words spoken between them. This ability to call to mind that which is not present, and to transcend the confines of present context by transporting the self imaginatively into other situations, or by importing meaning generated in other contexts into the context of the present, and by seeing one thing in terms of another, provides the opportunity for living creatively and imaginatively. This occurs in terms of transcending the literal meaning-circumscribing boundaries of existence, with its familiar meaning contexts, and transcending actual lived experience in time and space. Imaginative living occurs in terms of being able to transcend the constraints of consensual, literal and logical meaning. What makes this possible is the capacity to de-differentiate, and re-differentiate aspects of awareness, perception and thought which in turn serves to de-contextualize and re-contextualize them, and in so doing to discover their meaning.

The capacity to see some similarity between the clay, and an image in mind, action, intention and outcome, experience, perception and language, as a symbolizing means, and experience as a visceral bodily encounter in a world of already constituted meaning, makes the work of creative imagination possible as a means of bridging these divides in thought. Furthermore that which becomes present to awareness and thought tends to be identified in paradigmatic and systematic terms, which brings with it a certain logic of meaning, such as occurs in the meaning-generating grounds of particular known contexts, and traditional ways of thinking. Identifying experience in terms of certain memories, thoughts, and words, serves to contextualize experience by rendering it similar in some respects to that which is familiar. Hearing such thoughts and words serves to release in the imagination of the listener that which they refer to. To understand these words is to bring remembered experience to bare on them. Thus to hear a story about an experience is to create it in part by means of one's own imagination. To hear something told by means of language, within the context of a particular world view, is both to receive a meaning circumscribed, and made possible by the symbolic order of language, and given paradigms of thought, and to discover a meaning by means of what the words heard serve to conjure up in imagination. It is in this sense that reality is both discovered and created, and is something that comes about as meaning: a meaning which is relevant to, and has implications for, human existence.

6.2.1.9 Language as the ground for generating meaning

As beings born into a world in which language has been provided as a means of expression, and is used to think about, and speak about experience, the respondents and therapists were able to make use of this structuring means for grasping their awareness, and conveying its descriptive and consensual, symbolic meaning. Language is used to construct, convey, express, and release meaning which occurs in the communicator, listener and reader. This does not occur without the transformation of what may have been an original, experiential event into what can become formulated and understood as its meaning. The articulation of meaning, in consensual terms, relies upon the descriptive and symbolic means of speech and language at the disposal of the speaker, hearer, or writer.

Means of articulation, such as language, provide not only the necessary tools for grasping something in words, understanding these words, and conveying a meaning, but themselves implicitly influence the discovery and creation of the kind of meaning that emerges. The meaning that comes about in the production of speech and writing, takes the form of a symbolic 'representation', or equivalent, of lived experience in the world. It cannot, however, be equated with that experience, as language relies upon its own linguistic terms which have a particular nature and structure. Through the articulation process, complexities and subtleties of lived experience become constructed in a particular simplistic, and linear way. This is due to the grammatical structure of language. It is in this sense that Heidegger (1962) sees language as a means of interpretation, and interpretation as a simplification necessary for the showing of *Being*.

In the use of language, sentences are made to follow other sentences in a meaningful, and sequential way which forms narrative units. These units, together, convey experience as a structured composite unit, and/or sequence of actions, thoughts and intentions. A languaged account is made up of a hierarchy of conforming and opposing aspects, and in structuring experience and observations in language, a temporal sequence can be construed. Such an ordering serves to group, and story aspects, and dimensions of experience, and it is in the telling and hearing of a story that the meaning of existence, is revealed.

To relate a story about an experience, as the respondents and therapists were required to do in the research, was to have to conjoin a language and narrative structure to that of a lived, unarticulated, experienced bodily sense. What made this possible was the participants' knowledge of language as a way of construing the world as articulated meaning. That which was already available to them provided the means by which experience could be recognized and articulated, and in so doing made meaningful. In being able to identify and articulate the

details of their experience, the respondents and therapists had the means for recognizing it, and constructing it into an intelligible, coherent whole. In being able to speak about their experience in language, a common, consensual meaning of that experience, given by language (rather than the experience itself) could, furthermore, be instated.

The use of a common language, with its grammatical rules, ensures the possibility of communication. Furthermore, through the use of language, experience is made visible, and invisible thought is made public. Here, a past experience can also be made contemporaneous with a current situation, in being conjured up in imagination, as something spoken or written about.

In taking on a consensually meaningful structure in language, experience can be communicated and understood. The form of this articulated structure of experience, in conforming to certain rules of grammar links a subject to an object in each sentence. In this way a particular quality of relatedness between aspects of being is construed, conveyed and understood. This sense of structure and relatedness was thus inevitable in the participants' articulations in the research, built as they were upon the grammatical use of language. As language refers beyond itself to a world, the experience that language referred to became structured by means of that language. Through descriptive language, experience finds its context in the given symbolic order of the world, and languaged experience, in being received in imagination by means of a decoding of the referential aspects of language, becomes reality structured as meaning. It is in this sense that Heidegger's notion of language as `the house of *Being*' (Murray, 1974) came to be played out in the research. And it is in this sense that Husserl's notion of meaning predating its expression in language may be thrown into question.

It is in these terms too, that what emerged as awareness for the respondents and therapists gained a certain consensual meaning in being thought, spoken about, and written down. In so doing it no longer belonged to the unarticulated vicissitudes of a bodily experience, but became part of the communal world, in having been contextualized within the symbolic order. For one respondent, for instance, seeing and speaking about his actions as his own ‘creative process’, saw these actions instated as actions of a particular kind, which conformed to a communal sense of the meaning of the term `creativity'. Furthermore naming his experience in this way brought with it a certain kind of legitimation, and value, given the traditional status ascribed to creative action by the context of a world within which he found himself.

Without the capacity of the participants to conceptualise their experience in language, and their ability to articulate and describe such experience in language, this experience could not have become known to them in an explicit way. It could not have been grasped, let alone conveyed. Language brought to experience, not only structure, but traditional metaphors with which to think about experience in the form of semantic paradigms. Thus history and tradition, as the symbolic order, found a place for the experience of the participants in the research, within a context of what was known and accepted as true.

The role of language for realising the potential for meaning

The meaning-generating grounds constituted the potential for meaning in the art therapy situation: a potential that continually became realised through language in various and distinctive ways throughout the process of creating and understanding images. The potential for meaning already existed, and pre-empted the kind of discovery and creation of the meaning that was to come about within a whole process of languaged meaning formulation. It was only because the participants were `already in a situation', in being able to understand, via the use of language, that they were able to meaningfully and appropriately respond to it. This response, as thought and speech, symbolised their implicit understanding, and served to guide it by giving it a form, in the formulation of it. It is in this sense that Gadamer (1975) refers to a `horizon' of historical meaning within which we move, and which moves with us.

Language as imitation

In Platonic terms, the languaging of experience provided an `imitation' of that which was more fundamental and real (which was not the experience itself but was its true meaning). In Plato's (1956, in Warmington & Rouse; 1964, in Friëdlander) terms, formulated meaning, while `participating' in the truth, is not itself the truth, but points towards it. To arrive at this truth, a further discovery of the meaning of an imitation, representation, or formulation is required. In other words, understanding the image in art therapy, meant not only understanding what the images represented, but what this representation meant. In Heideggerian (1962) terms, the formulation of meaning through language, relates to an existential aspect of *Dasein*, which seeks to discover the true meaning of *Being*. In other words the participants in the research were fulfilling a natural aspect of their own natures, in identifying the nature of that which appeared to them, in order to grasp and understand it.

Language and forestructures of understanding

The role played by language in identifying lived experience, and its remembrance, within the anticipation of a particular kind of meaning, which pre-empted the recognition of certain

identifiable aspects in the research, can be explained in terms of the philosophical-hermeneutic notion of ‘fore-structures of understanding’. As previously mentioned, the Platonic belief in a `forgotten knowledge', and Vico's notion of a historical understanding, mentioned in *Part One* of this thesis, all speak of a given, more fundamental aspect behind the appearances of what amounts to superficial, or taken for granted meaning which relates to what is perceived in the world. As discussed, Heidegger and Gadamer, after Vico, understood that understanding is historical, traditional and inevitably and necessarily prejudicial and metaphorical.

In other words, what was in need of understanding in the research was firstly understood by the participants in terms of their general knowledge (provided to them through language), in that their ‘fore-structures of understanding’ became projected onto that which they perceived in the sense of having rendered it intelligible and familiar. These fore-structures came to the participants through their experience in the world, with its education, ways of thinking provided by culture, tradition and history, as well as the use of language, for grasping and conveying this understanding as meaning. These fore-structures pre-empted the formulation of meaning for the participants', and by virtue of their culturally determined, historical, metaphorical and linguistic nature, provided the possibility of a common, and public knowledge. But, as will be discussed, understanding in terms of that which was pre-empted, and familiar, is where the process of true understanding merely began but did not end.

What the notion of fore-structures of understanding can explain is the implicit influence of the participant's lived, previously formulated experience upon their response to the situation. However, the aspects that emerged in the situation also asserted their own nature, which had an influence upon awareness, resulting in the adjustment of anticipation. What the notion does explain is that bodily experience, as well as familiar ways of thinking about it, and formulating it as meaning, did have an inevitable influence upon the understanding of the participants. Traditionally, in art therapy, such influence has been recognised only in relation to ‘unconscious’ dimensions of experience, and the explanation tends to be given that this comes to be ‘projected’, as already constituted (although perhaps disguised) meaning, or in archetypal terms, as archetypal meaning, onto affect laden situations, including images in art therapy. What is not recognised is the general historical, and traditional influence, passed down through language, that is inevitably played out in all forms of knowledge.

The limitations of forestructures of understanding

It is clear from the analysis that there was a level at which the respondents were not able to recognize, or readily articulate the meaning of what was occurring. They did not always know, for instance, how to account for the way they found themselves automatically responding to the clay in a certain way. They had not intended their own spontaneous thoughts, memories, and images in mind, nor did they always know what they were thinking or doing on the video-recording. Furthermore, while the respondents were able to implicitly understand the general nature of the situation within which they found themselves, and were in a position to identify what had emerged in it as the identifiable particularities of actions, images and thoughts, they were not initially able to understand the deeper meaning of what was being experienced and observed.

The forestructures of understanding of the participants, given the meaning-generating grounds of language, helped them name particular concrete shape, or form in the clay. This was made possible by the capacities of language to identify, as actions, images and thoughts, but not necessarily their relationship to the enigmatic form of the image in clay, which seemed to embody a level of being that escaped articulation.

6.3THE FORMULATED LEVEL OF UNDERSTANDING

6.3.1The realization of meaning in response to implicit questions

As Gadamer (1975) says, "interpretation always involves a relation to the question that is asked of the interpreter" (p.333), and, to "understand a text means to understand the question" (p.333). What the respondents came to answer in relationship to the implicit question about the meaning of the clay, was answered in the images produced. These images were themselves also answers to the question about the meaning of the art therapy situation for certain participants, which was the answer itself to a research question, and ultimately a question to do with the meaning of life. As the ancient Greeks, and Heidegger understood, questioning is part of the human quest to understand. It is "more a `passion' than an action" (Gadamer, 1975, p.330). "Only a person who has questions can have knowledge" (p.328).

What the participants were to say about their experiences in the production of images procedure was itself a response to an implicit question about the nature of their experience. This response was itself in need of being questioned if an understanding of the images and their creation was to occur. This questioning relied upon the articulated descriptions which were themselves formulations of meaning given, in and by language in response to the situation. These formulations relied upon language, and the ability to describe what had emerged in experience, and also occurred in the form of actual images, which in turn had relied upon the participants' questioning stance. In Gadamer's (1975) terms,

> It is of the essence of the question to have sense. Now sense involves direction. Hence the sense of the question is the direction in which alone the answer can be given if it is to be meaningful. A question places that which is questioned within a particular perspective. The emergence of the question opens up, as it were, the being of the object (p.326).

In attempting to understand their situation, by responding to it in terms of implicit and explicit questions the participants in the research provided the images, and various descriptive formulations as the answers, which at first, spoke to the nature and quality of their own experiences, and awareness of the situation. These images and descriptive accounts constituted a realisation of meaning in relation to the mere potential for meaning provided by the meaning generating grounds in the research.

During the production experience, as they responded bodily and spontaneously, the attention of the respondents and therapists had been immersed in what was occurring in relation to the clay, and what was occurring in memory, and thought. Thus, implicit in what had emerged so

far as meaning was their own questioning stance that was poised to discover a certain kind of descriptive meaning. This emerged for the therapists in the form of written notes, and for the respondents as thoughts and actions described to the researcher. The process of description had served to formulate experience into something which could be understood and communicated. It did not yet convey the deeper meaning of experience.

What had emerged initially in the awareness of the participants, during the image production procedure, was simply discrete actions, thoughts, memories, concerns, and particular qualities of, and shapes in, the clay. This emergence, while natural and familiar, was not yet understood beyond its expression, and identity in the clay, and in memory and thought. What had emerged in awareness, as unanticipated details of experience, along with the novelty of the particular, non-prosaic clay images, which differed quite significantly in their visual aspects from actual, known and familiar things, called for an investigation into their meaning. While they could be identified as images of this or that, they as yet held no answer to the requirement for a certain kind of meaning, given the art therapy research situation. What had emerged, as unprecedented images, was to ultimately convey so much more about the respondents and their worlds than was previously anticipated, or known, at the time of creating the images. The anticipation of meaning has been explained in terms of meaning-generating grounds of potential meaning. What has yet to be explained is the process and effects of the realization of meaning, as articulated expression, given this meaning potential, and given what emerged as the unanticipated particular concrete ingredients of the situation.

6.3.2The realisation of meaning in response to the clay

Prior to formulating their experience within the world of thought and language, the clay had been experienced by the respondents on a visual, tactile, and kinaesthetic level, and in this way had come to be contextualized within their own bodily experience, with its vicissitudes of affect, and a historical past. This experience belonged to each respondent's physical existence in the world, an existence which was largely pre-reflective, and which words could not always fully, or adequately, convey in its visceral and visual aspects. This physical experience was private and did not yet belong to the world of symbolic meaning, as it had not yet been brought to articulation and thought. It had been lived, but until it became formulated in thought and language, it was not yet capable of being explicitly known.

The physical engagement with the clay had soon called forth memories, images, and associations of a bodily kind, which occurred, in thought, as remembered or imagined visual scenarios. What happened on an unarticulated level, in the form of a bodily responding,

provided a sense of being connected to, and 'one' with the clay: a sense which was accompanied by familiar words or thoughts, visual scenarios, visual impressions, memories, and identified forms in the clay. This accompaniment saw the beginnings of what was to develop into an emerging context of meaning, forged from a relationship that would be understood and articulated by the participants between these various, emergent ingredients of the situation.

6.3.3The lack of conscious intention in the emergence of concrete details

In spite of having had a general idea of what was expected of them in the situation, and of being able to orient themselves accordingly, what had emerged spontaneously during the production procedure (in the form of images in mind, actions, associations, thoughts and memories), had not been something intended. What the participants had become aware of had appeared during their responsiveness to the situation. Each participant had noticed what was occurring, without being prescriptive or intentional about it. What they naturally wanted to do, and what was incumbent upon them, was to understand, describe and explain the identity and relevance of what had emerged (as if spontaneously), in terms of their natural curiosity, and given the brief of the situation, and for this purpose they had paid particular attention to it.

6.3.4The discovery of grounded and symbolic meaning

Being able to find familiar forms in the clay, and having memories and thoughts that they could identify as their own, had brought into the situation a dimension of meaning that was both personal, other, and worldly, in that it seemed to both emanate from themselves, and from the clay, yet pertained to known meaning categories and familiar contexts. The situation had become co-opted by the participants in its being rendered meaningful in their perceptions, and their experience became grounded and available to them in the form of something concrete, and in the form of a symbolic world context, both beyond the immediacy of the current situation, and within its practical concerns.

6.3.5Responsiveness as the need for mastery

The natural responsiveness of the participants to the situation within which they found themselves was part of the interest that pertains to what it means to be human, and interested in a world: a responsiveness which Heidegger (1962) calls 'care' or *sorge* that occurs naturally in response to that which *presences* in the world. In his terms, the participants' spontaneous need to identify what had emerged in awareness belonged to a historical trend that began in ancient Greek times (Heidegger, 1977, in Lovitt), a trend which relates to the

need for ‘mastery’ over experience. It was the participants’ need to master the situation they found themselves in that saw them formulate its nature in awareness, action, thought, and words.

6.3.6Responsiveness as the realisation of meaning

The participants’ own past experience, with its accrued knowledge, language and anticipations, came to the fore in response to the current situation and made it possible for them to discover there something they could identify, and in so doing, could identify with, in terms of what they already knew and had come to anticipate. What they discovered was both subjective and familiar, objective and worldly. Through the identification in perception of the particularities of awareness, an intelligible form of reality emerged. In being realized as this or that, awareness in the situation was a meaningful awareness, and experience took on an objectified form. In being identified, clay was no longer merely clay to be squeezed, or flattened, but became, for instance, an old flower, or a bird, in the eyes of the participants. This realisation had relied upon the participants’ capacities to remember what they knew, and to use images, thought and language to formulate it. An old flower became a comforting genital form in the face of concerns about sexuality and mortality, and a bird became a creative elaboration in the face of concerns about personal creativity.

Just as the notion of *techné*, for the Greeks had meant `bringing reality into presence’, in conjunction within the circumscribing bounds of the medium used for doing so, so understanding the meaning of lived experience, with its actions and awareness, had required the use of the clay medium, language and thought for its recognition. Furthermore, it was in such a recognition that the expression of this reality occurred. In Gadamer’s (1975) terms, it was in a dialects of exchange that the particularities of awareness were met by the general possibilities of meaning conveyed by the situation, such as the clay, and the participants’ existing knowledge as understanding. Their formerly accrued knowledge had met the unanticipated concrete details of the situation, and helped in the process of interpreting them. In their awareness, shapes in the clay became familiar shapes, as well as verbally articulated identified shapes, and significant forms. Thus, what had been an existing knowledge of the possibilities of identity and meaning pertaining to familiar, known forms, took on a particular concrete expression in being identified as aspects of the clay in the present situation.

6.3.6.1Responsiveness as the realisation of a forgotten bodily existence

The expression of a bodily kind of knowledge in the clay, served to convey the identity of known forms in the clay in a particular, novel and enigmatic kind of way that related to the

clay and to the depths of each respondent's bodily being rather than to only known categories of meaning. In so doing, this objectified, bodily expression called forth a questioning kind of recognition. It was this novel, meaningful, concrete expression that grasped the attention of the participants, and which served to stimulate a further responsiveness, and further meaning associations.

By showing, for instance, the imprints of her hands, the clay had served to remind one respondent about the `crinkled' skin of an elephant. Furthermore, memories of elephants she knew, and the dynamic tensions she perceived in the clay, as well as the idea that she wished to create an elephant-like form, put her in touch with a sense of natural power and balance. In having been reminded of this quality of being by her thoughts, and by the clay, which had 'imitated' it, she had then been able to both recognise, and bring into presence this quality of being. Later, the therapist, had attempted to get her to see the relevance of this quality of being for her own life (which she seemed reluctant to do). All this had been pursuant to having at first been reminded of something forgotten, yet known, that had, in ancient Greek terms, been `imitated' by the clay and its forms. Aristotle's notion of imitation, as a fiction that augments aspects of reality can be applied to this situation, in which the clay image presented the participant with an understanding of a dimension of reality (naturalness, power, and balance), in a novel, thus inviting kind of way.

It is in this sense that the meaning-generating grounds, with their 'pre-figured' forms of meaning (Ricoeur, 1991, in Valdés) provided the necessary means for making it possible to understand, not only the situation within which the participants found themselves, but also the details of their awareness that had emerged spontaneously. 'Pre-figured', potential meaning became 'configured', formulated meaning in being realized first in perception and thought, and later in being spoken and written about. At first this formulation occurred on the level of an identification of the details of awareness, and later, in the dialogues, came to be construed in a more narrative and explanatory form, which served to conjure up a way of being which related to each respondent and the way they lived in the world.

6.3.6.2Responsiveness as the articulation of meaning

In having at first taken stock of what was occurring in their experience, and in identifying it, and then needing to describe and explain it, the respondents and therapists used the means at their disposal for doing so. Apart from choosing, and finding the right words with which to grasp and convey the details of what they had lived, describing their experience and observations was a matter of finding ways to formulate it, and, in so doing, discovering what

seemed relevant. The event of articulation itself opened up new directions in thought about the production experience. What occurred as remembered details of awareness met the possibilities of expression in language, possibilities which structured experience in a particular light. This structure in turn also circumscribed the possibilities of a certain kind of meaning for experience.

The formulation of meaning during the articulation event, while grounded in the possibilities of a linguistic, consensual, paradigmatic form of meaning, was also grounded in the details of a lived experience, and grounded in the sense of what each participant currently found to be meaningful. In this way, the symbolic, consensual, particular, individual, pre-reflective and reflective, unarticulated and articulated aspects of experience came together, and in a dialectics of exchange, understanding emerged.

6.3.7Verbal articulation as the customary mode of formulating understanding

Verbally articulated understanding was the customary mode in which knowledge about experience in the world had been, and could be conveyed to, and received by the participants. It was thus an entirely familiar and integral part of their existence, and, as articulate participants, they had no difficulty in using language for the purpose of describing their experience. However, there had been no set precedent in deciding which words and phrases were appropriate for describing what had been, and was being, lived. What had occurred as lived experience had to be formulated in the choice of words used to identify it. Words and experience thus influenced one another in a dialectics of exchange during the articulation process, to produce the articulated accounts.

6.3.7.1The possibilities opened up by the naming of experience

Discovering the names for identifiable forms in the clay was made possible, in part, by an existing knowledge of the appearance and names of familiar known forms. Known forms already have an identity provided to them by the cultural world through its language. Identifying forms in the clay, that could be named, thus also meant understanding what these names meant, in terms of their reference, and consensual meaning. For instance, perceiving the clay as an ‘elephant’ or ‘volcano’, meant being able to locate what the clay offered in these known terms, or categories of existence. Such names had served to locate the clay within an existing knowledge, or context of familiar meaning. The discovery of named shapes in the clay had also served to author it, and had provided the participants with a sense of intention as they had been the ones to recognise these shapes, discover their names, and bring such shapes into an alignment with such names.

The naming of experience was the first phase in a process of an explicit recognition of meaning. Naming and describing the shapes in the clay, however, did not do justice to the meaningfulness that the clay seemed to harbour, as the expression of the body's being. The taken-for-granted meaning of names, and identified forms, did not yet speak to this meaningfulness, until a context of meaning had been established in the later dialogues, within which these names lost their taken for granted quality and became symbolic of something other than their taken-for-granted meaning.

6.3.7.2The instatement and possibilities of consensual meaning in the identification and naming of experience

The verbal description of the production experience saw experience presented in the particular words, phrases and sentences chosen to describe it. Although influenced by remembered and viewed experience, what came to be instated in this process was a construction in the form of a descriptive, fictional account of experience, by each respondent and therapist. This account, having been developed from the opaque depths of a bodily experience, and from the identification of the details of awareness, was based upon a linguistic structure.

In being able to relate the particular details of a former situation, in the form of described memories, thoughts and images, the horizons of potential meaning pertaining to these articulated details brought with them both a consensual horizon of possible meaning and the participants' associations to such articulations. The process of finding the right words with which to grasp and convey experience, had seen experience being formulated into that which was abstract, and objective, in that it had a consensual meaning, could be made public, and could be further interrogated.

In being named, shapes in the clay no longer belonged only the to the clay, or to the solipsistic orbit of each respondent's experience of the clay as a bodily extension of the self, but came to be placed in a meaning context where they existed as part of a given semantic field of meanings. Such names became a representation of this field in their own right, separate from the meaning intended by each respondent or therapist. The identification of aspects of the situation as this or that, saw them now also belong to the symbolic, objective world. Thus, what was felt to be meaningful in being named, came to be placed outside the self's own jurisdiction, and became stated in objective, and general terms. In this way the passioned involvement with the clay came to be instated as a reasoned articulation, and the vicissitudes of a bodily experience came to have a symbolic, and objective representation.

6.3.8Articulation as a restructuring of experience

What came to be conveyed in a formulation of experience, was not the experience itself, but its representation (imitation) which provided this experience with a meaningful structure. This structure was the articulation itself, but was understood as that to which it referred. The formulation of experience continued with every attempt at its articulation, thus experience became structured and restructured. The words used in the therapists' notes from behind the mirror, and the respondents' descriptions as they watched the video-recording, as well as the dialogues between the respondents and therapists, formed and reformed a once lived, now remembered experience, in a dialectics of exchange that occurred between memory, current understanding, perceived significance, and articulating means.

The use of words and grammar had evoked their own associations, and made it possible not only to rearrange the details of a past experience in terms of an emerging understanding, in order to show it in a particular light, but, this linguistic organisation is what served to render experience recognizable, intelligible and communicable. It is in this sense that language served not only a representational function, but a productive, creative function. What was spoken and written provided its own possibilities for meaning, which were no longer confined to the actual details of a former awareness, and the way they had occurred at the time of the production experience, but served to disclose and shift their meaning in the very construction of it.

6.3.8.1The necessity of an articulated construction for the recognition of meaning

It was in seeing and understanding the 'difference' between the clay as clay, and words, as words in distinction from the images, and in being able to name the clay, and understand the meaning of such names and words that each participant had been able to recognize something meaningful in the situation. As Kruger (in Stones, 1996) says, "the word affords us not only a naming grasp of a thing that is present, but rather it is that which first grants presence to the thing" (p.17). This statement explains how finding an 'elephant-shape', for instance, in the clay brought it into presence. There had been an experience of the clay, that had, at first, not been recognised as anything more than a substance with a certain consistency and temperature, until it could be named.

What had confronted each respondent in their attempts to describe their experience, and images, was both what they felt to be deeply, and personally meaningful (in that it had occurred as a result of their own bodily expression), and what was entirely foreign in these

terms, as that which belonged in name to known categories of existence and meaning in the world. It was this disjunction between what was experience, what could be identified in the clay, and what was possible in terms of the meaning of this identity, that called forth further interpretation and thought. This disjunction created a fruitful paradox which needed to be resolved. This resolution was to see one thing being related to, and explained in terms of another. It also saw the meaning of words themselves become syncretistic, as they straddled different aspects of the situation. Words came to gain a symbolic depth of meaning, rather than remaining confined to the consensual meaning of terms.

It was, for example, once a ‘volcano’ had been identified in the clay, and in having been identified, reminded the respondent of the way a volcano should look, a realisation that had engaged her in trying to get the volcano to `look right'. This she had not been able do, both in terms of her own body’s capacity for expression, and in terms of the response of the clay in its reception of impressions made by her hands. Her engagement in the difficult process of bringing the volcano to form, had brought with it unintended associations, thoughts, memories and sensations which had seemed to find some echo in the clay as she worked with it. The reciprocal exchange between herself and the responsive clay had fully implicated the respondent in what was occurring, and, in being frustrated in her intentions to get the volcano to `look right', she had begun to feel that the clay, and its image, was ‘someone else’s’. While the clay had at first conformed to her actions and expectations, she had not recognised its separateness and difference from herself, and what she was thinking. It was only in this failure to conform to expectation, and in this recognition of separateness, that she was able to recognise that the image meant something else, and had interpretative possibilities. Having seen it in a new light, from the therapist's imagined perspective, and in the context of art therapy that she was reminded that the image revealed something significant about herself. When she was able to see the image from the therapist's point of view, as a symbol, or representation of an experience of sexual abuse, she felt exposed, and that the image was shamefully ‘unhideable’. Here, once again, she felt identified with the clay, but this time her identification was with its symbolic meaning. Her perception of what had taken on a consensual, or legitimate form, as volcano, and then as a symbol of a sexual abuse, saw her discovering its `objective' meaning, then reclaiming its meaning for herself as an expression of her own experience. What the respondent had forgotten, but already knew on an implicit level (as she had already experienced it), she also could now remember and know more explicitly through the symbolic image. This had been made possible, firstly in a recognition of the clay, and its form, as an `otherness'(volcano), or something different from herself, and secondly in its interpretation, as a sexual violation, which imitated her own, bodily

experience.

It is suggested, in these terms, that what is traditionally referred to as the unconscious in art therapy, is something experienced yet forgotten, which can only become conscious in being recognised, firstly in its difference, and distinctiveness, as something that has a shape or form, unrelated to the self, and then in its relationship to the self. Prior to its being identified in consensual terms, then co-opted in terms of its meaning for the self, it cannot be recognized in its true meaning. Once recognized in its consensual meaning, it is capable of being re-recognised, in being re-thought and spoken about, in terms of its implications for the self. In having no grounding in existing consensual possibilities of meaning, it cannot be thought or spoken about, and finds no place in the known, and familiar world, thus cannot throw light on the personal world. It is only in being identified that experience begins to lose its solipsistic claims of being submerged in the sea of ongoing experience, and gains a place in the world of consensual meaning, where it can then become productive. Once identified, it becomes something separate, which can then be related to, focused upon, and questioned. It is in terms of a questioning, or relationship of the self to `superficial' meaning, and a participation in what this may mean, that its significance becomes apparent.

Naming experience, is not yet properly understanding it. In being named, experience shows itself in its surface, and taken-for-granted, consensual aspects. Like Plato's sensible particulars, which were not themselves the truth, but which pointed towards it, this truth needed to be worked out on the path to knowledge. What was required was an interrogation of the meaning of what seemed apparent. Identifying images in the research, for instance, in terms of known categories of existence, was but a first step in the process of discovering their true meaning. It was, nevertheless, an important step, in the sense that something came to be recognised, thus providing the opportunity for focusing on it, and questioning its meaning. This identification process provided the opportunity for an interrogation of the

meaning of these identified ingredients in the situation in the sense of asking what they meant for the situation.

In Ricoeur's (1976) terms, the creation of images, and a languaging of experience constitutes a *creative mimesis* that does not so much reproduce or imitate, as 'augment'. By articulating their lived experience in clay, and in words, aspects of such experience became highlighted, by being shown to the participants in a certain light. In this sense the articulation of experience is always already an interpretation of experience, and an objectification. In being

realized by the participants, `pre-figured' meaning potential became 'configured' as articulated experience. This configuration, as an expression of life was a creative structuring that served to show experience in only certain of its aspects. This is what Heidegger (1962) means when he says interpretation is a simplification for the recognition of *Being*. Describing the image, showed that which had been experienced and implicitly known, and 'pre-figured' in a bodily sense. In this way, aspects of a bodily being became open to view, and could then be questioned in terms of their meaning.

As "pre-understanding of what human action is, of its semantics, its symbolism, its temporality" (1991, Riceour, in Valdés) this articulated expression, in plastic, and in verbal form, was not yet fulfilled in its true meaning. The discovery of meaning, while a discovery based on prior experience, knowledge and assumptions about meaning, was the discovery of meaning in the application of thought and language, firstly to the image, and secondly to what was said about it, and other issues and scenarios, and was the discovery of meaning for each respondent's psychological situation, as part of the brief of an art therapy situation. Such thought and language was further able to open up meaning given the context, and the requirements of the situation.

6.3.8.2The imitatory and productive function of the words used to formulate understanding

Words, and the structure of experience given in language, like the ancient Greek notion of *mimemata*, are like 'imitations' which point towards reality. To bring the familiarity of language as `pre-figured' meaning potential, to bear upon experience, is to provide the means for recognising, and, ultimately, contributing towards an understanding of it. Here, the potential for meaning, given in past and traditional uses of language, that pertain to various contexts in the world, provides the means for formulating meaning in the present. The experience of understanding an image made out of clay, is not a matter of discovering what already exists as pre-existent, already constituted meaning, but is bringing pre-reflective understanding to a configurated meaning, by means of language, given the particular and general context within which such a formulation occurs. The process of creating and understanding the image is a creative *mimesis*, as an 'imitation' or 'configuration' of meaning (Ricoeur, 1991, in Valdés). The image, and words spoken, are the outcome of a wish to express meaning, but this expression is also an imitation and not yet true meaning. Meaning is that which comes about once what is known about the image and the respondent, and the context they find themselves in, including legitimate ways of thinking about it, falls into place.

In ancient Greek terms, in "being reminded of one thing by some different but similar thing, one notices the reminding thing lacks something (*ti elleipei*) in its similarity to the thing it calls to mind" (Patterson, 1985, p.98). Recognition as a means of accessing the truth (which in Greek terms was that which is, or that which could possibly be), depends upon the capacity for making a distinction, and being aware of both similarity and difference. For instance, the images `reminded' the participants of what they already knew, and in speaking about this knowledge, the meaning of words spoken came to be recognised in terms of their possibilities of meaning. Hearing and thinking about these words heard, brought new meaning into view which was different from, yet related to, these images and words. It was by virtue of their difference from actual lived experience that the words used were in a position to remind the participants of what they already knew, and what was possible, rather than only of what they had perceived in the situation. As symbols, or representations of experience, words have a `surplus' of meanings. But, understanding such meaning requires something to be `heard' in terms of the listener's own understanding, as that which these words conjure up for him or her, given their existing possibilities of meaning.

In the research, components of a remembered experience took up a certain relationship to other components, as the words spoken fulfilled their grammatical, semantic, and referential task. This establishment of a linguistic structure, in both referring back to a previous experience, and bringing new aspects of existence into view, saw this experience gain in meaning by gaining in context. What the understanding of the meaning of words had served to do was to replace a former event in the minds of the participants through its connection to a symbolic order. It in fact served to create a type of experience in their understanding.

6.3.8.3Understanding words spoken, or written, as an imaginative construction of meaning

Words (like images) point beyond themselves to that which they reveal, but what they reveal relies upon a reception in understanding and imagination. This reception is not passive, but is itself a constructive event. While the respondent whose friend died of AIDS did not seem aware of any connection between his description of the creative process, his identified images, and the story he had to tell about his friend, the researcher, as listener was able to receive the description in a manner which served to formulate an understanding of the respondent's images in the light of the story told. This is due to the synthetic, meaning-generating nature of human understanding, which serves to connect experience, and to `gather meaning through remembrance' (Heidegger, 1978, in Krell), and in art therapy, applies a paradigm of thought which assumes the notion of the image as symbol of, for instance, its creator's psyche. This nature makes it possible to 'read into' a description about the image, the details of a story

about a friend.

As Aristotle had said about the tendency of humankind to connect experience, it was the capacity of the respondents, researcher and therapists to connect aspects of their experience in their attempt to understand it, and in their attempt to formulate it. In the early part of the dialogues, this tendency to gather meaning, by accruing and confirming understanding, saw the development of a context emerge within which the respondents' issues, actions and images increasingly came to find a place, and to relate to one another. Furthermore, the past came to inform the meaning of the present, as the clay, and its images, served as reminders of past experience. Furthermore, what was suggested in the clay came to be connected to thoughts about issues. In this way a gathering occurred, which was to see a context of meaning emerge that was to unify different dimensions of the participant's experience in understanding.

It seemed fairly obvious to the researcher and therapists (as listeners) that the images bore a symbolic relationship to each respondent's described issues, while each respondent seemed initially less aware of such a connection while relating their experience. Just as identified (named) shapes in the clay had reminded the participants of things they already knew, so words heard by the researcher did the same. While finding the right words with which to describe a lived experience meant that the respondents focused on the process of translating a lived sense into its representation, hearing those same words turned the attention of the listener to what that representation might refer to, which was released as meaning in imagination.

Understanding experience via its configuration in language, resulted in a release of meaning in the listener, who came to mediate the consensual meaning of such words heard, in his or her own imaginative terms. For example, in one dialogue, the therapist tells the respondent that she sees something like an `organic fish-like form' in the clay image, which reminds the therapist of the respondent’s love for landscape. He hears these words, and understands their reference, and, in remembering their literal meaning, can bring such meaning to bear on his image, which now emerges in his perception in a new light. This results in a series of further memories, and the respondent is reminded of the importance that organic form has for him, and of a series of dreams which started when he began writing his thesis. These dreams are about fish, which he recognises as a `symbol' not yet understood by him. He reconstructs one such dream for the therapist, of a fish caught in a web, or tangle of string: a fish that is in threat of being unpicked, or constricted, in being further entangled by a hovering bird with a sharp beak. In thinking about this remembered dream he imagines that the bird signifies

something intellectual. On hearing what the respondent has to say, the therapist then remembers recognizing a `bird of prey' in the respondent's evolving image: an image she had thought was going to become an eagle. Upon hearing this, the respondent now imagines the sense of a `hovering', and thinks of his creative process as the `waiting with an idea', `that sort of watching' that the clay process has required of him. He notices that what looks like a human figure-type form in the clay, seems like a mother, and seems to express the sense of `watching over'. In relating this back to himself, he then things about the development of a mothering aspect in himself, and the sense that as a child he was `on the loose', and brought up with only one parent, (given that his father had died in a plane crash when he was five years old). He surmises that perhaps this has resulted in a certain 'wildness', and a consequent lack of structure, in his creative process. His projects seem to him to be, `like slosh all over the place'. What he expects of himself, but does not fulfill, is that he should think through a task before he embarks on it.

Here we see how engaging with an interpretation, and the polysemic meaning of the words spoken heard (given the horizon of meaning that had developed), allowed the participants to explore what the words suggested. A `hovering and watching', for instance, brought into view ideas and associations which related to the world of the image, to the respondent's life, and to an aspect, and quality of his own being. From words spoken and heard, given the context in which they emerged, an understanding about the self emerged. The words, as fictions, had served as imitations that reminded the respondent and therapist of something they implicity knew, but which confronted them in a new light. This occurred because the participants were able to place themselves within a viewpoint suggested by such words, and by virtue of the context of understanding they were in, and the meaning it conjured up. They could learn something via such `heuristic fictions' (1991, Ricoeur, in Valdés) about their own situation.

Here, one is reminded of Aristotle's views on plot as an abstraction, or fiction, that follows certain rules, and which presents a creative *mimesis* - "a kind of thing that might happen, i.e. what is possible as being probable or necessary" (1964, Aristotle, in Friedlander, p.106). Interpretations heard had presented the participants with certain scenarios relating to that which was possible in the images, in life in general, and in their particular lives. In engaging with the logic of what was possible, they were able to recognise something about themselves. We are also reminded of Gadamer's notion of `play' as recognition, a notion which acknowledges Plato's view that the 'known', "enters into its true being and manifests itself as what it is only when it is recognized. As recognized it is grasped in its essence, detached from

its accidental aspects" (Gadamer, 1975, p.103). And what is more, this, "is wholly true of the kind of recognition that takes place in relation to what is represented in play", in other words, a fiction that `augments' an aspect of reality.

It is here that it is also possible to understand Plato's notion of '*particulars*' which have no possibility in and of themselves of being the truth, yet which participate in the truth, and point beyond themselves towards the truth. *Sensible particulars,* such as words heard, provide a means of access to the truth. It is the reminding function served by words, for instance, that serves to bring experience into presence, as this or that kind of experience. As Heidegger (1962) understood, the use of language to describe experience is already an interpretation. In other words, it is a formulation that brings into view what is implicit in understanding by construing it as this or that. Language thus serves to co-construct the nature of `*Being'*. The reception of words spoken, in Plato's terms, however, was still not yet the truth of meaning. A further engagement upon the `path to knowledge' was to occur, with a `rubbing together' of various cognitive and intuitive modes, each with its own level of experiential relatedness, before a proper understanding could arise. From a philosophical-hermeneutic perspective, a `fusion of horizons' (Gadamer, 1975) was needing to occur, once all the aspects of the understanding of the participants at last suddenly seemed to "receive full illumination" (Gadamer, 1975, p.168).

In having been formulated as the nature of an experience, in having been identified, and meaningfully re-arranged in linguistic and descriptive terms, a representation (imitation) of experience provided the means for a necessary `interrogation'. This took the form of interpretations of the images, and explanations of the meaning of a formulated experience, which could now be regarded as a `text'. The 'configuration' which had occurred in the thinking, speaking and writing about experience heralded a reflexivity on the part of the participants, that gave them an ability to see the implications for meaning of identified actions, thoughts and images. Such meaning, in turn, contributed to further understanding of the respondents.

6.3.8.4The circumscription of meaning potential in the act of its realisation

For the moment, in having been identified as this or that, and realized in its linguistic identity, and then understood in its referential meaning, the potential for meaning in the situation became narrowed down, circumscribed, and somewhat foreclosed upon. The qualities of the clay, its shapes, remembered images, associations, thoughts about issues, disclosures made,

and the observed actions and their impact upon the clay, in receiving a meaning through being described in language which also saw them receive a relationship to one another. The discovery of an 'elephant', or 'volcano' began to take up a symbolic meaning in relation to their creator's psychological world, in spite of the possibility of the same shapes in the clay being capable of conveying something of a different name, or of being symbols of something else. What had come to be experienced in relation to these named forms, was something personal, complex and multi-layered in terms of meaning, as it pertained to the respondents' lives (past and present), their needs, and their experiences. The images of a 'volcano', 'mound', 'elephant', 'woman in a kimono', and 'generic face' had implicitly come to stand for a way of being in the world that related to their creator, and no longer had the possibility of meaning something else, at least in the research situation.

What had occurred from the time that the respondents were first able to identify and name shapes in the clay was a whole process of discovery and creation of context which saw meaning emerge. In taking on a linguistic form, the possibilities of meaning in the situation became both circumscribed, highlighted, and organized in a certain way. Identifying experience in terms of existing categories of meaning, and arranging these into a unit in understanding provided a structural coherence, and a logic of meaning to experience that had not existed before, and which now excluded contradictory information. Due to the nature of verbal articulation, with its conformity to the given rules of language, lived experience became transformed into a rule-governed structure. This structure, with its descriptive, temporal sequencing of actions and intentions, provided the means whereby experience could be understood as type, quality, and unit of experience.

This instatement of coherence in the situation carried with it a depth of experience, known to be true and a certain sense of commitment and acceptance of its reliability and actuality. That which had been understood, as the meaning of images had lost its literal meaning in favour of a symbolic meaning. In Plato's terms the surface appearance of images had begun to yield a deeper psychological meaning.

6.3.8.5The influence of the hermeneutic task at hand in the formulation of meaning

In formulating an understanding of the images, the participants had drawn upon their implicit knowledge of what they already understood, and had discovered in the situation. The

hermeneutic task that had faced the therapists required of them to use what information was available to them, including their observations, to translate, what in effect had been the observation of a visually perceived event, with its images, into its psychological meaning. The hermeneutic task for the respondents was one of understanding themselves through an interrogation of their own actions, thoughts, and created images. The hermeneutic task itself implicitly guided the participants in their attempts to understand what had emerged in the situation, by enabling them to adopt a certain interpretative focus which served to mediate their understanding.

6.3.8.6The transformation of lived experience through its reproduction and formulation

A transformation of the lived experience of creating images had already occurred when a video and audio recording was made of it. This recording of action had succeeded in retaining the visual modality of the production event. Such recorded experience had in the process lost its sense of something 'yet to be accomplished', with future, possible alternatives and uncertainties about outcome, and had become distinct and detached from the respondents' intentions and responses at the time of producing their images. Experience had thus taken on the quality of an envisioned process of action and reaction (which was entirely familiar in a world in which the observer status is adopted in relation to things seen (van der Berg, 1972)). Its 'fixation', and transformation, in a video-recording of it, had served to emphasize what could be visually determined about the experience, and had in this way, reinforced a sense of agency and meaning as the respondents' intended actions upon the clay, a sense which formed part of a traditional paradigm of thought given by the world. The opportunity given to each respondent for viewing themselves in action 'from the outside', so to speak, had provided them with a kind of spectator-distanced perspective which fitted in with the way they understood their worlds as something `objective'. This mediated what had previously been experienced as a receptive, sensual, tactile, reflective, relational and responsive experiencing that had not yet been aware of its outcome. In a dialects of exchange between a remembered, lived experience, and the 'fixed' experience on a video-recording of it (both of which had served to show the experience in a particular light), these two modes of experienced reality had influenced one another in a dialectics of exchange, and in being mediated by language.

The dialectics of exchange between the use of language, a visual representation of experience, remembered experience, and the need to make coherent, and communicable sense, saw experience construed in a particular light that broke certain ties with the way it had actually been lived. The presentation of experience in a verbal description of it, was itself a construction of experience, rather than a reproduction of it. Nevertheless, in having been

lived, objectified experience retained certain implicit connections with the depths of each participant's body's affective remembrance.

6.3.8.7Understanding as the product of mediation

Far from meaning already existing in an original form, and simply having been projected onto the clay, uninfluenced by the way impressions on the clay were received in the perceptions and understanding of the respondents and therapists, and uninfluenced by the situation, and by the way this experience became fixed and formulated in articulation and thought, meaning relied upon the mediation of these dimensions for its creation and discovery. For example, what one respondent had noticed in creating his images reminded him of his own `creative process', not only within the situation but also outside of it. What was occurring within the situation now received a certain status and relevance. He then thought about his own historical experience, and approach to other creative projects in his life, and realised that this creative process had implications for his life in general. Eventually he came to understand that he had the capacity to overcome what he had previously disregarded as a 'chancer element' in his own creativity: an element which saw him seduced by what seemed to come too easily, and which flew in the face of what he expected from himself. Thus, an idea that had occurred to him had served to colour the way he came to perceive and understand what was happening in the situation, with its realisation in the form of images, and associations to them. It had caused him to change his thinking. This understanding was the product of a mediation between what had been disclosed, via perception, language, thought and disclosures to the therapist prior to the production procedure. What the therapist noticed occurring in the situation, and was able to articulate also mediated its meaning. Thereafter, the respondent's focus on creativity, and the therapist's focus on what she saw as his approach to life, mediated one another. Here we see an understanding of one aspect of the situation influencing the understanding of other aspects, such that meaning evolved and changed.

The bringing into awareness and presence through articulation and thought, and the bringing together of different dimensions of experience in the situation, meant that one thing came to bear an influence upon another. For instance, the field of meanings generated by the thoughts of one respondent concerning the death of a friend from AIDS brought into the art therapy situation a particular context of meaning that appeared to influence the way the respondent perceived the clay, without him necessarily being aware of this. Prior to thinking about his friend, the clay had seemed to look like a pizza, then a wheel with handles, one of which seemed too large and phallic-like. It was in feeling uncomfortable, and wanting to 'suppress' this image that memories about the recent death of a friend emerged. The clay then seemed to

change its aspects. In finding himself questioning a change in his friend's sexual orientation from heterosexuality to homosexuality, and in questioning the fragility of life, and the possibility of himself changing, what the respondent saw in the clay alternatively looked like an old flower, a piece of paper that could be crumpled up and thrown away, a shroud, or protective hood, and a comforting female, genital form that could envelop his entire body. It also looked like a wave, heart, bark, sphere and cube, as opposite qualities. The images perceived in the clay thus seemed to echo, in a concrete, and/or symbolic way, the sense of what the respondent found himself to be concerned about. The respondent's lived, bodily experience, and his current, yet momentarily forgotten concerns, predisposed him to seeing a phallic knob in the clay, a knob which called forth a response of embarrassment and thoughts about a friend. Together, the meaning of identified forms in the clay, and memories of things past, yielded a discovery for the respondent that the possibilities of existence can change, not only for a friend, but for oneself. The understanding of meaning had come about in a dialectics of exchange, in which concrete aspects of the situation mediated one another.

6.3.8.8Understanding as the generation of a new perspective

In being made contemporaneous, the world of the clay, and the memories and concerns of each participant lost their literal boundaries, and now became related to one another in terms of a common meaning perspective, which provided a new insight, not only into images and issues but the nature of each respondent's world. Without such memories, the clay would have not have looked like it did, and without discovering familiar forms in the clay to remind the participants about the respondents' issues, these would not have emerged in the situation, with the result that the meaning of the images may have remained sterile, with only their identity, as taken-for-granted meaning.

It was in being able to articulate their awareness of the clay, actions, and their memories and thoughts, that the ground was set for the respondents to understand that a relationship existed between them. A new ground became established, in the discovery of similarities of meaning which made possible the eventual meaning that was to emerge. In being able to see that the respondents' psychological issues related to their images, and that the images threw some light on the issues, a new meaning-generating ground emerged. A change in perspective from wanting to give an account of a formerly lived experience, to wanting to discover what the images might possibly mean, saw a radical shift in focus that served to open up new possibilities for meaning. Within the context of this new potential for understanding, wherein

an assumption could be made that one thing was to be understood in terms of the other, meaning became symbolic and broke free from its consensual and literal bounds. The establishment of a perspective, which accepted a relationship between experience, thought, language, images and issues, was one in which the brief of the art therapy situation came to be fulfilled. Once such a perspective dictated understanding, the images and issues began to take on their true meaning as their art therapy meaning for the participants in the situation.

6.3.8.9The adoption of a common perspective in the discovery of a unitary meaning

The participants' formulation of a descriptive account of a subjectively lived experience in language was, in Gadamer's (1975) terms, a `productive event' that served to show that experience in both a particular, and consensual light. The use of certain words, phrases and sentences, rather that others, meant that particular features, qualities and details of experience became highlighted in a certain way, and in being placed in a certain relationship to one another, began to convey a narrative that spoke of a sequence of actions and experiences in time. This narrative description also conveyed a relationship between the identified ingredients of the situation, and what was brought into presence was a unitary structure of experience made up of pivotal, meaningful moments. Connections had been made in thought and language as a kind of gathering of meaning. Even in the absence of the use of full sentences, narrative threads emerged in understanding, threads within which various remembered details of experience began to find a place in relation to one another. The process of articulation and thought thus served to bring a certain coherence to such details. Reality as a coherent unit of understanding thus came to be constructed.

During the dialogues, in speaking about their understanding, feeling heard, and in having their own understanding seemingly affirmed, and elaborated upon by the listening, responding, partner in dialogue, a situation of mutuality had developed. This occurred during the first part of the dialogues, in which a narrative was jointly constructed, and a common ground of understanding came to be both established, and relied upon, between the participants. In assuming that they were 'speaking the same language', each person had felt that their own articulated view of the situation had been confirmed, and in assuming the like-mindedness of the other, a sense of trust and acceptance had developed in the opinion of the other. This sense of a common ground saw each participant feeling supported by, and able to assume, the agreement of the other, even where they were unknowingly speaking about different things. In the absence of explicit disagreement, both partners of the therapist-patient pair felt part of a shared world. They had together unwittingly come to adopt a common perspective, with its horizon of potential meaning. This enabled them to become more

actively engaged in exploring the meaning implications of certain further things said about the images and the respondent's world with its issues.

The formulation, or structuring of meaning, through speaking and listening, and the confirmation and participation of the other, had made it possible for the respondents and therapists to take certain things for granted. In having established a common perspective, in which images now clearly related to certain psychological issues, they no longer felt the need to clarify their own understanding to the other, but now found themselves wanting to understand the meaning of what the other had to say. By listening, and exploring meaning implications, the participants found themselves engaged in unanticipated new horizons of meaning, within the implicit assumption that everything now related to the task at hand, which was to understand the respondent, and his or her issues, in terms of the images. The establishment of a common ground of understanding between them had enabled each participant to begin to explore the ingredients of the situation more actively and fruitfully from this new horizon, or contextualizing perspective.

The syncretistic quality of words, which now symbolized more than one level of meaning at once, spoke of a new breadth, depth and coherence of meaning. This meaning confirmed understanding across different time periods, and at various, different levels. For instance, at the level of image production, the level of the respondents' issues, and at the level of understanding the implications of meaning for future action, a coherence of understanding had emerged. Just as the therapists' theoretical and clinical understanding had initially born a paradigmatic influence upon their perceptions, and the respondents' past, lived experience had asserted its influence upon what came to be perceived in the clay, so the assumption and adoption of a common interpretative perspective bore its influence upon the understanding of meaning.

Just as the engagement with the clay had been deeply, and personally meaningful, and had seemed to be an extension, or equivalent of a bodily being, the words spoken in the dialogues once a common ground had been established, seemed to meaningfully reconnect the participants to a deeply felt sense of their experience. Words in the interactive part of the dialogues had taken on a syncretistic function in standing for more than one narrative thread at once, and a deeply felt quality of experience occurred, in parallel, on the part of the participants. Once this occurred in the dialogues, one therapist's description, for example, of a `gouging out' of the clay with a `foreign object', served to connect to an experience of feeling `gouged out'. The past, and the present, became united in the deep sense of shame,

vulnerability of frustration consequent to the collapse of a crater of a clay volcano, which was experienced as a personal sense of failure. Having now been established as a symbol, or metaphor, of the respondents' issues, images, and worlds, such words carried, what Ricoeur (1976) refers to as a `surplus of meaning'. This meaning came to be understood by

the participants, as referring to what it means to be human, and failing as a victim in the world.

6.4THE TRANSFORMATIVE LEVEL OF UNDERSTANDING

It was in the reception, or `hearing', of the proffered meaning of the images, in the form of the other's interpretations, particularly in the latter half, or interactive part, of the dialogues that alternative meanings came to be imaginatively entertained. And it was in engaging with the sense and reference of what was being said, and seeing its meaning implications, that the participants were able to discover their understanding transformed.

6.4.1The transmigration of meaning from one context to the other

The transmigration of meaning from one context to the next, and from the literal and the concrete to the metaphoric and symbolic provided the means for a new coherent way of seeing, which yielded further opportunities for the discovery of meaning, by finding a meaningful place for related situations, and other issues, which ended up further contributing towards understanding. This was done against a backdrop of what was implicitly known about the nature of art therapy. The therapists' understanding, for instance had served to connect the respondents' actions and images to his or her developmental past, to specific, lived events, or personality, and to a theoretical understanding, and in so doing found a way of understanding these from a particular new meaning perspective that had broken ties with its former context. It is also clear that the therapists' contribution, far from detracting from the respondents' understanding of the images, served to extend, change, and deepen it, by bringing into the situation alternate ways of looking at the images, and how they had been created. In the early part of the dialogues these ways did not cancel out, or substitute, one set of meanings for another, but instead tended to influence, extend, and qualify the overall meaning horizon that was developing, which in turn had served to extend the understanding of the participants. However, once a coherence of meaning had been established, this broke ties with its contributing parts, to become a new perspective which coloured, also, and in retrospect, the meaning of the identified ingredients in the situation.

In finding themselves hearing a new interpretation, the participants were faced with the

hermeneutic task of making sense of it in the light of their adopted perspective. An interpretation pointed towards some new situation, or different meaning of the images, or issues, which could be either entertained, adopted or ignored. Responding to an interpretation resided in the moment of imaginative reflection, upon hearing what was being said, and in responding to it by imaginatively trying out its meaning, then applying it to the current situation. The meaning of an interpretation thus resided in the human participation involved in its understanding, and in the capacity of the participants for integrating new meaning within their current perspective, or finding this perspective changed.

In Ricoeur's terms (1991, in Valdés), meaning reaches a place where the notion of a re-description of, for instance, a past experience is no longer important. Meaning was what occurred in the understanding of the participants: not meaning as it had previously been lived, intended, or expressed, but meaning as something unanticipated and new, which came about in an insightful experience of its understanding. It occurred within the context of each participant's current experience once there had been a gathering of information, and the development of a new, overall coherence of its details. What this new understanding of coherent meaning served to do was to transform, not only the images, but the way each respondent came to view him or herself, and their worlds.

Following the train of thought opened up by what had been said in an interpretation meant it had to firstly be understood on its own terms. In the words of Ricoeur, “to interpret is to follow the path of thought opened up by the text, to place oneself en route towards the orient of the text” (1991, in Valdés, 1991, p.17). In the research, the respondents and therapists having adopted a particular perspective, were able to suspend their taken-for-granted former understanding of the situation, in order to enter the fictional world of the images, and of an interpretation heard. For instance, to understand the meaning of a collapsed volcano meant being able to grasp, in Plato's terms, the nature of that precarious existence, and in having done so, to `rub together’ this knowledge with what had been understood so far, by integrating it within an existing context of meaning potential, which itself belonged to the broader context of existence, with its given potential for the true expression of meaning. Such integration was not a matter of adding to understanding, but a matter of changing understanding when interpretations heard became productive. A release of new meaning occurred within what Ricoeur (1976) refers to as an `event of discourse', as a current reading of the objectified `texts' of images and issues, and traversing the horizon of possible meaning opened up by each of them in order to grasp it.

The event of discourse in the research entailed moving from images to issues to interpretations and back again in order to discover their relationship to one another. In seeing one thing in terms of an understanding of another, there was, in Ricoeur's (1976) terms, a `clash of semantic fields', akin to what occurs in metaphorical thinking and this caused a shift in meaning. Ricoeur asserts something similar to what Vico had said when he says, that, "a discourse which makes use of metaphor has the extraordinary power of re-describing reality" or, "metaphor shatters not only the previous structures of our language, but also the previous structures of what we call reality" (Ricoeur, 1991, in Valdés, p85). Secondly, what he says is that, it is via "the construction of a heuristic fiction" (Ricoeur, 1976, p.67) that such a shattering comes about. In other words, it is in being able to enter the world of a `text' (a fictional representation) by being `placed in its meaning' (which is semantically circumscribed), and then being able to bring back what has been understood there (in the text's world) to our current situation, and how we already understand it, that causes a shattering and a new integration. It is in the clash between what the world of the text presents to us and our former understanding that a new integration is forced to occur.

In Ricoeur's terms, in describing the images in terms of what they already knew, and in terms of memories and dreams, the respondents and therapists were describing, "an unknown thing or a lesser-known thing in terms of a better-known thing, thanks to a similarity of structure" (Ricoeur, 1991, in Valdés, p.85). This also worked the other way around. In seeing the issues in terms of the images, the issues also became easier to recognise and understand. For instance, in seeing the clay as an embarrassing phallic knob, or a comforting, enveloping, female, genital form, and in thinking about a friend with AIDS, it became easier to see the lesser known thing of an existential concern. Seeing the possibilities of a self transformation, including a change in sexual orientation, had became possible in terms of the construction of a relationship between images and a story about a friend's life.

Understanding meaning was thus not an empathetic re-experiencing of the respondents', therapists', or researcher's intended meaning, or lived experience. Neither was it the projection, or imposition, of an already existing meaning belonging to the therapist or respondent. In other words meaning was not traceable either to the past, or to its creator's, or to the interpreter's account of meaning. In Ricoeur's terms, understanding of the issues and images for the respondents and therapists entailed complying with the meaning injunctions of the images, and interpretations, as texts, by allowing the self to be placed in the direction they opened up for thought. The dissemination of meaning required a work, as an act of reading and interrogation: a doing something, which included participation in the world of the

configuration, as image or articulated text. By being receptive to its sense and reference, then `appropriating' its meaning, by applying it to their own current situation, the participants came to understand their own concerns, as these concerns came to be portrayed in a particular, concrete light. This work, it would appear, is made possible by a disconnection from former, or original context, in order to re-contextualize something (whether a memory, an image, a story, or a dream) in a present situation. Meaning is not something to be discovered purely in terms of an original, determining meaning, but is something in need of discovery in terms of a current event of reconstruction, and a current experience of meaning. Understanding in the research was also entirely dependent upon being able to suspend what was familiar, in order to rediscover it as something different from the way it was understood before.

The clay, the images, the issues, and what was said about these, provided new constructions of potential meaning, or 'texts', which asserted their own meaning, and had their own truth claim, by virtue of the fact that they belonged to their own, given semantic fields. Provided that the therapists and respondents were able to follow the `injunctions', or `orients' of these texts, it became possible to move beyond the personal existing horizons of understanding of the interpreters present in the situation. While the semantic fields opened up to them were constrained in terms of their own internal logic, provided by the historical and traditional world, with its language, action contexts, and paradigms or thought, it was the human capacity of the participants to see one thing in terms of another, and to transport insights, or meaning, gained in one semantic field to that of another, that resulted in a new description of reality with its insights. The `rubbing together' of different meanings, and modes of experience, `created' a new understanding as reality.

In Ricoeur's terms, a text, actually, is not a self-enclosed entity, it has "not only a formal structure", it points beyond itself to "a possible world", a world one "could inhabit" (Ricoeur, 1991, in Valdés, p.349). It is in the engagement with this world that an understanding of what it means to be a self in a world occurs. Discovering meaning, here, entails a recovery of the self, a self as a way of knowing oneself in relationship to something else. It is not a solipsistic imposition of an existing, subjective meaning, projected onto a text or image, neither is it a confirmation of existing theory, or meaning. Understanding is not an empathetic re-experiencing of a creator's or author's original intention or experience, neither is it the imposition of an already existing interpretation. In other words, the meaning of an image or production process reaches a new place (Ricoeur, 1991, in Valdés,). It is the outcome of a work as a creative re-configuration of the existing ingredients of a situation. An existing

figuration, such as an image, or an interpretation, which has been pre-figured by lived experience and known contexts in the world, releases its meaning in an interrogation and explanation, or `re-figuration' of its meaning. A re-figuration is the outcome of an act of reading, an interrogation, a doing something. It is firstly participation in the world of the configured, and secondly a re-configuration of it in terms of one's own world. To interpret by following the path of thought opened up by the text, `in placing oneself en route towards the orient of the text' is, in Ricoeur's (1976) terms, an instance of `distanciation'. Secondly, the `appropriation' of the distanciated meaning of the world of the text, is to discover its relevance for a current situation, with its concerns, which involves ourselves.

The discovered meanings in the images, memories, and issues, during the active part of the dialogues, were like different windows to reality which enabled the participants to see things differently. Ultimately, in a transportation of meaning, and synthesis of meaning in understanding, the participants were able to see the respondent in his or her world more clearly, and as if for the first time. In Ricoeur's terms, in `following the orient of the text' the participants were engaging, in imagination, with the possibilities inherent in the world opened up by it. Said differently, when paradigms, as ways of seeing, change, "the world itself changes with them [and], what the world appears to be is entirely dependent on our way of looking at it and of acting on it. Said differently, the only answers the world gives are to questions we have asked of it" (Madison, 1988, p.16). In questioning the images in

terms of the issues, and the issues in terms of images, the participants in the research had received certain unanticipated answers.

6.4.2The image, and the interpretation of its meaning, as fiction

Ricoeur (1979) specifically refers to the image, as fiction, as a creative '*epoche*' whereby he means that the image, by virtue of being an image and not the real, presents the opportunity for the suspension of engagement, perception, action and attention to the real. It presents the opportunity to suspend literal meaning, and provides the possibility for imagination, as the `free play of possibilities' to work, and the possibility to create a "re-description of reality" (p.134), and to disengage from habitual ways of thinking. The image, provides a `productive reference' by virtue of the fact that it provides the place for imagination to `work', and, "in a work… produces itself as a world" (Ricoeur, 1979, p.128). The image in his terms, is a fiction whose function is to shape reality. Here the image, perceived as a concrete shape, makes an idea manifest rather than being a reflective (imitative) mirror. But, it is not the image per se that Ricoeur considers to be the instigator of creative imagination so much as the

things said about the image that cause a ‘reverberation’, or clash between semantic fields, a clash that serves to transform understanding, in what Gadamer refers to as `a fusion of horizons'.

By being placed in the direction of meaning opened up by the text, the listener or reader allows him or herself to be transported into the world of the text, but, at the same time, unless the listener or reader is able to appreciate the foreignness of the text as depicting a world different from his or her own, the understanding of it will be a naive one. In adopting a respectful attitude to the text, which asserts its own meaning, by attempting to engage with this otherness, the reader will not be simply projecting his or her own understanding and foreclosing on possible new meaning. For example, in being able to `follow' what the clay was able to show as an elephant in its aspects of lightness, naturalness and groundedness, a mound in its emerging aspects, a bark in its textured features in relation to a protective wave and a heart, or a figure in a kimono with a tail, the clay had presented the opportunity for a `suspension' of attention to the real, as either familiar form, or literal meaning, and made a place for the imagination to work. Furthermore, in speaking about these concrete forms in relation to knowledge about each respondent’s current psychological issues, and in the context of the anticipations of an art therapy situation, an imaginative working, and reworking, saw reality become recreated in such a way as to assert what was essential about it, as the relationship of the respondents to their worlds.

6.4.3Understanding as an experiential event of discourse which occurs via the mediation of a heuristic fiction

According to Ricoeur (1976), the release of new meaning in the present, within an event of discourse, emerges through a process of dialectical mediation. Furthermore, he like Heidegger, and Plato before him, realised that the truth as reality, relies upon the capacities of human understanding for its revelation in the form of meaning. Ricoeur's general theory of interpretation, based upon his theory of discourse, acknowledges the dialectical polarities of event and meaning, sense and reference, understanding and explanation, and distanciation and appropriation in the mediatory, interpretative process required for the discovery of true meaning. Interpretation, with its phase of understanding as guessing, and explanation as a validation of this in the first phase, and the move from explanation to comprehension in the second phase (Mook, 1991; Ricoeur, 1976), establishes reality as a realisation, that is the outcome of a whole `work’ of interpretation.

The contributions of the formulations of meaning about images in words spoken, as well as

the different interpretations of each respondent and therapist, were themselves specific aspects of understanding by means of which a disclosure of each respondent's world occurred. In Ricoeur's (1976) terms, a "disclosure of new ways of being - or new forms of life - gives to the subject a new capacity of knowing himself" (p.94). It was the capacity for mediation of interpretations that made possible a new way of knowing each respondent as a self. As David Klemm, (1992, in Klemm & Schweiker) explains it, by mediation, Ricoeur means `the comprehending anew', by means of an interpretation, of that which has already been given to experience, and has already been comprehended unreflectively in a given language. Meanings are `mediated unities', or `resilient syntheses' which express, and reflect the human wish to grasp, and to receive an understanding of the truth, no matter how incomplete and fleeting the insight might be (Klemm, 1992, in Klemm & Schweiker).

The meanings in the images, and what was said about them, and the meaning of the respondents' issues were themselves mediated, `resilient syntheses' that reflected the wish to grasp and receive understanding in the lives of the participants.

Mediation can be seen to have occurred on a number of different levels, as well as by means of a dialectal exchange between the various contributing horizons, both as contexts of potential meaning, and as formulations of meaning. It is clear from the dialogues that the meaning of the images was not simply reducible to only the respondent's, or only the therapist's understanding, or to the actual interpretations and words spoken between them. They were equally not something divorced from the particular lives, concrete experiences, and issues of the participants, nor from the articulations of experience, ways of thinking about such experience, particular images, the situation within which meaning was discovered, and the general possibilities of existence. Meaning was construed within an all encompassing mediating, synthesising ground where understanding found a place for all of the implicit and explicitly formulated meaning dimensions in the situation. It is in these terms that reality may be regarded as understanding that occurs from within a mediated synthesising event of meaning dissemination.

In a similar sense, *sensible particulars*, in ancient Greek terms were `heuristic fictions' in that, in and of themselves, they were non-real, mutable aspects which changed in perception, and within different paradigms of thought. Just as different interpretations of images could all still act as pointers to some truth about each respondent's existence, they were, in Platonic terms, not knowledge of the real itself (as that which was constant and immutable). They

provided access to the real, so long as they were properly engaged with by the reasoning mind. Similarly, as Madison (1988) explains, in Ricoeur's terms,"a text itself is not a self-contained, determinable meaning but is, rather, the "'promise' of meaning" (p.21). Likewise, "the meaning of a text is not a substantial *entity* but what the text gives us to understand; it is an invitation and a call to interpretation, and interpretation is the effective realization of a text's promise" (pp.21-22). A text is a "surplus of meaning", in its range of possible meanings, that actually "calls for and engenders an open-ended process of creative interpretation; a process which ultimately confirms the text in its own meaning" (p.22). It

is this confirmation, as the outcome of a work of interpretation, that realises the text's meaning by revealing it as meaning in, and for, human understanding.

The meaning of the images, for instance, also while something finite in the sense of being grounded in actual lived existence, did not exist independently of their interpretation, as mediation by the participants, which occurred in terms of some or other implicit understanding given the meaning-generating grounds and motivating questions that were active through them in the situation. It also did not exist as something that came to be imposed upon the image, or something thing-like and fixed for all time.

6.4.4The role played by concrete expressions as a mediating ground for transforming meaning.

The therapists' and respondents' perceptions of images in the clay, such as an elephant or a volcano, had served as reminders of something they implicitly knew, but ultimately came to recognise as a quality of existence which they could see as belonging to the respondents. This knowledge only came to be understood in the light of the concreteness of particular psychological issues, images, and their articulated meaning, in a research situation. In its concrete form, the expression of meaning, as the expression of a quality of existence, had taken on a particular shape, in images, memories, and thoughts, but this shape was not its true meaning (as Plotinus has previously understood) until it took a place in understanding. Through imaginative experience, and a work of interpretation which served to explain the relationship of such shapes to each respondent's world, their implications for an appropriately informed future action (areté) could not become known.

6.4.5The role played by distanciation and appropriation in transforming meaning

What had made understanding possible was not only the implicit knowledge about the nature of meaning in art therapy but the semantic autonomy of the sentences spoken about images

and about issues. In being able to recognise the meaning of these sentences, each of which brought with it its own logic and meaning possibilities, given by the known contexts of the world, rather than by the speaker's meaning intentions, it became possible to follow their reference in the discovery of new horizons of meaning. In entering the particular logic of, for instance, a memory, or a dream, its alienness as `other', which at first seemed not to relate in any way to the situation at hand, could eventually be discovered in terms of what it disclosed about the meaning of the current situation. What it projected, as a quality of being came to be understood firstly in its own terms, and only thereafter as something which related to each respondent. What came to be projected, by virtue of a remembered or dreamed scenario, could only be discovered as an aspect of the respondents' being-in-the-world once it had been understood in its objective meaning. Such meaning can be said to have thereafter been `appropriated', in having been understood in its meaning implications as part of the self-world relationship, and as an aspect of a current, as well as a past, situation. By entertaining the reference of the words spoken about various scenarios, and seeing in it a meaning which had a relevance for the respondent's current situation, certain insights occurred.

By `appropriation' Ricoeur (1976) means to make one's own what was initially 'alien'. The aim of all interpretation, and hermeneutics, is to struggle against distance and `alienation'. It is to render familiar that which is unfamiliar. Interpretation is what brings together, equalizes, renders contemporary and similar. This goal is attained only insofar as an interpretation actualizes the meaning of the text for the present reader. In Ricouer's (1976) terms the interpretation is complete when the reading releases something like an event: an event of discourse, which is an event in the present time. It is this event that sees understanding at work in the discovery of the implications for action of new found meaning. In the act of appropriation, the interpretation becomes an experiential event which opens up a way to be, or to do. Said differently, and in Kierkegaard's terms, the "truth exists for the individual only as he himself produces it in action" (Kierkegaard, in May, 1969, p.12).

This event can be seen to have taken place in the way the respondents and therapists came to understand that what they were talking about, in terms of its meaning for the present situation, also spoke of a quality of being that they could relate to. For instance, in understanding that the precarious quality of existence of a tangled fish in a tree, or the equanimity of a natural balance of complimentary opposites in an elephant, spoke also of an implicit sense of self in a world, the participants discovered that what had appeared foreign, or as an `other' was something they owned which, having recognised, they could act upon.

The participants in the research were able to imaginatively enter into the world portrayed by sentences spoken and heard, due to the fulfillment of their reference in imagination. Configurations of meaning in language (interpretations), in being heard, saw a release of their meaning in the understanding of all those who imaginatively engaged with them. In Ricoeur's terms, this was like the reading of a text as the `interrogation' of its (rather than our own) meaning. An interpretation, like a text, is also a configuration of reality, and as such is a creative *mimesis*: It imitates reality by showing it in a certain light (Ricoeur, 1991, in Valdés), and this configuration, which has its own semantic sense and reference, was capable of placing the participants in the reseach `in its meaning'.

In the research, the respondent's memory of a dream image of a precarious fish and a hovering bird augmented a vulnerable, and precarious way of being, and became linked to aspects of the present situation within which he had become aware of his wish to `hang' onto feelings and to `hang' onto precious details in his own creative work. The dream of a fish in a tree was not simply a dream from the past, neither was it only a symbol of an historical event related to the death of a father. It took on a mediating function in being a concrete (distanciated) representation by means of which something else, as a quality of existential being, could be heard. An interrogation of the meaning of this dream saw a production of meaning which brought with it a revelation (appropriation) in the form of deepened understanding about a respondent's situation. This understanding included future possibilities of action.

Thus, we see how words spoken and heard, and a fictional story about a hovering bird and a threatened fish, open up new self understanding, as they provided analogies for qualities of experience, by means of which the self came to be understood. Similarly, in the same example, when the therapist referred to the `softness of the back' of the figure, the same respondent remembered a certain stage in his life when he thought he could `see all around himself'. This lead on to his being reminded that he did `not like to feel vulnerable'. He also remembered an image on TV, of a sad figure in heavy chains, and thought of his clay image as reflecting a `neurotic being', `bound up inside of itself'. This he linked to what he felt about `self torture', which he saw as a form of `own boundupness'. Thereafter, when he thought of his image as a figure with bound hands, he remembered a sense of self, in which he felt `disconnected from his own hands', as if his hands were not part of his life. This relates to what the therapist had previously observed about his tendency to `stand back' before getting fully engaged. When the therapist then reported seeing a screaming mouth in the clay image, this new way of viewing it reminded the respondent of Edvard Munch's

painting, The Scream, and then of certain `wrenching, tortured feelings', and alienating self experiences, which were accompanied by a destructive sense that he hated. He also remembered an ochre, `army-colored' dream in which he walked around a paddock with his finger on a wire fence as immense trucks dumped very, heavy clay. This was an `alienating experience', something like `walking on a plane', an experience he had never been able to put into words, an experience to do with a primordial anguish that had no way of being expressed appropriately, except in certain kinds of destructive movement. Thus, from a remembered dream of a threatened fish, and a hovering, watching bird, through various further interpretations of the image and associations, the respondent got in touch with a quality of his own existence, part of which had never yet been put into words. The discovery of an aspect of being, which had been incomprehensible, and forgotten, could now be remembered and identified with by means of the image, and was consequently a productive event. Within a context wherein images relate to issues, what looked like a screaming gaping mouth in the clay, saw a quality of being, in "being raised by its representation" in the image, and in interpretation, become raised "to its own validity and truth" (Gadamer, 1975, p.103). This truth can be described as a form of knowledge about what it means to be human, in a certain situation, and in relationship to the world.

In these terms, knowledge is something that (as it was for the Greeks) can be understood by means of interpretation as an intellectual, or cognitive type of vision, but comes to be deeply experienced. In the research, this knowledge had come about as a recognition of the essence of what it meant to be human and in a world. The truth that had occurred, occurred by virtue of what the fictional aspects of the situation referred to, which called to be understood. In a production, as understanding, of what was given in, and bound by, the art therapy research situation, in the form of particular actions, images, and an account of each respondents' issues (all of which may be regarded as fictional texts), in Gadamer's (1975) terms, a `play' had occurred in which something was 'brought forth' for the participants as players and as spectators. What was brought into view was a `fictional play world' in which certain meanings could be entertained, that had a certain truth, claim, and which was both revelatory and transformative.

In Gadamer's (1975) words, "Imitation and representation are not merely a second version, a copy, but a recognition of the essence" (p.103). Through the `fictional' aspects of the situation in the form, for instance, of dreams, and clay images, a recognition of an aspect of being occurred. As fictions, imitations, or in Ricoeur's terms, `texts', interpretations made by the participants were playful abstractions. In having been `objectified', 'lifted out' of

ongoing, or un-reflected upon lived experience, what had been identified and given as an interpretation of the experience and situation, became a ‘text’ in need of understanding, not only in its sense, or surface aspects, but in its meaning as implications for the lives of those concerned. These texts each had a truth claim in that they represented, thus participated in, an aspect of the meaning of existence.

The construction of a fictional world had been made possible, not only by the capacity of the participants' to imaginatively connect experience, but by their capacity to imaginatively decontextualize aspects of their experience in order to recontextualize it differently. The expression of meaning was itself an interpretation, or thing-like text, and within the world of this text, as context, certain things and not others, could happen. Interpretation, as the abstraction and objectification of meaning, was a necessary step in the process of understanding. The respondents and therapists as creators of images and articulators of this process, had utilised interpretation to mediate between the expressions of meaning, and the possibilities of meaning. As `readers’, the participants were called to understand such formulations, or objectifications. In other words the interpretations of images, and their creation, necessarily required a complimentary act of a more `existential’ character, which Ricoeur (1976) calls, the `appropriation’ of meaning. The respondents and therapists, faced with what had already been done and said as formulations of meaning about the production process, during the articulations, were faced, in the dialogues, with making sense of the `apparent' meaning of what had emerged. During the interpretative exercise of the active part of the dialogues such meaning that had emerged as articulated meaning, came alive once again for the participants in the present. For instance, the respondents felt the same feelings occurring in the present as they had felt in the past, or in a situation outside the research. They also felt these same feelings towards the images, and towards the present situation. That which was being played out as meaning in the present grasped them in a revelatory experience. In having become players in the production of meaning, conveyed in the clay images and syncretistic use of words, a fictional world in which images stood for issues, and issues stood for a way of being in the world, was created, and by means of this creation, the respondent's situation came to be understood.

This discovery of meaning occurred as a participation, or active involvement in an event of new discovery and revelation, within which the respondents and therapists had been the investigators and the prize had been the investigated, as their own human situation. While "the text is experienced only in an activity, a production" (Risser, 1991, cites Barthes) in Silverman, (Ed) p.93), and a "text is not a given object, but a phase in the execution of the

communicative event" (Risser, 1991, cites Gadamer, in Silverman (Ed) p.93), the discovery of meaning in the details of a dream text, for instance, was a production of meaning which came to be played out in the discovery of its relevance for the present situation: a production in which the respondents and therapists found themselves to be the players. In being able to `read' the meaning of the dream text, the players found themselves `performing' its meaning on an experiential level. It is in this sense that understanding is a productive event, and meaning is a revelation. As Risser explains Gadamer's position in this regard:

> Reading, for Gadamer, is similar to the active involvement of spectators of a performance: a reshaping produced by its actualization. This performative character means that there is ultimately no determination of meaning that is originary or even reproductive; the determination of reading remains productive.
>
> …at stake in the performing is the future of the reader as well as the future of the text. For Gadamer, to reach an understanding is not so much the successful assertion of one's point of view, but a transformation into a communion in which we do not remain what we were (Risser, 1991, in Silverman, p.105).

The meaning produced in the `reading' of the formulated interpretations of events, issues, dreams and images, was a transformation in the present, of both the past and present. It was also a transformation of the respondents and therapists who understood their situation differently. In appropriating the text's meaning into their own, current situation, they discovered themselves transformed. In taking their focus of attention away from the concrete situation, and discovering themselves in different worlds, which related to stories told and to interpretations made, the horizon of the present situation became extended in its meaning, in being connected to other dimensions and aspects of life. The meaning of a particular interpretation, dream image, memory or association in being re-realized in terms of their own situation gave a sense of self in relationship to each participant.

6.4.6 The understanding of a self-world relationship by means of a fictional world context

The revelation that emerged from the process of interpretative mediation for one respondent was that something which she felt to be part of herself needed to `be seen', in order for it to be healed, painful as that had been, and would still be. The resolution which occurred to her, was to take the issues which had surfaced during the research process into to her own therapy. For another, what emerged was the recognition that his creative process, far from being inconsequential, confirmed what he both liked about himself, and aspired towards, in his life. It related to his `interesting side', with its `quirky', comforting `elaborations', and a

`chancer' element of himself, which did not have to be given up in the interests of something more solid, substantial and grounded. His `quirky' expression, and spiritual aspirations, belonged together, and made him the person he was. The other two respondents, while gaining some self knowledge, did not themselves seem to reach the same depth of insight, yet the therapist seemed to have grasped more of what seemed essential to their lives. She understood that the `confusion' one respondent felt within himself seemed to express a difficulty he was having in deciding who he was as a person. What this insight made possible was the potential for helping the respondent acknowledge the opposites within himself. The therapist understood that a fourth respondent needed to acknowledge her capacity for perseverance, and that she should become fully engaged in the process aspects, rather than the analysis aspects of her life. The respondent herself had come to understand her need for naturalness, without letting her intellect get in the way, and was able to understand that she had a desire for a healthy balance between seriousness, heaviness, security, safety and lightness, and freedom, as well as the ability to complete things in her life.

These different levels of insight seem to have depended upon whether or not a mutual ground of understanding had at first been firmly established between each therapist-respondent pair, and whether, as a result, they were able to give free reign to their imaginative involvement in the fictional reality opened up by what the other had said in an interpretation. In Gadamer's (1975) terms, they needed to be able to hand themselves over to the `rules of the game', or to the symbolic meaning of the interpretation made, with its logic of meaning, before they could fully discover themselves as the players.

In having been tied to one another, through a dialectics of exchange, into a configuration of verbal meaning, lived experience, and thought, informed, circumscribed, expanded, and symbolized different aspects of an art therapy situation to create a fictional world wherein past, present and future, and the bodily experience of the participants came to live together. The establishment of a mutual narrative, which had spanned the therapists' understanding of the creation of the images, the respondents' awareness of what had occurred in this same situation, and what had emerged as information about each respondent, with his or her life's issues, saw these various dimensions of the situation losing their former context in being related to one another. This was a contextualization process which served to ground the details of action, memory, and experience within what came to be a meaningful framework that was implicitly understood. This framework not only served to relate the respondent's images to their lives, but also spoke of the possibilities of a human existence. As the meaning of the images this framework became a base, or template, from which to proceed into the

future, in enabling the respondents to recognise their own situation. While the images were identifiable merely as images of this or that (a volcano, a mound, a face, an elephant) their meaning extended beyond that of imitation as copy, likeness, or semblance of some or other concrete form or object and became understood, instead, as symbols of a past, current, and potential way of being.

Ricoeur's view on 'the detour of mediation', or `the detour via a heuristic fiction' in the comprehension of meaning, asserts the necessity of fictional representation for discovering the truth. Gadamer's notion of understanding, as "always an interpretation", and "interpretation [as] the explicit form of understanding" (Gadamer, 1975, p.274), as well as his notion of understanding as always involving, "something like the application of a text to be understood to the present situation of the interpreter" (Gadamer, 1976, p.274), along with Ricoeur's explanation, are ways of explaining how clay images, words spoken, and memories from the past, having been co-opted, make understanding explicit, and provide a direction for future action.

6.4.7Understanding as the re-discovery of context

The images, associations, and interpretations in the research can be seen to have had the same status as Plato's sensible particulars which participate in, but are not themselves the truth. They gain their true meaning only in a discovery of their essential relatedness to the `oneness' that is the overall meaning, or expression of existence itself. Their surface appearances are thing-like until they become appropriated in becoming relevant for the self, as meaning for questions about its human existence. This process of appropriation is a process of re-contextualization, that occurs via that which is being investigated, but is something applied to the self as its relationship to the world. In discovering the meaning of the `other', the self-world relationship can be understood in related terms. The detour via an imaginative, or fictive world, opened up by that which was in need of investigation in the research, provided a means for recognition of what it is like to be human with concerns and in a world. Understanding an image, gives an image-world to the self and a way of recognising one's existence. It was in this way that it became possible to discover the respondent as a self with a quality of being. In being able to understand, for instance, the meaning of a gaping mouth in an image, as something differentiated from the self, and with its own possibilities of meaning, a certain quality of being came to be grasped: a quality which exists as a given potential of the expression of being itself, yet which can only be understood in personal, and human terms. In these terms, existing, true potentials of existence, are realized as meaning in finding their place in experience as part of the 'oneness', or context of the possibilities of existence itself,

of which human existence is a part. As Gadamer (1975) explains it, "everything that is given as existence is given in terms of the world and hence brings the world horizon with it" (p.217)

Meaning in these terms is not something fixed or thing-like, but is something that comes to be released as understanding, through the process of decontextualization, and a re-contextualization. In other words, meaning only comes to be in a current situation, in which a text is created, thought about and experienced. In terms of meaning, lived events are already there, but their meaning is never anything settled. The interrogation of an image or event means momentarily forgetting ourselves, in order to rediscover ourselves. We forget ourselves while we concentrate on the forms of life, and its expression, whether those be images, memories, or words spoken, and remember ourselves in contemplating the meaning of such things (as Plotinius understood). Meaning is released every time anew in an `event of discourse', or, in Plato's terms, in a `rubbing' together of various cognitive modes of experience. In Ricoeur's (1976) terms, it is the traversing of a particular contextualizing ground in which the field of misunderstanding is reduced, and the plurality of possible interpretations becomes `screened'. This screening occurs as a contextualizing process.

Gadamer has referred to this contextualization as a productive process, or as a `fusion of horizons', while Ricoeur refers to it as an `event of discourse', both of which see a shift in former understanding. A discourse, in these terms, is the systematic investigation of a subject, a subject which brings with it a world context. Ricoeur (1976) says that the "contextual is the dialogical" (p.17) in which the recognition and "reciprocity of intentions" (p.19) occurs by virtue of a dialectical exchange. This exchange occurs between sense and reference, in which the world "is the ensemble of references opened up by every kind of text", and understanding such texts is to "interpolate among the predicates of our *umwelt* (Ricoeur, 1976, p.37). In other words, the movement from interpreting texts, to understanding meaning, is a movement from understanding the text's references to appropriating a sense of self by means of the context of the text's world. The outcome is an awareness of coherence within a meaning circumscribing context, in which the self finds itself as a self located. The establishment of context, in the form of a symbolic, narrative coherence, or the understanding of relationship between difference ingredients of a situation, finds its echo in the world and in bodily experience. All words, like images, refer beyond themselves to the world and its possibilities of meaning, and, because this world only finds its meaningful expression in the understanding of humankind, there is a reciprocal, and dialectical exchange between texts as expressions of life, and understanding the meaning of the texts as the understanding of life.

While Ricoeur's thought suggests that the capacity for understanding relies upon the capacity for suspension of who we are, or of taken-for-granted meaning, which occurs when we hand ourselves over, or enter the alien world of the text, before discovering ourselves in the light of it, Gadamer's thought suggests that we must test and adjust our current understanding, and assumptions, in terms of the text's meaning. In Ricoeur's terms we have no sense of self except in terms of what the text opens up for meaning, and in Gadamer's terms we have an existing implicit sense of self that comes to be recognised, and requires adjustment in the light of our findings. In the light of this research it would seem that these are not contradictory but complimentary positions, and includes the notion of an implicit knowledge, given in a lived, bodily experience, which is unconscious, or pre-reflective, is accepted. What does seem to be of importance is that there are different levels to understanding which inform the discovery and creation of meaning, each of which is necessary, if true understanding is to be achieved.

Ricoeur refers to his own body of thought as a hermeneutic-phenomenology, rather than as a phenomenological-hermeneutics, in his belief that textual, or constituted meanings give a meaning to the self. In a phenomenological-hermeneutics, lived experience is the foundation from which all meaning comes to be derived. In Merleau-Ponty's (1962; 1967) terms, for instance, bodily experience and articulated meaning reside in a dialectics of exchange in which they continually inform one another, with essence being regarded as articulated meaning, which is the outcome of this process. (Mook, 1991) All three of these theorists accept the relatedness of existence and meaning as human expression, that occurs in a dialectics of exchange, yet each explains this in his own way, and emphasises a particular aspect of it. All three, like Plato, are concerned with the process of understanding as an epistemological means for discovering reality as the truth.

The respondents and therapists in the research found themselves caught up in horizons of meaning that had emerged in terms of the respondents' issues, and the images being discussed: horizons that provided a sense of where the respondents had come from and where they were headed. This occurred in terms of what they remembered, and what they noticed in the current situation. Having already been implicitly aware of the contexts, or meaning-generating grounds of the dimensions present in the situation, the participants came to realise their current situation by means of certain concrete details presented to their awareness, and through language, and dialogue discovered what these meant in the situation. What they had realised as meaning, served to show them their own situation in a comprehensible light. Subjective experience, in being given meaning in images, and by language and thought, also

gave language and thought a meaning as the experiences of participants. That which was understood beyond its superficial aspects referred to both the world, and to their experiences. In Gadamer's opinion (1975) the discovery of meaning may be explained as follows:

> …a hermeneutical situation is determined by the prejudices that we bring with us. They constitute, then, the horizon of a particular present, for they represent that beyond which it is impossible to see. But it is important to avoid the error of thinking that it is a fixed set of opinions and evaluations that determine and limit the horizon of the present, and that the otherness of the past can be distinguished from it as from a fixed ground.
>
> In fact the horizon of the present is being continually formed, in that we have continually to test all our prejudices. An important part of this testing is the encounter with the past and the understanding of the tradition from which we come. Hence the horizon of the present cannot be formed without the past….
>
> …old and new continually grow together to make something of living value, without either being explicitly distinguished from the other (Gadamer, 1975, pp.272-273).

In Gadamer's terms what the participants came to understand was where they were coming from, yet their understanding was also the coming to be of a meaning which pointed towards a new orientation, a new way to be, a future horizon of undecided possibilities, something unsettled. In Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Gadamer's thought, a lived sense can be brought to its essential meaning through articulation and thought. In Ricoeur's terms, it is through articulation, and thought, that the self comes to be in the first place. In these terms, there can be no sense of self without ways of thinking about it. Such ways exist, and make it possible to discover ourselves for whom we are, which is our meaning. This meaning only comes to be by virtue of the interpretative lens applied to our experience. In this sense we are the product of a *techné hermeneutica*.

In Ricoeur's terms, what the respondents and therapists had done in the dialogues was to figure, or create a fictive world in which the respondent and his or her images lived. This configuration emerged out of the human capacity to figure something in language from the existing meaning potential (pre-figuration) given in the situation which was the world's, and not the participants' meaning. For Ricoeur, "configuration is the realm of the world of work itself. It is an inquiry into the mode of organization, of composition, of that world that looms as the necessary task" (Ricoeur, 1991, in Valdés, p.20). Because the therapists and respondents had "shared in the prefiguration of language in the world of action" (p.20), they were able to generate a mutually understandable world in which the images and issues related to one another through the process of interpretation. The images, memories, and issues were

heuristic fictions inasmuch as they could transfer the description of “a better-known object to the field to be described on the basis of a partial isomorphism” (Ricoeur, 1991, in Valdés, p.85). This transfer also came about in the respondents’ and therapists’ use of language with its capacity for metaphorical extension, by borrowing words from the realm of the corporeal, visible, tangible. In order to think about, or discuss the issues and images, and in describing the experience of their production, the respondents and therapists had necessarily used language and in this way discovered their nature and identity in consensual terms in having imposed a meaning on themselves.

In considering the organizational structure that emerged in understanding, and in terms of the verbal interpretations of images, memories and issues, a narrative world-view had emerged in a movement from the parts towards a total organization and, with this totalising emerging world-view, towards an illumination of the parts. Here the principle of the hermeneutic circle came into play at the level of fiction, in which dreams, issues, memories and issues could be found to relate to one another. At the level of experience, which this fictional world referred to, the respondents understood who they were in relationship to the world.

It is in this sense that a re-contextualization occurred within which the different dimensions and aspects of the situation found a place, and each respondent was given a self in a world: a world made up of a past, present and future. This contextualization occurred as a narrative forming that was different from, yet referred back to, lived experience. In Ricoeur’s terms, “the effort of thinking which is at work in every narrative configuration is completed in a re-figuration of temporal experience” (Ricoeur, 1991, in Valdés, p.21). What emerged in understanding as a result of all that had been spoken about, was a coherent, temporal reality. A construction of meaning that had occurred in the dialogical situation did not simply deepen an existing understanding, but ultimately gave a meaning to experience retrospectively. However, what had been proffered in the earlier, descriptive accounts, and before that in the participants' lived experience, formed the significant ground within which this configurated meaning could be created. Here Husserl's intentionality, is but a phase in the creation of meaning, which, in Ricoeur's term is a moment of distanciation, that is not yet the appropriation of true meaning.

Meaning, here is the outcome of a process which necessarily has different phases and dimensions to it which `rub together' in a dialectics of exchange prior to which true understanding can not be said to have occurred. In Gadamer's (1975) terms, meaning as something prospective, comes about in a `fusion of horizons', what in ancient Greek terms

has been referred to as a `gathering of meaning', in remembrance, of what has been formerly known but forgotten through a `rubbing' together of various modes of experience until insight lights up. By this Gadamer, means that understanding proceeds not from that which is obvious, assumed or capable of being confirmed in a so-called objective way, neither is it finding the one, forever same meaning of an object under view, which may be passed on from one person to the next. It is instead something which emerges anew from the projection of a particular horizon (prejudice, or forestructures), participation of the respondents and therapists in that which is being investigated, whether the clay, the images, or interpretations made, and allowing the investigated to assert its own horizon of meaning, with the subsequent removal of the original meaning and understanding of the investigator, and the investigated, by a new horizon of meaning.

Whether it is Gadamer's focus, which sees a transformation occur at the level of an adjustment of forestructure of understanding, or Ricoeur's focus, which emphasises a more radical change due to the capacity to suspend former understanding in the face of an imaginative sojourn into the projection of a world, the outcome in both instances, is the discovery of what it means to be human and in a world. This is the ontological basis of hermeneutics, which, "ceases to appear as a simple mode of knowing in order to become a way of being and a way of relating to beings and to being" (Ricoeur, 1981, in Thompson, p.44).

6.5THE HERMENEUTIC CIRCLE AND UNDERSTANDING

In the light of all that had emerged in awareness, articulation, and thought for the participants in the research, the process of understanding can be explained in terms of the hermeneutic circle. As a principle, which explains the way understanding is reached, the circularity of understanding, or hermeneutic circle, can be seen to have occurred on a number of different levels throughout the research procedures. Tracing the circle firstly takes the form of identifying some of the dialectics of exchange between different meaning-generating grounds, and discovering how meaning became instated during the formulated level of understanding. Thereafter tracing the circle takes the form of showing how meaning evolved and changed, until a context was created and understood, which placed the ingredients of the situation in a non-contradictory relationship to one another.

The first explicit evidence of the understanding of the participants in the research had been the

meaningful, purposive, and appropriate way they had managed to respond to, and orient themselves within the situation. This response initially occurred in terms of a pre-reflective, spontaneous, bodily reaction, in the light of perceptual awareness, prior instructions, and prior anticipations. It was made possible by the capacity for responding, and a knowledge related to the familiarity of a historical, bodily, and cultural existence. Such knowledge occurred in response to, and was influenced by what was given in a situation. Initially understanding for the respondents, in relation to the clay medium, took the form of a spontaneous bodily response, which occurred largely at a pre-reflective level. It saw each respondent become aware of the visual, tactile, and malleable qualities of the clay.

The response of the respondents, in relation to the clay medium, set up a dialectics of exchange, or circularity of responsiveness and receptiveness, between a pre-articulate, bodily level of engagement, with its historical experience, and anticipations, and the qualities of the clay. This led to a sense of resonance, a feeling of oneness, and being identified with the clay in terms of what the clay seemed to offer in the form of a tactile, sensual, and visual experience. For the therapists, observations of the respondents' responses in the situation, and their action and its impact upon the clay (which responded in its own terms), met with their own capacities for understanding. The meeting of past experience, and accumulated knowledge, including anticipations of a certain kind of meaning, with the demands, and responsiveness of the situation, in a dialectics of exchange, also saw associations, memories, and thoughts, emerge as awareness for the participants. In perceiving something recognizable in the situation, and in the clay medium, the situation thus became co-opted by each participant.

What the participants had been able to perceive in the situation was something familiar, which they could identify. Actions upon the clay met particular qualities, shapes and forms that emerged in the clay, and own reactions to the group situation became noted. In its familiarity, the situation thus became recognised by each participant. This occurred in terms of known contexts of meaning provided by their own past experience, language, ways of thinking, history and tradition, which constituted the meaning generating grounds of potential meaning given by the world. Familiarity with these grounds had made it possible to discover the identity of certain aspects of their awareness.

In becoming aware of what was occurring in the situation, and in relationship to the self, and the medium, the situation had been co-opted by each respondent in its having been rendered meaningful in both implicitly known, and familiar terms. Such terms related to what the respondents were able to recognize and identify in their responses, and the responsiveness of the situation. This recognition had rendered aspects of the situation familiar, and saw them become identified in thought and language, which served to render them meaningful in consensual terms.

Each respondent's response to the situation, and their actions upon the clay, had called forth an interpretative recognition from them, which, in Heidegger's (1962) terms, constituted an existential, human predisposition to want to grasp and master the situation. This disposition had grasped the practicalities, and concrete details of the situation, the meaning of which, in turn, grasped the attention of the respondents.

What each respondent had been able to recognize was what he or she may have anticipated in general terms, but which had not anticipated in specific terms. What had been encountered, for instance in the clay, while known in implicit terms (as a pre-reflective, bodily engagement with its historical knowledge), had taken on a specific shape and identity in a concrete, objectified form. As an enigmatic form, the image was felt to be deeply meaningful. This form, as the product of the body's exchange with the clay, was an extension of a bodily experience, yet existed independently as an object in its own right. This called forth further curiosity which demanded interpretative recognition. What could be identified in thought and language, gave to each respondent a sense of the image being grounded in a known world.

The observations of the therapists had, likewise, met the details of each respondent's actions upon the clay. The impressions, shapes and forms that had emerged in the clay, in response to such actions, met a general familiarity with a practical and clinical knowledge of the psychological meaning of action, in an art therapy situation. In a dialectics of exchange between the anticipation of a certain kind of meaning, and observations of actions, and the clay, the situation had become co-opted by the therapists.

In being able to recognise familiar aspects and details in the situation, and in being able to articulate these, firstly in awareness and thought, and then in spoken and written language, identification and categorization of the situation, in known terms, began to occur. This rendered the situation meaningful in consensual, and symbolic terms for respondents and

therapists alike, and what they understood was a shared, communal horizon of meaning brought into the situation by these terms.

Once experience, observations, shapes, and forms in the clay became identified and formulated in descriptive, linguistic terms, they took on an objective, semantic meaning, with its logic of context, and related paradigms of thought. As formulated, objectified (distanciated) texts, such representations of experience, opened up the possibility of being thought about, and recognized in terms of their reference. As texts, images, descriptions of images, actions, and experience referred beyond themselves, and needed to be fulfilled in their reference, in the recognition, and an appropriation of their meaning by the participants. The listener, and hearer of these words was able to follow their reference, in terms of what their semantic meaning opened up for their own thought. In terms of their own imaginative capacities, the participants found themselves suspending their former understanding, entering the world of the text, and finding themselves located differently. In being grasped by the text's projection of a world, and in familiarizing themselves with its meaning, they discovered themselves located. Then they were left with the injunction of integrating this new discovery to the context of their own situation, both in the research, and in their lives.

This integration occurred in terms of their own concerns, which related to the context of the art therapy situation, and their lives. The movement of the hermeneutic circle had thus proceeded from the formulation of experience in articulated texts, whether in the form of clay, or in words heard and spoken, to the context of the known world and back again to the context of each participant's experience and concerns.

The circularity of understanding also moved from what the participants had intended as meaning in their verbal expressions, and in the clay, to what the interpreter as researcher, or their partner in dialogue, was able to understand from the text itself, which extended beyond the intentions of its author.

This occurred, not only, for instance, when the therapists interpreted the respondent's images, or what they said about them, but when the respondents themselves were able to look at their own images from a new interpretative perspective. Nevertheless, in Gadamer's (1975) terms, as both the texts and the interpreters were part of the same historical, and cultural world context, with its meaning traditions, they shared similar prejudices. From the point of view of what it means to be a body in a physical world, they had also shared in similar bodily experiences.

The bodily, cultural and historical traditions of the participants' shared world had provided horizons of potential meaning by virtue of certain meaning-generating grounds that were at their disposal, and operational in the situation. Thus, the texts, as well as the listeners, speakers, and the participants, as investigators of meaning (which included the researcher) all participated in a horizon of communal possibilities of meaning, in their quest for understanding.

As part of a historical and cultural tradition, all the participants, as interpreters of meaning, shared in the prejudices of their world context, and brought this to bear on the text, which, nevertheless, was an objective expression of life, and thus asserted its own truth claim.

This truth claim influenced the understanding (prejudices) of the participants, and is so doing

became fulfilled in its reference. It had provided the opportunity for a recognition and adjustment of prejudices. By virtue of the objectivity, or fictional nature of the text, and its semantic possibilities of meaning, the participants had been able to recognize it as something different from themselves, and in this recognition discovered what it referred to, before applying it to their own situations.

This adjustment occurred in a dialectics of exchange within which the text came to be both questioned in terms of certain assumptions (fore-structures of understanding), and in terms of certain of its answers.

The adjustment in understanding occurred as a fusion of horizons in which the text, with its meaning, could be grasped as a whole within the understanding of the participants, and its meaning could be integrated into the context of the participants' worlds, and within the art therapy situation. One aspect of reality had been understood in terms of the meaning of another, so that both came to be understood differently. Meaning came to be de-contextualized in terms of its origins, only to be re-contextualized differently within a current meaning horizon that had emerged.

In having been questioned, and explained by means of interpretations the clay images came to be understood within an interpretative context. This context related to particular memories, current issues and concerns, and to the experience of creating images. The meaning of clay images thus came to be constructed and understood in an insightful revelation, as a fusion of horizons. While this fusion was occurring, words and images served a subservient, and syncretistic function in the attempt to represent a global vision of the respondent's reality, with its various experiential vicissitudes, and narrative threads.

The fusion, of what had formerly occurred in awareness as differentiated, discrete horizons of meaning, had been gathered together during the formulations of meaning, and explanations in the situation. The development, and mutual adoption of a particular interpretative perspective, which had endorsed seeing images, and each respondent's issues in terms of the meaning of the other, had made a particular form of understanding possible. Having been constructed throughout all the interpretative procedures, a former, implicit understanding had come to be remembered, and then came to be constructed and understood in its unifying essence as what it means to be human and in a world context. Each ingredient of the situation could now be understood differently, as it had found its meaning in the overall context of each respondent's life situation.

This understanding of ontological essence, produced as it was firstly in the construction of a `fictional world' came to ben experienced in an event of meaning, or the sense of an answer

to ontological concerns. What had made this possible was the fusion of meaning horizons of the various textual ingredients of the situation. These had firstly been gathered together to form an imaginative text world. This world had been constructed between the participants by virtue of their capacity to formulate in thought and words, the relationship of the ingredients in the situation to one another. What was also understood, given the art therapy situation, was that this fictive, imaginative world related symbolically to the general possibilities of the respondents' psychological being. The meaning of this fictive world served a reminding function, which provided the possibilities for recognising each respondent's situation, which, in turn, cast a certain light upon the participants' understanding of the nature of human existence.

Every time a productive interpretation had occurred, and through appropriation, was released as meaning in understanding, an appreciation of the respondent's situation had deepened, and the nature of human existence became further understood. In this way, textual meaning, (concrete details, or *sensible particulars* in Plato's terms) had made it possible, through an interrogation of their meaning, to see what was occurring as the respondent's life situation, and what was possible in life in general. This recognition had thus brought with it an awareness of ontological concerns, and the possibility of doing things differently. This discovery of `true' meaning, as existence, was a discovery of the essence of what it means to be human and in a world.

CHAPTER SEVEN
CONCLUSIONS

7.1INTRODUCTION

Part One of the research sought to establish a context wherein certain assumptions pertaining to the interpretative dimensions of understanding the image in art therapy could be considered and reviewed. Notions about the image, meaning and reality were discussed, both in terms of how they relate to current art therapy practice, and how they may be alternatively thought about, both from the perspective of ancient Hellenic Greek thought, and more contemporary thought, particularly that of phenomenological- and philosophical-hermeneutics. *Part Two* of the research investigated the phenomenon of understanding the image in an art therapy situation, with a view to reconsidering certain of the assumptions raised in the first part of the thesis (phrased in the form of research questions). It did this utilizing a qualitative methodology, and by exposing four respondents (patients) and two therapists to an art therapy situation in which images were created out of clay. The respondents (patients) and therapists articulated their understanding of the image production procedure, and the meaning of the images created.

In having considered the phenomenon, or lived experience, of understanding in art therapy, and having thought about it from an ancient, traditional, and then a contemporary perspective, the answer to the question of how the image is understood in art therapy, is necessarily a complex one.

The research process yielded a variety of clay images, descriptive accounts of the creation of these images, and a discussion about the meaning of the images between each therapist-respondent pair. What the outcome of the research suggests for art therapy, is that understanding occurs for both the patient and therapist in terms of their response to the situation, and in terms of what emerges in a concrete form during this response, and as a result of it.

The patient's understanding of the situation occurs in a dialectics of exchange between his or her capacity for response, and the demands of the situation. The outcome takes the form of actual perceptions, memories and experiences in the situation. This response typically includes summing up the situation, disclosing information about the self, engaging with the medium, being aware of sensations, associations and memories, discovering images in the medium, and bringing some of

these to form. It also includes remembering current issues of concern, and noticing significant qualities about the image. Noticing these qualities serves to engage the patient differently, in that what the image now seems to suggest, apart from its shape and form, which may be readily identifiable, is an enigmatic, unfamiliar quality that grasps the attention of the patient. This quality, although understood in terms of the patient's actions upon the medium, is unintended, unfamiliar and unanticipated, yet seems to resonate with the patient's being, and the patient feels identified with the image. This calls forth a questioning kind of recognition, which cannot articulate the nature of what is occurring beyond discovering familiar names for the content of the image, and having further memories, and associations. What the patient has at his or her disposal for understanding the enigmatic quality of the image that embodies the depths of the patients' lived experience, is what is already familiar, and capable of articulation.

The therapist also responds to the situation in terms of his or her own past lived experience, with its knowledge about the meaning of similar situations, and familiarity with the interpretative demands of the art therapy situation. As an observer of the process of creating images, the therapist readily identifies the patient's actions, with their impact upon the medium, in terms of his or her clinical knowledge, and knowledge about the patient. In this way the participants' response has served to co-opt the situation by rendering it meaningful in their own terms.

If asked to describe what was occurring during the process of creating his or her image, the patient is hard pressed to find the right words for doing so. In the process, certain things are remembered, and others are forgotten, and what was previously experienced, and understood in a certain way, from the inside, so to speak, comes to be transformed into its communicable and public meaning, as an articulated, narrative account of experience. The therapeutic significance of this step lies in what it means to the patient to discover a sense of conformity, continuity, and intentionality in their actions, feelings, thoughts and experiences, all of which seem to now reside alongside what is embodied in the image.

What has occurred in the process, once the patient has articulated his or her experience, is that a former lived awareness has taken on a narrative, linguistic form, with the patient instated as the intending, acting subject, and with the image instated as the object being related to. Here, by virtue of the use of language, a consensual, narrative type of meaning has emerged provided by the symbolic order of the world, given in thought and language.

The therapist is also able to describe what has occurred from the position of what has been observed and thought about, and is able to make definitive statements about the patient's actions and their impact upon the medium. In so doing an authoritative opinion has come to form another ingredient of the situation. As more it said, thought about, and articulated in the situation, the more a common ground of understanding is made possible by virtue of an accrual of knowledge and information from which the discovery of meaning can proceed. What is of further importance, is that the patient and therapist come to grasp, and objectify the patient's lived experience, in temporal, narrative, and linguistic, and thus intelligible, familiar terms. This serves to ground the patient's experience within the context of a familiar world, and the patient can begin to recognize the nature of his or her experience, while the therapist and patient can understand one another.

Once a common ground of understanding has been established between them, and the clinical understanding of the therapist has enlightened the patient about the potential for psychological meaning in his or her images, actions, and experiences, a common perspective comes to be adopted. From this perspective, it becomes possible to creatively now explore the images in relation to the patient's psychological issues, and the issues in terms of the images. What this serves to do is to create a `fictive' world where images and issues, and other related details of the patient's situation come to bear a relationship to one another, in the understanding of the patient and therapist.

It is by virtue of the coherence of this fictive world, as meaning, that the patient is given a sense of what it means to be human, and in a relationship to a situation. In recognizing the qualities of existence, captured, and portrayed by this fictive world, the patient comes to recognize the nature and qualities of his or her own situation as a person, with concerns, and in a world. He or she also comes to recognize, by virtue of this new found meaning, certain possibilities for future action.

The creation and discovery of the true meaning of the patient's images in art therapy, is a process of understanding which leads to the recognition ultimately, of ontological concerns (see 6.4.6 and 6.4.7). This recognition provides the possibility of a change in behaviour, in the light of the

discovery about the nature of his or her own situation. This understanding occurs, provided that the patient and therapist are able to respond meaningfully and appropriately to the situation (See *6.2.1.2* and 6.3). On the part of the patient, this engagement needs to occur from a position of his or her own historical experience and concerns, and on the part of the therapist, (see *6.2.1.6* and *6.2.1.7)*, it needs to occur in terms of their experience and clinical knowledge (see *6.2.1.4* and *6.2.1.7*). Provided that the patient and therapist articulate their understanding to one another (see *6.2.1.3* and *6.2.1.9*), and discuss the possible meaning of the images that are created, a dialectics of exchange can occur in which the hermeneutic circle is put into operation, until an apparent coherence of meaning occurs (see 6.4).

If the response to the situation is inappropriate, the meaning that emerges will not be true for art therapy but may be true for some other context. If the patient does not articulate his or her experience, understanding remains in the realm of the implicit and unrecognized. If the therapist does not articulate his or her understanding, this forecloses on the ability of the patient to recognize the psychological dimensions of their own behaviour in the situation. This would suggest that where there is not the equal opportunity for both the patient and therapist to participate in the negotiation of meaning, then understanding will necessarily be limited. What is also suggested is that, the conditions that prevail in the situation influence the possibilities and limitations of understanding, whether these be the type of therapist, or the patient, the type of theory, and/or the particular anticipations of the situation.

7.2POSSIBILITIES FOR FUTURE THOUGHT AND PRACTICE IN ART THERAPY

7.2.1Limitations of the research

7.2.1.1The extent and permanence of insights gained

While the research served to explicate the nature and quality of the therapist's and patient's understanding in art therapy, it did not answer certain questions pertinent to the success or failure of the therapeutic process in terms of the lasting nature of the insights gained. To answer this question the extent and long-term influence, in terms of the effects on the patients' thinking and future behaviour would have to be determined. While there had been a certain recognition of each respondent's psychological situation in the research, the meaning and impact of this recognition within other situations in the broader context of their lives, has not been determined. This would have required a follow up interview, or longitudinal study. Determining the extent, permanence and/or influence of insights gained in art therapy could be a focus for further

research, but has not been the concern of this research, which has focused upon the interpretative, rather than the therapeutic dimensions of the situation.

7.2.1.2The influence of particular paradigms of thought

Another aspect of understanding which emerged in the application of phenomenological-hermeneutic thinking, and its application to that which emerged in the research, is the question about the influential nature of different perspectives upon the nature of meaning in art therapy. Had the interpretative focus of the thesis been different its results would have been different. The therapists in the research had also for instance, tended to understand the creation of the images in terms of a particular theoretical paradigmatic approach. This perspective made it possible to describe observations in psychodynamic, and developmental terms, which made it possible to think about the respondents' behaviour in a particular way. What the research did not investigate was the nature and influence of different paradigms of thought upon what emerged as the meaning of the lived phenomenon under investigation. This, too, could form the focus of further research in that different paradigms of thought applied to the same image production procedure, should, in the light of phenomenological and phenomenological-hermeneutic thinking, yield a somewhat different understanding of it.

The same situation applies to the possibilities of different media, and different therapists and patients influencing the type of meaning that emerged. Here, a further study could be done to determine what is common to the art therapy experience across different groups of patients and therapists, as well as within different art therapy procedures, and with the use of different media.

7.3RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF THE RESULTS

As the purpose of the investigation was to understand the nature and complexity of understanding itself, for the purpose of reviewing practice and thought, its reliability relates to the consistency with which this nature and complexity can be demonstrated and understood across cases, and across similar studies. In this research there was considerable consistency in the way the participants engaged in the task of creating and observing the creation of images. This was evident in the way in which they responded to the situation, and in what occurred in the process of the articulation of experience and the dialogues about meaning, including the way in which meaning emerged. While the context of understanding of each participant differed, the way understanding proceeded, and the way meaning was reached revealed a consistency. Of course,

this was in large measure influenced by the methodological procedures themselves, which have purposefully, and in a step-wise manner, guided the participants through different phases of the process. Nevertheless, the movement from at first assessing and responding to the situation, and then becoming immersed in creation and observations, and thereafter articulating understanding, and exploring different meanings, saw a consequent development and deepening of understanding. This occurred for all the participants in spite of the depth of understanding being different for each. Furthermore, the understanding that emerged pertained to art therapy, and to the nature of the images and issues of each respondent, and ultimately to different ways of being and relating to the world.

In terms of validity, the study investigated what it intended to study as the nature and process of understanding the image from a phenomenological-hermeneutic perspective. However, this was done in a simulated art therapy situation which was artificially structured, for the purpose of a qualitative research investigation. It was also not an *in vivo* art therapy situation with real patients and an art therapist, in an actual clinical, therapeutic setting. While the focus on the research nature of the study may have engaged the compliance of the participants as research subjects, the lack of an intimate, on-going therapeutic relationship, in which familiarity with the art therapy situation and trust in the therapist had developed over time, may have negatively influenced the therapeutic benefits, and personal nature of the disclosures of the patient, respondents.

In the research, certain personal disclosures were nevertheless made, and issues were raised that were of concern to the respondents, and that did come to be understood. This had occurred in terms of the images created, and in terms of the respondents' lived situations, thus the outcome, as understanding, was significant for drawing conclusions about art therapy. Furthermore, the discovery of meaning did raise new found possibilities for action. However, this benefit may have been increased with on-going, real, live art therapy in a clinical setting, where the focus of attention was on therapeutic, rather than other research, issues.

7.3.1Interpretative validity of the research

As this was an interpretative study, its outcome is not something either `correct', or `incorrect', but should be viewed as a persuasive argument that convinces or fails to convince, given what is known about the subject matter, and what has emerged as data. This subject matter includes art therapy, the nature of created images, and psychological issues, and the implications of certain

meanings for practical living, and understanding of, what it means to be human, and in a world. It also includes knowledge about the paradigms of thought raised, and the capacity to understand the relationship and implications of these for both what emerged in response to the research procedures, and for art therapy in general. The outcome of the research needs to be judged in terms of whether or not it provides a responsible judgement, akin to that of juridical procedures based upon reasoned interpretations of the law, and "generally accepted criteria norms and principles," (Madison, 1988, p. 28). These "serve only as guiding principles in choosing among courses of action" (p. 28). The validity of method here, is the validity of "method in a normative sense," (p. 28), which relates to interpretative principles such as coherence, comprehensiveness penetration, thoroughness, appropriateness, contextuality, agreement, suggestiveness, and potential (Madison, 1988).

7.3.1.1The coherence of meaning in the research

Just as most of the participants in the research developed a unified picture of each respondent's psychological issues and concerns in terms of their images, and just as they understood the implications of their insights for their human lives in general, so the "harmony of all the details with the whole" (Madison, 1988, p.29 cites Gadamer), of this piece of research, is important in judging its validity and value for orienting future art therapy action. Its investigation into ways of thinking about meaning and reality, the image, and art therapy (including its phenomenology), should present a unified picture that does not contradict itself in places. A failure in this regard would mean that it has been inadequately understood (Gadamer, 1975). The lack of contradiction is for future readers, as researchers, to decide.

7.3.1.2The comprehensiveness of the research

The reference to various philosophical paradigms, such as ancient, Hellenic Greek thought, and philosophical- and phenomenological- hermeneutics, should ideally do justice to the system of these paradigms of thought as a whole, and not ignore salient aspects which might contradict this interpreter's understanding of them. While the writer of this thesis found inspiration in various tenets of such thought, and sought continual support for her understanding from various, authoritative, secondary sources, and from a repeated scrutiny of original texts, the comprehensiveness of her understanding is necessarily limited, as it is confined to her non-specialist interest in the subject. In mitigation, however, as Gadamer (1975) states it.

… we understand texts that have been handed down to us on the basis of expectations of meaning which are drawn from our own anterior relation to the subject (p. 262).

… understanding means, primarily, to understand the context of what is said and only secondarily to isolate and understand another's meaning as such. Hence the first of all hermeneutic requirements remains one's own fore-understanding, which proceeds from being concerned with the same subject (p. 262).

[There is] an inevitable difference between the interpreter and the author that is created by the historical distance between them. Every age has to understand a text in its own way, … The real meaning of a text, as it speaks to the interpreter, does not depend on the contingencies of the author and whom he originally wrote for (p. 263).

Thus, while the researcher's non-specialist interest may, or may not be a naive one, it is a necessary one in terms of the comprehensiveness required for a less than superficial understanding of what has been said, and in the context of history and philosophy about understanding the image.

7.2.1.3The penetration of the research

The depth of penetration of this study into the phenomenon of creating and understanding the image in art therapy, and ways of thinking about it, should bring out the "guiding and underlying intention in the work" (Madison, 1988, p. 29). This intention relates to investigating and reviewing certain notions which inform thinking and practice in art therapy, which includes investigating the nature of the lived experience of such understanding, and exploring it from a phenomenological-hermeneutic point of view. The research has done this to the extent that it has looked at various notions about the image, meaning, and reality in art therapy given in the history of thinking and practice of art therapy. Such thinking has been shown to have its roots in ancient Hellenic Greek thought, more recent notions of philosophers such as Vico, Dilthey, and Husserl, but particularly those pertaining to philosophical- and phenomenological-hermeneutics such as Heidegger, Gadamer and Ricoeur, and to a lesser extent Merleau-Ponty. It has also done this to the extent that it has been able to use their ideas to understand and explicate what has emerged at the experiential level in the research. Waht has now been included are the implications of these finding for the understanding and practice of art therapy for the future.

7.3.1.4The thoroughness of the thesis as interpretation

The ability of the research to address the general and specific questions it has posed, which

includes the questions that have been raised by the excursion into philosophical thought, and raised by the lived experience, has necessarily been limited and confined by the scale and scope of this investigation, given the constraints of time, the multiplicity of possible meanings, and given the complexities of reality, and the researcher's limited knowledge. The thesis has, nevertheless, attempted to answer most of the salient questions it has raised, and has attempted to do so within the confines of the overall, general research question about how the image comes to be created and understood in art therapy.

7.3.1.5The appropriateness of the interpretation

The questions dealt with have been those raised by the philosophical thought deemed to have been of value, in setting a conceptual ground within which to situate and explain the research and its finding. The thesis, as interpretation, is thus less an answer to the researcher's own questions, and more an answer to questions emerging from philosophical thought, and tradition of practice itself. Equally, it is an answer to the questions raised by the results of an actual lived experience of creating and understanding images in an art therapy situation, and the questions raised at the interface between such thought, practice, and experience.

7.3.1.6The contextuality of the interpretation of meaning

Throughout the research procedures an attempt was made to ground conceptual theory in art therapy practice, including that of the participants and the researcher in this study. Thus an attempt was made to ensure the relevance of though for practice and experience, and to ground practice and experience within a current and historical tradition of though. In so doing, an attempt was made to limit the arbitrariness of the findings.

7.3.1.7The reaching of agreement as interpretation

The research sought to reach an agreement in a dialectics of exchange between all the major components of cited philosophy, method, results as lived experience, and its meaning for the participants and the researcher in the research. Due to the extensiveness, and complexity of each of these components, the agreement reached could not be presented in an entirely systematic, or linear way, and needs to be seen as a more or less reasonable agreement established by means of a creative synthesis. Its reasonableness relates to the validity of its argument which rests with the probability, and likelihood, of its meaning being true, given all that is known in relationship to what has been presented for consideration. In the light of known, lived, and articulated

experience, and what is possible in terms of thinking about it, the reaching of agreement in this thesis has attempted to be a grounded, one at both the phenomenological and hermeneutic level. The reaching of agreement between what is presented in the form of a thesis, and future readers of this research, remains an open question, the answer to which will decide whether or not the interpretation is an adequate or deficient one.

7.3.1.8The suggestiveness of the interpretation

What the research has opened as suggestion for art therapy is that the quest for the meaning of the image, in the therapeutic interests of helping the patient achieve self-insight, may be understood in the light of the hermeneutic circle. Provided that this circle becomes fully operational during the process of understanding that occurs, what emerges as meaning provides the therapist and patient with the sense of a true answer, which is an answer that is experienced as being true, in relation to their specific and general concerns. It is also true in relation to the specific concerns of the broader context of related theoretical and practical knowledge provided by the world.

In being brought to articulation, by means of the operations of the hermeneutic circle, a former, implicit understanding comes to be remembered and articulated, then understood in terms of its meaning for the current art therapy situation, and ultimately in terms of its meaning for a possible way of being in the world, that relates to the patient in his or her situation. This has been made possible by means of the hermeneutic circle, that has been operational in the understanding of both patient and therapist, provided that they engage in the art therapy procedure, bring their understanding to bear on it, articulate this understanding, and are prepared to receive what the situation has to offer, in terms of new possibilities of meaning. In other words, if they are prepared to engage in an active work of interpretation, and are capable of opening themselves to the objective (textual) possibilities of meaning of images created, and words spoken, they are able to construct a meaning in imagination which is both grounded in the patient's lived experience, and shows it clearly in abstract and concrete terms, and in terms of what is possible, and desirable, given their situations. In these terms, the discovery of true meaning, by means of the hermeneutic circle, is an emerging conception of the whole of the patients' life situation, which is ultimately the meaning of what it means to be human and in a world, with its possibilities of being differently in the interests of personal, psychological well-being, given the insights of true understanding.

7.3.1.9The potential of the interpretation

The thesis, as potential, is a `true' interpretation if it is "capable of being extended and if in the process the implications it contains unfold themselves harmoniously" (Madison, 1988, p.30). This extension can relate to any number of aspects of the various levels of understanding that occur in art therapy. Ultimately, however, it relates to the necessary conditions that ensure an unimpeded operation of the hermeneutic circle.

REFERENCES

Allen, R.E. (Ed), The Oxford dictionary of current English. New York: Oxford University Press.

Alschuler, R.H. & Hattwick, L.A. 1947/1969. Painting and personality. (Rev. abridged ed.), Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Anastasi, A. & Foley, J.P. 1940. A survey of the literature on artistic behaviour in the abnormal:III. Spontaneous productions. Psychological Monographs. 52(6), 1-71.

Aristotle, 1958. J.D. in Ross (Ed), The pocket Aristotle. New York: Washington Square Press.

Aristotle, 1964. In A. Hofstadter, A & R. Kuhs (Eds), Philosophies of art and beauty: Selected readings in aesthetics from Plato to Heidegger. London: University of Chicago Press.

Barasch, M. 1985. Theories of art: From Plato to Winckelmann. New York: New York University Press.

Barasch, M. 1990. Modern theories of art, 1: From Winckelmann to Baudelaire. New York: New York University Press.

Betensky, M 1973. Self-discovery through self-expression. Springfield, Illinois: Charles, C. Thomas.

Betensky, M 1977. The phenomenological approach to art expression and art therapy. Art Psychotherapy. Vol. 4, pp. 173-179.

Betensky, M. & Nucho, A.O. 1979. The phenomenological approach to art therapy. The proceedings of the 10th annual conference of the American Art Therapy Association.

Billig, O. & Burton-Bradley, B.G. 1978. The painted message. New York: Wiley.

Blanck, G. & Blanck, R. 1974. Ego psychology: Theory and practice. New York: Columbia University Press.

Bleicher, J. 1980. Contemporary hermeneutics: Hermeneutics as method, philosophy and critique. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Boss, M. 1963. Psychoanalysis and Daseinsanalysis. Lefebre, New York: Da Capo.

Brooke, R. 1991. Jung and phenomenology. New York: Routledge.

Brown, L.M. Tappan, M.B., Gilligan, C, Miller, B.A. & Argyris, D.E. 1989. Reading for self and moral voice: A method for interpreting narratives of real-life moral conflict and choice. In M.J. Packer & R.B. Addison (Eds), Entering the circle: Hermeneutic investigations in psychology (pp.141-164). Albany: State University of New York Press.

Copleston, F. 1946. A history of philosophy. London: Burns Oates & Washbourne Ltd.

de Koning, A.J.J. In A Giorgi, R. Knowles & D. Smith (Eds), Duquesne Studies in Phenomenological Psychology Volume III. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press.

Douglas, B. 1986. The use of art in the diagnosis and treatment of body boundary disturbance in scizophrenia. Unpublished M.A. thesis. Pretoria: University of South Africa.

Douglas, M. 1970. Natural symbols. London: Barrie & Rockcliff: The Cresset Press.

Eagleton, T 1983. Literary theory. London: Verso.

Edwards, D. 1990. Case study research method. Grahamstown: Rhodes University: Psychology Dept.

Edwards, R. (general Ed), 1967. The encyclopedia of philosophy. New York: MacMillan & Free Press.

Ehrenzweig, A. 1970. The hidden order of art. St. Albans, Herts: Paladin.

Fischer, C.T. & Wertz, F.J. Empirical Phenomenological Analyses of Being Criminally Victimised. In A. Giorgi, R. Knowles & D. Smith (Eds).

Flew, A. 1979. A dictionary of philosophy. London: Pan Books.

Fowler, R. 1987. A dictionary of modern critical terms. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Freud, S. 1924; 1950. Collected papers. Vol III, New York: International Psychoanalytic Press.

Freud, S. 1975, in A. Richards, (Ed), Sigmund Freud 4. The interpretation of dreams. New York: Penguin Books.

Friedländer, P. 1969. Plato. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Gadamer, H. 1975/1979. Truth and method. London: Sheed and Ward.

Gilroy, A & Dalley, T. (Eds) 1989. Pictures at an exhibition. New York: Routledge.

Giorgi, A. Fischer, C. & Murray, E. 1975. Dusquesne studies in phenomenological

psychology. Volume II. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press.

Giorgi, A., Knowles, R. & Smith, D.L. (Eds), 1979. Dusquesne studies in phenomenological psychology. Volume III. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press.

Hammer, E.F. 1958. Clinical applications of projective drawings. Springfield, Illinois: Charles, C. Thomas.

Heidegger, M. 1962. Being and time. Translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson. London: SCM Press Ltd.

Heidegger, M. 1977. The question concerning technology and other essays. Translated and introduced by William Lovitt. New York: Harper & Row.

Heidegger, M. 1978. In Krell, D.F. (Ed), Martin Heidegger: Basic writings from Being and Time (1927) to The Task of Thinking (1964). London Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Hofstadter, A. & Kuhns, R. (Eds) 1964, Philosophies of art & beauty: Selected readings in aesthetics from Plato to Heidegger. London: University of Chicago Press.

Ihde, D. 1971. Hermenuetic philosophy: The philosophy of Paul Ricoer. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

Ihde, D. 1975. Dialogues in phenomenology. The Hague: M. Nijhoff.

Jorstad, J. & Ugelstad, E. (Eds), 1975. Schizophrenia ' 75: Psychotherapy, family studies, research. Universitelsforlaget. International Symposium on the Psychotherapy of Schizophrenia. Oslo, Norway, August - .

Kelly, K.J. 1994. Hermeneutics in psychotherapy: A study of interpretation in the context of the psychotherapeutic dialogue. Unpublished PhD thesis. Grahamstown: Rhodes University.

Kierkegaard, 1969. In R. May, E.Angel & H Ellenberger (Eds,) Existence: A new dimension in psychiatry and psychology. USA: Simon & Schuster.

Klemm. D.E. & Schweiker, W. (Eds), 1992. Meanings in text and actions: Questioning Paul Ricoeur. Charlottsville: University Press of Virginia.

Kvale, S. 1996. Interviews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing.
Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Kramer, E. 1971. Art as therapy with children. New York: Schocken Books.

Kramer, E. 1979. Childhood and art therapy. New York: Schocken Books.

Kris, E. 1952. Psychoanalytic explorations in art. New York: International University Press.

Kris, E. 1964. Psychoanalytic explorations in art. New York: Schocken Books.

Kruger, D. 1988. An Introduction to Phenomenological Psychology. Cape Town: Juta & Co, Ltd.

Kruger, D. 1991. Unpublished lectures: Grahamstown: Rhodes University.

Kwant, R.C. 1963. The phenomenological philosophy of Merleau-Ponty. Pittsburgh: Dusquesne University Press.

Lachman-Chapin, M. 1979. Self-psychology: Kohut's theories on narcissism: Implications for art therapy. American Journal of art Therapy, 19(1),pp.3-9.

Langer, S.K. 1979. Philosophy in a new key. New York: Mentor.

Levin, D.M. 1988. The opening of vision. New York: Routledge.

Levin, D.M. 1985. The body's recollection of being: Phenomenological psychology and the deconstruction of nihilism. London: New York: Routledge.

Levy, F.J. 1995. Dance and other expressions in art therapies: When words are not enough. New York: Routledge.

Lowenfeld, V. 1982. Creative and mental growth. (7th ed). New York: MacMillan.

Machover, K. 1949. Personality projection in the drawing of the human figure. Springfield Illinois: Charles C. Thomas.

Madison, G.B. 1988. The Hermeneutics of Postmodernity. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Malchiodi, C.A. 1990. Breaking the silence: Art therapy with children from violent homes. New York: Brunner/Mazel.

McConville, M. 1978. The phenomenological approach to perception. In R.S. Valle & M. King. Existential-phenomenological alternatives for psychology. New York: Oxford University Press.

McNiff, S. 1992. Art as medicine. USA: Shambhala Publications, Inc.

Marx, W. 1971. Heidegger and the tradition. Evaston: Northwestern University Press.

Merleau-Ponty, M. 1962. Phenomenology of perception. New York: Humanities Press.

Merleau-Ponty, M.1967. The structure of behaviour. Translated by A.L. Fisher. Boston: Beacon Press.

Mook, B. 1991. Unpublished lectures. Grahamstown: Rhodes University.

Moon, B.L. 1990. Existential art therapy: The canvas mirror. USA: Charles Thompson.

Murray, E.L. 1974. Language and the integration of personality. Journal of phenomenological psychology. Vol 4, No 2. Humanities Press.

Nash, J. 1970. Developmental psychology: A psychobiological approach. Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice Hall.

Naumburg, M. 1950. Schizophrenic art: Its meaning in psychotherapy. New York: Grune & Stratton.

Naumburg, M. 1966. Dynamically oriented art therapy: Its principles and practice. New York: Grune & Stratton.

Naumburg, M. 1973. An introduction to art therapy. Studies of the "Free" art expression of behaviour problem children and adolescents as a means of diagnosis and therapy. (Rev.ed). New York: Teachers College Press. (Original work published 1947).

Niederland, W.C. 1976. Psychoanalytic approaches to artistic creativity. Psychoanalytic Quarterly 45, pp.155-212.

Packer, P.E. 1969. Hermeneutics. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

Patterson, R. 1985. Image and reality in Plato's metaphysics. Indianapolis: Hacket Publishing Company.

Piv_evi_, E. 1970. Husserl and phenomenology. London: Hutchinson University Library.

Plato, 1956. In E.G. Warmington, & P.G. Rouse, Great dialogues of Plato. New York: The New American Library.

Plokker, J.H. 1964. Artistic self-expression in mental disease: The shattered image of schizophrenics. London: Skilton.

Reeves, J.W. 1958. Body and mind in Western thought. USA: Penguin Books.

Ricoeur, P. 1974. In D.Ihde. (Ed), The conflict of interpretations. Evaston: Northwestern University Press.

Ricoeur, P. 1976. Interpretation theory: Discourse and the surplus of meaning. Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press.

Ricoeur, P. 1979. "The model of the text: Meaningful action considered as a test". In P. Rabinow & W.M. Sullivan (Eds), Interpretative social science: A reader. Berkley: University

of California Press.

Ricoeur, P. 1981. In J.B. Thompson (Ed), Hermeneutics and the human sciences. Cambridge University Press.

Ricoeur, P. 1991. In M.J. Valdés (Ed), A Ricoeur Reader. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Ricoeur, P. 1991. From text to action: Essays in hermeneutics, II. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press.

Ricoeur, P. 1991. In K. Blamey, & J.B. Thompson. From text to action: Essays in Hermeneutics, II. Illinois: Northwestern University Press.

Risser, J. 1991. "Reading the text", in Silverman. (Ed), Continental Philosophy IV: Gadamer and hermeneutics. New York: Routledge.

Robbins, A. & Sibley, L. 1976. Creative art therapy. New York: Brunner/Mazel.

Schafer, R. 1976. A new language for psychoanalysis. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Scott, C.E. 1982. Boundaries in mind. New York: Crossroads Publishing Company.

Silverman, H.J. 1991. Continental philosophy IV: Gadamer and hermeneutics. New York: Routledge.

Spence, D. 1982. Narrative truth and historical truth: Meaning and Interpretation in psychoanalysis. New York: W.W.Norton.

Steele, R.S. 1982. Freud and Jung: Conflicts of interpretation. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Stone, E. 1981. Theoretical and clinical issues involved with patient's originality vs imitation in art. Proceedings of the Twelfth Annual conference of the American Art Therapy Association.

Stones, C. 1988. Research: Toward a phenomenological praxis. In Kruger, D. An introduction to phenomenological psychology. Cape Town: Juta & Co, Ltd.

Stones, C.J.R. (Ed), 1996. Qualitative research approaches to psychotherapy process. Pretoria: HSRC.

Tarnas, R. 1991. The passion of the western mind: understanding ideas that have shaped our world. New York: Ballantine Books.

The living Webster: Encyclopedic dictionary of the English language, 1975, Chicago, Illinois: The English Language Institute of America, Inc.

Trusted, J. 1981. An introduction to the philosophy of knowledge. The MacMillan Press.

Ulman, E. & Dachinger, P. (Eds), 1975. Art therapy in theory and practice. New York: Schocken Books.

Ulman, E., Kramer, E., and Kwiatkowska, H. 1978. Art Therapy in the United States, Craftsbury Common, Vt: Art Therapy Publications.

Vernon, P.E. (Ed), 1970. Creativity: Selected readings. New York: Penguin.

Valdés, M.J. (Ed), 1991 A Ricoeur reader. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Valle, R.S. & King, M. 1978. Existential-phenomenological alternatives for psychology. New York: Oxford University Press.

Van den Berg, J. 1972. A different existence. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press.

Vernon, P.E. (Ed), 1970. Creativity: Selected readings. New York: Penguin.

Warnke, G. 1987. Gadamer: Hermeneutics, tradition and reason.Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.

Wild, J. (Ed), 1964. The primacy of perception. USA: Northwestern University Press.

Wilson, L. 1982. Art therapy: Theory and practice. Unpublished lectures. New York: New York University.

Winnicott, D.W. 1971. Playing and reality. New York: Penguin Books.

APPENDIX 1:

DATA BASE 1 (a)

Subject J: Experience-near description

The clay is very, very cold, and I am bumping my hands, wanting to warm it up. I want to get used to it. I am not really concerned about making a picture, I am really just enjoying feeling the clay and wanting to use it the way that I want. I feel a bit concerned about the other people being around. I think I would prefer to go somewhere and do something and then break it up, then nobody would see. I am quite concerned about making something that will be worthwhile, something someone could look at and see, something meaningful that could be interpreted. I find myself breaking it up and just using it as small pieces, not really wanting to put it together. I know what I want to make and I start making it, putting the pieces together and digging a volcano out. I begin enjoying myself, and forgetting the others. I feel part of the clay.

Then I suddenly remember that we are being watched through the one-way mirror. I am instantly aware of all the images that the therapist is thinking about. I feel quite concerned and exposed. The volcano is unhideable. I try to fix the edges of the volcano. The volcano doesn't look right, it is too wide. I take clay and build up the walls to make it look right, but I can't get it to look like a volcano any more and I become very frustrated. I pack the sides and try to fix the edges. I have the idea of having pieces of clay running down the side. I know what I want but I can't get it right. I feel as though, with crayons, with a lot of colours, I would be able to draw it. I am beginning to feel very separate as if it is someone else's. I smash it up. I am not happy, I really want to leave. I want to be out of here. I have no more ideas.

I then squash the clay into a mound, which I put down. I find myself wanting to fill the board with clay. I don't know why. I just don't want there to be a difference between the board and the mound. Maybe it's just because that's how it is with beach sand. I used to make mounds in beach sand as a child, with the mound being the same as the surrounding sand. It feels like something that I know, and feel quite safe doing. In childhood I made mounds which stood for members of the family. This mound doesn't feel recognizable

I then find myself rolling some clay and making a border or fence around the mound. I want to do it again and again. As I am rolling the clay to make the fence, I get a sense of it being quite soothing: rolling and then putting down, and rolling and putting down. It becomes quite a ritualistic thing. At first it is going to be a border with two or three strands. Now it becomes a wall. If I had the whole day I would continue to build the outside, and not touch the inside. I feel that I am running out of time. What I would like to do is to build a high wall and put a roof on it: over the mound. I want to protect it, but I don't want to hide it so that it can't be seen. It must be accessible. I start panicking. The wall isn't going to be high enough, and it isn't going to cover the mound. I feel quite unsafe. It is so exposed. I feel kind of open. Still I want the therapist to see it. There is a lot I'm still rejecting. Oh God, and now what do I do? There's no time to break it down and start again. There is no time to finish the wall. Because I know I won't complete this, I decide to leave it as it is. I start playing with the clay again. There is no time. I am forced to leave it. It feels very left. As I walk out, I find myself feeling

that I have left a large part of myself inside. I feel unsafe, and I know everyone else is in their own space. I wish I could take it with me. I also feel as though I haven't made anything at all. There isn't anything to see: no interpretations are going to be got out of it. I feel as though I haven't done a very good job. While I want to protect and hide what I have made, and I'm scared of being exposed. I would also like it to be recognized.

DATA BASE 2 (a)

Therapist M: Observation:

I found watching the process really interesting: how it tied into her history was quite an interesting thing for me. She started to play with the clay quite nicely, manipulated it with her hands and got into play. She built a mound, used a knife, and cut a hole in the top, then sort of really yanked it open with the top of a spoon. I thought of the sexual abuse, with its violent penetration, and of the spoon as something foreign being introduced into the clay. The hole was opened more until it became a cup-like container or castle. She pulled the clay so much that it became thin on top and started collapsing. She then started to repair the edges by reinforcing them. Then she crumpled it up, and stopped working. It was for me quite significant: the creative stuff got closed down - that sort of free play - which was how it had been for her back then with the sexual abuse. And then the defendedness came. She then put this mound down. For a moment I was not sure what she was doing, as she started pulling the clay away from it. She flattened out the rest, then started to build a kind of wall around it. It was like a covering up, a defending, a barrier, a defense: a way of keeping out. She then stopped doing her work. With a small piece of clay she went through the whole first process again. She made another one, another small shape, and opened it. At the end when she'd finished with it I thought, "here we go again", that she would break it, but she didn't. There was that shape again but then she closed it. I thought of an ancient oil lamp that flashed, but I didn't know what that had to do with things, except that there was an alternative to looking at the same theme again. Then she scrunched it up and left it. When I went in to look at it afterwards I remembered that while I was watching, it looked as if she had been taking clay from the mound and flattening it out, but this time I had a sense of it's emerging, of it's not actually being flattened, but it's coming up. There were finger marks on it going in a certain direction. It was such an emergence! So now I wanted to know, what was in the bud? Because it was as though it was coming, and it was going to be: emerging. And maybe there was a need to protect the vulnerability as it quietly emerged. The emergence was like those little green things belonging to a seed that pop up and push the earth.

DATA BASE 3 (a):

Dialogue between subject J and therapist M:

M:I found watching the process really interesting. It tied into your history, because you got into free play quite nicely in the beginning, then the defendedness came, and the creative stuff got closed down. You built that mound, and then you really yanked it

open and started to repair the edges. Then you closed it, and put this mound down, then flattened it out and started to build a wall around it.

J:Yes, I was getting into feeling the clay, just enjoying it, and just working. I wanted to try and make a volcano. I cut out the centre, but I became quite frustrated because it wasn't the way that I wanted it to be. I became aware of what you were thinking: of the interpretations you were making, and I wanted to leave. I thought, okay, this is it! I broke it down and I wanted to go. I didn't really have anything in mind, because I was very aware of you, and of the time that was left. I started just making a border, and it kind of grew into a wall. If I had had the time I would have made a wall to cover it. If I had been able, I would have made it all day, and would have found a change. It would have all been done.

M:You would have completed it, enclosed it and protected it?.
J:Yes

M:So you were worried about my interpretation? Was it about the abuse?

J:Yes. When I started making it I had this whole idea in my head of how I wanted to have it. I hadn't even been thinking of whether or not you were watching. When I started cutting into it with a spoon, then I knew what you were thinking: I knew what you were going to say.

M:Did you disagree with the interpretation, or was it just that you didn't want anyone to see it?

J:It wasn't a disagreement. It just seemed so unhideable. That was the main thing. My intentions in the beginning were that I wanted you to see. Even at the end, when it was so open, I realized that, to a degree, I wanted you to see some things that were there: a lot of what I was rejecting.

M:Because you made another smaller one: you made another shape, and you opened it. At the end when you'd finished with it, I thought, “here we go again”. But, then you closed it. I thought of those ancient oil lamps, that flashed. I don't know what that had to do with things, but there was an alternative to looking at the theme again. I wondered about that, and then you scrunched it up and left it.

J:I was making the fourth layer when I started panicking, because I realized that I wouldn't have time to finish it. I wouldn't have time to cover it. I wondered whether I should break it down again, but decided I couldn't do that: there had to be something. I resigned myself to leaving it as it was and then I was just kind of playing. That was when I squashed that piece of clay. It feels very left.

M:Explain.

J:It doesn't feel completed.

M:Complete? The old thing?

J:Yes, and this experience.

M:You know we went in afterwards to look at what everyone had done. While you were making it, it looked as though you were taking clay away from the mound, and flattening it out. If one looks carefully now, however, it seems to be emerging. It is not actually being flattened, it is coming up. Do you see? It's such an emergence!

J:I didn't think about it like that. It started when I moved my hands down. Then at the end, I use a framework.

M:So what's in the bud? (laughs) Because it is as though it's coming and it's going to be…, emerging. Maybe that's a need to protect the vulnerability, the need to protect as it quietly emerges. You know, when there is a seed, and those little green things pop up, and the earth gets pushed?

J:Yes. It's funny, it is almost a presurge to a world, isn't it? It's like wanting the guardian, the protectors to come. It was too much to have that whole hangover. As I was saying to B.D, its as though I felt very safe as I was making this shape.

M:Yes, it got very contained.

J:Yes. When I look at it now, it feels very strange.

M:Do you feel different?

J:Yes, very much. And what I was thinking is different.

M:Tell me about that.

J:It felt like a boil or a sore. It looks ugly. I just want to break it down.

M:You wanted to cover it up with the walls, not so?

J:Yes. (long silence) Is it alright?

M:Tell them what not to do, what then will get covered up again. You know.

J:Everyone knows what I've broken down. Oh, no! When I was breaking it down, I felt quite distressed that I hadn't done what I wanted. I felt quite angry with myself for even having done something like that. I felt just blocked and angry.

M:About exposing yourself?

J:Yes. And it was even a bit of a carry over from Monday, as well.

M:You gave too much away?

J:Yes. I'm rationalizing, you know. I felt that I'd given too much. But then again, it was as if I was wanting you to see.

M:Yes, there's a real need to be seen. That's what I felt about the last piece, that the piece was picking up that first theme again. There's a real need to be seen but…

J:But it's almost not alive.

M:No, no!

J:How did you find the whole process?

M:It's been a really rich experience for me, and I've learnt about the way the process reflects the history. I don't know if we would have got there if I hadn't had the interview, but it was just so interesting how that was so.

J:I think, even if we'd had an interview afterwards, I don't think it would have been the same.

M:It wouldn't have come out.

J:Yes, I think that it would not have changed me at all.

M:Yes. And it was very interesting because it clearly reflects everything. When you switched from playing, and were not able to be free anymore, was very interesting.

J:Yes. When I left I really felt as if I was leaving part of myself, and went up to Mountain Drive, and mooned around. I was in quite a dilemma, and wondered how I was going to get it back.

M:What back?

J:What I had made.

M:You wanted to take it back so nobody could see?.

J:(Laughs) I kind of wanted to take it away with me.

M:Are you feeling violated again?

J:It's not as strong as that. No, I'm feeling frustrated that I allowed it. I really feel that whatever is seen, I'm to blame for.

M: Like the feeling again.

J:Yes. I'm feeling that every scene I've actually watched, every scene that I had to take, I

have had to take responsibility for.

What would they be?

J:You know, the kind of thing that my…whole… It's just a part of me that I hold. It's just a part of me. And that is what I miss now. Do I completely go away and take everything with me, if I could, or do I give everything and just try and fix it up?

M:It's very fragile, hey?

J:Yes it feels… It's fragile. Because the walls started cracking… It was drying.

M:…crumbling, yes (laughs).

J:The walls cracked open.

M:Oh, No! (laughs)

J:Who was going to be following me? It felt like a dream. Once again my one instinct was to fix it. And then I thought, they are just going to break again.

M:And even the sense that it could be something good growing there…?

J:No, it feels like it's bad.

M:Pusy, yucky (laughs).

J:That it has to come out to here.

M:Yes. So there's the knowledge that it has to be seen before it can be healed. There's that, but then also the consequence of that, along the way.

J:Yes, it's like my head's concern. I know that I have to…It has to come out and I have to see it, but my feeling is that I can't face it.

M:Yes. And emotions aren't caught up with the head then.

J:Not wanting to give, but wanting to. Shew, it's been interesting!

M:Now could you take this all back into therapy and work with it?

J:Yes, I want to tell my therapist about the process: about what I did.

M:And feelings that you're left with.

J:Earlier I felt it was a mistake.

M:A mistake! (laugh together).

J:But now I'm feeling this really has been one of the few things over the past couple of weeks that has been a step forward, because of my being stuck. So it's been valuable for me in that respect.

M:When you take it back to therapy it will be like seeing it again.

J:Yes. I have been quite taken back. Its tomorrow so it will still be here.

M:And me having a part in this? How does that feel?

J:It doesn't feel as bad as it did. Part of it is having gone through it with you. I thought maybe I was at fault when I told you. It was quite disconnected, you know. Now that you've had a part in it, it feels okay.

M:Okay? (laugh together).

J: Yes.

DATA BASE 1 (6)(b)

Subject B: Experience-near description

I feel quite relaxed, looking around. The other people don't worry me at all. It is actually quite a nice atmosphere and I am enjoying the music.

I am trying to get the clay into a ball, into a formless shape. I want to throw it down. I think it's interesting how your past experience comes through: I want to slam it down like pottery. The last time I worked with clay was with pottery. My hands automatically want to wedge, and are just doing it. Then I say to myself, "okay, now this is a different thing, you must actually feel the clay, feel the texture". Then I just work with it, smoothing it, pushing it around. It is soft and just gives in. I want the clay to tell me what to do. I don't want to think of a shape, and then try and make it. I am twisting and twisting, twisting and twisting. When I take my fingers out and then down the side, there is a little trunk that gives me an idea. Then I think, "Oh that's interesting. Okay, there's the shape". Then I remember Lillian's elephant and that Shawah thing on T.V. and so I think, "This is an elephant. Let me just let it take its shape, because it sort of has this trunk form and ears, and crinkles down the side. So let's go that way".

I am trying to get balance. I turn it around, then I try to put it down, but it is difficult. I tell myself I want the contrast of its being heavy, secure and safe and light. I want to make it so that it doesn't fall over, with a strong base, but then I want to have thin edges, a well, to give it a quality of lightness, like flying: the edges flying, or the elephant flying. It is as if it is heavy and solid on the ground, and I want to lift it up to have a sort of light quality. The front just keeps on wanting to tip down. I keep lifting it back and then work a bit on the back and get bored again. Then I realize that it is because it is hollow, and so, I take some more clay

and I stuff it in and it seems to be a bit better.

Something I liked about Lillian's elephant was that it's got thin ears, and that's the thing I like about elephants. They are so heavy but their ears look as if they could just flap or fly away: just sort of blow in the wind.

I question whether it is going to work. I know what I want to do and wonder whether it is going to work, and I try to get it to do what I want it to. I stroke it to make it smooth. I want the whole thing finished. I don't want this time constraint. I don't want it to pass until it's finished. I am thinking that's like my life all the time, this rush, rush, rush. I don't feel I have time to sit. I want to get a few plains, and want things to be thick and then thin, and sloped this way. I want to make a skull, and want it to be rounded at the top, and slope, but I realize that I won't have time. I want the whole thing to look reasonably finished, including the back, and not just one part looking beautiful. When I turn it round, the back is just revolting, so I keep spinning it and trying to have a reasonable finish. I want it to be smooth.

I quite like what the clay has given me: that I have an idea. It has given me direction. I haven't had to try and press it into anything. I could go on for a long time. I haven't run out of ideas or things to do. There is about ten more minutes, so I just start finishing it off. I am quite happy. I am a bit worried about the trunk in a way, because that has been put on: I added on a piece on the front to make it look more earthenkind.

It is like fine details. I want it to be smooth, and the clay is drying in little crunchies in my hands, and I can't get it smooth. Where I've squeezed the clay some beautiful lines have formed in the clay, and I don't want to touch those. I want to make more of those, so it is quite hard. I feel as if I am working with a bone, like an elephant's head bone, or something like that. I want some plains, so I don't mind if it is really chunky.

I want my hands to be printed on it, and my hands to make the forms, rather than my head saying, "okay now push here". I want to get natural shapes, also where it is quite hard to get my hands into the clay without changing what is already there. If I push here the other marks disappear.

I have to make it wide on the ears: I want the ears fat and wavy. I have just stuck with what is like a head. I am not trying to make legs and a body. It is just the head. It is only right at the end when I am finished that I turn the base into something like a leg, with a bit of a pattern, like the toes.

It is the head of an elephant: elephant-like, because at the back there are different plains. The flying seems to be quite important. There are two plains. Those two things at the side there, that are like my bone part: two spikes. I want those to fly. The way the ear curves around there reminds me of a bone, so I try to accentuate it a bit. The back is more bone-like. The front is more delicate-like. If you want to really attach something to it there's definitely elephantness in it, but I want a lightness. Maybe I am imposing that on it. I squeeze the ears. It might be Lillian's thin ears that made me want to make them thinner. Then, I am concerned a bit about the base, the base and the sculpture.

I'm quite happy with it. I mean I don't want to grab it and scrunch it up. I have really enjoyed doing it. It was fun and something came out of it.

I'd like to now turn it, make it a pegasus, or turn it round so I can tell more. From this side it's definitely what I saw most of the time: wild elephant. I want it flapping. I want it flying. It's not a sort of earthy wildness. It's not a big elephant trundling through the jungle-type wildness, it's more like a massive power, the power of the elephant.

From this side (laughs) it looks like some teeny little… It doesn't look like an elephant, it just looks like more bone, - that surface there - like a pelvic bone. From the other side I remember trying to accentuate my finger marks, and that's what reminded me of a backbone. I then wanted to make it strong down the back. And from here it looks corally, like some sort of sea form, and sort of wave-like also.
It's interesting what the other people are doing at intervals.

I am trying to integrate the top because there is a sticking out part. Then I pull the back more into a pointy shape and I impose my fingers on it. There is no shape there, so I want finger shapes. I want my fingers to make natural dents. I'm trying to lift it up, but it keeps falling down. I want a contrast. I don't want it to seem like a little blob thing, I want it to be swept up. I want to tidy it up.

I have been totally in it. I haven't ever really looked up and felt distracted. It was great fun.

DATA BASE 2 (b)

Therapist D: Observation

B. took the whole lump of clay and squeezed and pinched it as she held it up in the air. She seemed unsure. I related this to an unsureness she displays in the face of the many different directions and possibilities to be negotiated and taken up in her life. After a time she found a base on the mat, grounded the clay and proceeded to make one image throughout the session. This can be seen as a rooting of herself, and reflected her capacity for perseverance and ability to stick things through and not give up in her life process, whether in relationship to her children, her house, or her marriage. This rooting and perseverance was evident in the way that once she had decided on a design she stuck to it and worked it through. In our previous session I had said she needed to be more involved in the process of her life rather than in the product and this interpretation seems to have been internalized and used by her here. She showed an intensity of involvement in what she was doing throughout the procedure. She used her fingers, palms and whole body as she worked. Her need to smooth away rough edges with water and a spoon, and the absence of textured features in her image, reflects her need to gloss things over. Crevices and holes in the piece signify places to explore and places to hide. She likes to hide aspects of herself, and not talk about them. The different edges of her work reflect the different parts of herself and the different directions in which she is moving. While there is a strong feminine flow in her work, which indicates a healthy energized self-image, there are aspects which reflect other dimensions. Some edges of the image are sharp, yet rounded, some precarious and others grounded. Her engrossment, both

over a long, phallic-like form and what looked like a pubic bone, as well as her need to use a spoon and water (as a feminine symbol), to smooth the sharp edges of the clay, or earth (a masculine symbol), relates to issues with which she is currently concerned, to do with her sexuality. She experiences a sense of precariousness which is reflected in the various thin edges, jutting out pieces of her image, and in the threat of the clay object falling over. Her attempt to rectify this, by spreading out the base more, can be seen as her own ability to use support at times when she herself feels precarious. This support serves to make her more solid.

DATA BASE 3 (b):

Dialogue between subject B and therapist D:

D:How do you feel after having created an image?

B:(Laughs) I don't know. I enjoyed the process.

D:Did you? You seemed very involved.

B:I sort of got into this. It's nice to do something tactile. It was fresh. Yes, I was quite happy.

D:Good. I'm wondering what your image means to you. I have some idea of what I thought your image was. We can discuss our respective understanding together. This is the idea of the session today, to hear each other's perceptions of what your image means.

B:Okay, so I'll tell you what I think I made. I kneaded the clay, and felt it, and then I kept twisting it. At one stage I looked and saw ridges down the side that reminded me of an elephant. The clay had a sort of trunk form and ears. I just took that idea and worked on it. I then wanted to make the edges like wings: quite light so that there was a sense of flying. Then I added a piece on the front there to make it look more elephant-like. When I turned it around there was no sense of an elephant. From the other side it looked more like a bone.

D:And what did it mean for you? What did the image mean for you in terms of how it relates to you? What significance has it for you? The elephant, the wings, the flightiness?

B:Well you see, we've got a sculptured elephant at home. It's a baby, and I was reminded of it. I saw a similar shape in the clay and I also thought of that elephant on TV: Sol Kerzner's big, gross elephant. So maybe those things just came into my head. I know I wanted to make different planes and surfaces, and to make them smooth. I just wanted them to feel both thick and thin in places, and I wanted the imprint of my hands on the shapes. I wanted to press with my hands.

D:I noticed that you worked with the clay straight away. I saw you squeezing it and getting into it. And you stuck with the same shape right throughout, so there was a real sense

of continuity and a capacity for persevering, for working on an issue, in your approach. You didn't chop and change. You had this solid idea right at the beginning and developed it. You worked on it. You were engrossed and quite involved in the whole process. You were touching, and feeling, and smoothing, and then you really smoothed all the places, but you also left crevices and openings. When I was looking at it from the one side, where you probably saw the bone, I had a sense that it could be either a weathered rock or a piece of wood. And then again, I thought it could even be a woman's hair, or head, with her hair flowing. Afterwards I also got the sense of something elephant-like, strong, but fragile at points. So, for me there was this heaviness, this strongness, but also the fragility in terms of the peaks and the little crevices.

Having spoken to you a little bit yesterday, this said to me that there are different directions that your life is taking. And, at the same time, you are working on them. I really saw this quality of working through. I really did see that there were different directions that the elephant, or this weathered rock, was taking, you know, from the different perceptions I had from different angles. There were definite levels of…, like holes or crevices, as well as the bits sticking out, like the precariousness. But then, there was also the solidness: a sense of the bulk being kind of really solid. And, there was evidence of some movement in the image. It wasn't just a static thing. I constantly saw movement in your image.

B:Well, that's great if you saw that, because, I had the sense of power, of the size, of the strength of an elephant. But I didn't want it to be a stodgy power, I wanted it to sort of flow and move. That's why I wanted to make the edges light and thin.

D:I definitely got the feel of the base, and the lightness in terms of both a kind of solidness and also a kind of flowing energy, and also a sense of working.

B:Yes, I must say, just doing this as a little exercise in the middle of nowhere was quite a nice feeling when you realize that all your feelings of the past come together. Like in the beginning, when I was patting it into the right shape, I realized that the last time I had held clay was when I was doing a few pottery lessons. And then I wanted to slam it down. Everything comes back, no matter what you've done. Where you leave off, you start again.

D:I could see from the way you were working that you have had experience working with pottery before: the fingers knew where to go. You weren't just lost in the medium, you got into it, and you enjoyed it, but then you'd been there before.

B:I forced myself to feel the clay more. I told myself not to try and form the clay, not to try to think of what I was going to make, but to try to get into it: to get into the feeling. It was nice.

D:Well, that's good. I also agree with you that I saw it as an elephant. Did you see the other side more as a bone - the back part? It looked more and more like a weathered rock, a weathered piece of drift wood. Did that gel? What did you think of that?

B:If you turn it around it is like a bone.

D:To me it could have been a piece of drift wood, or a woman's hair, a face, and the hair kind of blowing in a direction, which again was movement for me. But, you know, the crevices look like places, like your holes, or hidden things. You've lots of things that are out there in the lightness, and there are also crevices: things which are kind of hidden, and in darkness.

B:This side, to me is more like a shell, but still bone-like, like a back-bone, with those side pieces that come off. Those are finger marks. I didn't want to get rid of them. I liked those marks there. It looked more like a shell.

D:So basically, what we're saying is that it could either be very animate, as the form of an elephant, or more inanimate, but yet still having a life of its own. It could be a piece of shell-bone, driftwood or, wood, or weathered rock with both smoothness and roughness.

B:I wanted to make the crinkles down the back. I wanted it to have my finger marks so that it could be like a natural form. Because, the moment you start thinking about it then it comes out unnatural. So in that way I'm quite happy that it does look like a natural form: like an elephant, or a shell, or a piece of wood, or something like that.

D:But I definitely still think that there's some kind of lightness to it. A heaviness and a lightness, solidness and a flowing feeling. Do you get that same feeling?

B:Yes, I like the little thin pieces at the back. It's got that sense of a race against time, not so? (Laughs) Get it out!

D:But yet you persevered at the same theme, so you kind of had the time. You worked within your time constraints and were able to come up with your own image through just working with your fingers, and your feelings, and your head.

B:Yes, I feel quite happy with it.

D:And, would you say that it is something of who you are, and what you are feeling at the moment. The image: does that mean something to you, today?

B:Not really, no. I wouldn't say that.

D:It's just something that came more from your experience with the clay?

B:Yes, and the sort of shapes that I like. I always like a balance between heaviness and lightness. I'd like to be able to do both. I'd like to have a range of possibilities.

D:And, also the smoothness. You like smooth texture.

B:Oh yes, I definitely wanted…

D: …a gentle touch.

B:…to, to smooth it out, yes. I could have worked much more here. But I don't think my trunk is very successful.

D:What?. No, I think it gives us an idea of it being an elephant, from the trunk. It is quite evident. I saw you having difficulty.

B:Yes, it was a major problem. It kept tipping forward, and then I'd pull it back, and then the ears would start to split. Then, I'd think it was going to collapse. But, then I got another piece of clay, and I added it because it was hollow inside. And that seemed to…

D:…support it, yes. Okay?

B:Yes.

DATA BASE 1 (c)

Subject K: Experience-near description

I'm just playing. After the music I feel sort of in myself, centred. I don't want the other people around, that are there, but at moments they give me some inspiration. I look at S. and he is holding an image preciously, almost like an idol, a sort of mother, a Virgin Mary, a womb image. I think, "uh oh, those are his issues", and laugh embarrassedly. I don't really have an idea, I'm just feeling the clay. There's a shape I quite like. It doesn't have a meaning but I think of a spine and two wings. Then it looks like a frog or a bird, and then like a mask. I find myself resisting the temptation to work with a particular image.

I started working on my thesis yesterday and have this idea about the creative process: something that has also been part of changing the house. There's the idea that you've got to sit with things and think with things: something that I have become conscious of here. It is something that I deeply sort of feel to be mine. I shouldn't say it is just an idea, it is something in me. I am working with my own creative process. This process confirms for me a whole lot of things about myself, and where I want to go.

Here I am working with very fine little things, spontaneously making shapes that I've found, making balls, fine shapes, fine lips. And I know that it is prematurely complex and fine. This is me: I have a lot of early elaborations, so if I have an idea it just snowballs out: a store house of ideas, a lot of creativity, but there is no holding together. There is a little bird sort of thing that I set apart. I want to actually keep that and wonder if it won't watch over the rest of the work as I proceed. I don't want to interfere with any of the shapes that I make.

I feel that I am getting into trouble early on because I am making things that I don't want to destroy, yet I don't know where I am going yet. I am making a shape I could happily finish off, smooth off. I want to get to something finished, I don't like unfinished things. But I am prematurely getting to something, and for me I know that's a problem. I know in my life at the moment that it's a problem. It's a problem with my thesis. I mistrust a spontaneous decision so I know something is going to have to happen here, and I don't want to have to break it up. That is something I don't like about the way I do things, or that I avoid, because it is kind of destructive to have to squash it, and to have to start all over again.

In my thesis there are particular ideas that I treasure, and particular little pieces that I write, and I don't want to give them up. Besides a whole lot of other things, it's the other thing I create. But the same thing happened with my last thesis. It must have been two or three hundred pages and eventually I just pruned it to ninety pages, to a very clear form. I thought I could have done that in the beginning. I could have thought the whole thing through. That's not me somehow.

What I call a `chancer element' is just building something up until you have a form you like. But I am realizing more, and its my greatest fascination with art, that in fact that is how artists work as well, or at least a lot of them. I'm sure Michelangelo didn't chip away until he found David, but there must have been a process of finding stuff that's already there, you know. But previously I have had this depressing thought, it's a great expectation on me, that I must create something in thought first, then do it with my hands exactly like it is. And somehow discovering this is not so freeing for me but I still want to see it as a bit of a `chancer' thing. That issue is very much alive in the work here, and is very much what I live with. The chancer thing is that I create something by chance that is pleasing. It's like building the fish pond. It's going to turn out quite nicely and I just put it together bit by bit, building on top of what's there. It hasn't been all planned out from the beginning. It's like my thesis. I'm working on a chapter on my thesis and it is going to come together quite nicely. My thesis could actually be very clear and very good, but at the moment I'm flitting. Now I'm looking at explanation, now I'm looking at interpretation, now I'm looking at understanding, and it's a bit of this and a bit of that. I'm jumping around and I'm not working from `a' to `b'. You know some people can sit down and write the first word to the last word. I'm not like that. And this is a kind of acknowledgment of that but I don't know whether this is a problem.

Here I find myself working on a basic form, but there is nothing that wants to be built on further. I'm just playing now, I'm not sure what to do. I can't seem to do anything with that foundation that I've built, but I don't want to destroy it and start again. So I mould it round, into a base, that naturally wants to be built up. I notice what S. is doing and it reminds me of a form, a wooden sculpture I have in mind, an aesthetic form, but I don't get there. I depart from it. But I have this image of something flat and solid, yet it has to have something of an ethereal quality to it. I consider building a little chamber to keep all the little treasures I've made in, and decide to build on top. That would then be my own little secret. But I think, "oh bullshit!", that's not solid, that's just like self-comfort: trying to keep something.

Now I start to put something in there. I have a sense of going upwards. I'm not sure how solid I want this thing at the bottom. In the final thing I want to have little lips on the edge, I don't want a very solid lump of clay. I want to have something of a flower quality in it as

well, yet it has to be thoroughly grounded. Once I have that solidity and a basic form, like it was with my thesis and its ideas, then I can elaborate on the edges there. I can do a little quirky something on the side. Somehow it is also the frills that somehow give it my character, or elaborations: almost like my flowers, or the particulars of my quirky presence.

The imagined form inspired by S's thing was very different from this. It was much simpler. It was a slightly boomerang-type of shape but I actually prefer what I've done. I don't just want to produce something like a big, solid phallus: something heavy. I want to have the curves, and the sort of flow and smoothness, but it has to be interesting as well. It has to have little eddies and places where you can get caught. I have an interpretation of that.

After working on a flat surface I start to move up. I am aware of B. picking her's up quite a lot and I don't know what to do to pick mine up. Somehow I want a base but I want to have a greater feel of the whole thing. From here I start to have a very much clearer feeling of what I want to do. I feel it is important to get the same movement I had in the wings. I start to develop an image, almost like a form. I've turned it on its side without realising it, so I basically destroy everything, but I feel I am carrying the possibility of not wasting what I have done so far. It isn't wasted anymore because I know what is emerging. I have not destroyed it. I carry it with me into the next process. The delicacy and fineness of the initial forms, and the ideas that I had, embellish a basic structure which I now have. Before, I just had the embellishments without the structure, but now I begin to have a structure.

Now when I look at it , it is very much a kind of mixture between a female form and something substantial. When I look at it now, it is almost like a female torso. It is not ethereal and flighty. There is a solidness to it. The elaborations I put there, in the end don't matter, they are very important: that little bit to the side. I've learned this about myself, or I've learned to trust this about myself: that I have the capacity at the end. All that stuff that I was doing in the beginning was still going to be there at the end.

There are only ten minutes left yet I feel as though I am just starting. I know what I've done but all sorts of things could happen. At one stage I drew little lines on it that seemed to have a kind of female, groin feel about them. I just left them, and thought, “no I'm not happy with that but I'm leaving it there because it can go away”, and I think it actually went into a kind of slight depression. I can leave it, knowing that I've got something there. It's like I've got something I'm basically working with, and I'm happy with.

It's almost like a game, trusting my own capacities to somehow make it my own. I wouldn't like to say it is a female form. It's actually got a sensual quality that supported putting water on it, getting the lines, the flowing lines. That is important. At the same time I want interesting places in it. It's like the female body. And it's solid yet it also aspires upward. For me it is very much a symbol of something I aspire to. It is spiritual but physical. It is ideas in sort of something substantial. My ideas are not to be trusted because they sort of fly me to the moon.

DATA BASE 2 (c)

Therapist M: Observation

At first he stood back from the clay, and was quite controlling, which was represented in his working with tiddly little bits. It seemed as though he wasn't meditating or dialoguing with the clay. He was working on the clay, not with the clay. Then he closed it up. Then he got more into it, he took off his jacket, too off his ring, and he rolled his sleeves up, and started to work with the clay. It started to become more solid. That is when he made a tower shape. I thought of a penis, and masturbation. It didn't stay a gross shape. He ground it. It was as he described his life: going forward and making a big noise, being very ordered and controlled, and thought out, and then quietly caving in. I knew from the interview that if he is unsure of himself he controls. Then this shape re-emerged. It came back and he started working on it. That was like the re-emergence of one little bit. Then he started to use his finger tips, which he hadn't done before. I though of a ???, a feminine-masculine thing. For me, a spiral ran through. There was a lot of fish, and bone and a ridge. It was as though a piece had grown out. The two parts related to each other. Three fish-like things could be seen. At one stage it looked like one of those women in a kimono, or a gentleman in a kimono. There was a contemplative stance about it. If looked at from behind there was a very quiet kind of contemplation about it. It was like an organic form. There was growth. One part was definitely growing out of another, because it seemed new. It was more crisp. If you looked at it from the side there was a screaming, gaping mouth, like a snake or reptile opening its mouth. The scream came out of the back of it. There was a sense of the spiritual, of something like Neptune or Poseidon.

DATA BASE 3 (c):

Dialogue between subject K and therapist M:

K:When I was doing it, I wasn't at all aware that it would remind me of a figure, or have so obvious a reference to a human form: a female form. It was not something I was consciously aware of. For me the main aspect of it was, more wanting to create something solid, that was firmly based.

M:Grounded?

K:But that also had other aspects. I spoke to B. about the importance of having all these frills on it. I started out the whole process by creating them. Initially, they represented all my ideas, my sort of elaborations. I couldn't stay with that because I needed to create something solid for them to be on. It was frustrating, having the ideas, but not actually having a structure. I wanted to create an image of a certain kind that drew me. It had to be upwards, and a boomerang-type of shape. It couldn't be a big, solid, shape. I wanted an integration of something both grounded, material and solid, but which also carried my own unique signature: my elaborations, my thoughts, and the kind of places I like, the places I would like to explore, almost like a terrain with little places. In that sense it was also like a female body, which for me is just as much a landscape because I really feel for places like that. And so it was creating a unique sort of

geography on something that was there already. It was a very good experience to have found something. Once I felt I'd got something that I could stay with that was simple, but substantial, then I could elaborate. Whereas before, I had started with elaborations. The meaning for me lies in its being a kind of process. This process of creativity is one that I like, rather than the first one. You know, it's almost like two different things. I was saying to B., it was like this with my thesis, or my Masters thesis: three hundred pages of something like the balls and the steps. And then it's just like bringing the knife out. I didn't want to scrunch it up. I didn't want to lose anything, because some of those shapes I really liked. But I wanted to bring it together. The meaning of it for me is actually the bulk of the way I live my life, and the way I create things. It was very important to me, when B. said ten minutes left, that I managed to get those finishing touches that gave it my signature.

M:Your mark, yes.

K:I also didn't want to mess with things that I'd spontaneously created, just sort of by feeling. All the lines I wanted to smooth and form, but right at the end I didn't want it too smooth. I suddenly wanted something like brush strokes, just like the finger marks on the clay. I wanted to keep that. Strangely enough, it is very much like the original sort of form that I was working with. It's important that that is there. But they are different. I feel that that is fine. In a way it's my unique, crazy, side. I mean, when I look at it now I almost think of mother and child, or man and dog, or, whatever it is. It's somehow a company of two. One part cannot stand by itself. It's personal. It needs this kind of stability and all the elaborations. Let's say this is elaboration which needs a stability to be grounded. For me that's what this whole thing is about. I can't sort of see it in any other term. I mean, in terms of my life it connects with a general process that's been happening over the years. I spoke about that to you.

M:Yes. Well I watched the process of you doing it. First, you were back from the clay and you were quite controlling, like the little bits. There was a lot of control, and you weren't meditating, or it didn't seem as though you were meditating or dialogueing with the clay. You were working <u>on</u> the clay, not <u>with</u> the clay. And then you closed it up, and then got more into it. You rolled your sleeves up and you started to work with the clay, and then it started to become a more solid form. That's when you made that sort of tower thing. So it was as you described your life: going forward and making a big noise, and very ordered and controlled and thought out, and then you quietly caved in.

K:Yes, yes. You see, it's funny, because what I created in the beginning I didn't want to destroy. That process was almost a slightly self-deceptive process, because, at one stage, I had a temptation to put some of those little things physically inside another.

M:And close it (laughs). Yes, yes.

K:And then build the whole. And then build something substantial on top of it. I then thought, no, that's bullshit, a sort of more feeling process. Then I realized, no, you won't lose that, that's your signature.

M:Because they re-emerged, didn't they? I mean at the back of the image this thing re-emerged. It came back, and, you started working on it.

K: Which things?

M:The ridge at the back, was like an emergence of that little, nitty bit. In fact then you started to use your finger tips, which you hadn't done before, it became a signature (if you want). A spiral runs through, and this is very much part of the whole thing. It couldn't be separate. Also, there's a lot of fish and bone. There was a part, from the back, which was different. It was as though it had grown out. So you say that it…you needed to be grounded before it could grow. The parts relate. The two relate a lot. They make sense. There are three sort of fish-like shapes, so the whole seems contemplated. At one stage it looked like one of those women in a Kimono, or, a gentleman in a Kimono. There was a contemplative stance about it. If you look from behind, there's still that very quiet kind of contemplation.

K:The idea of the fish and the bone…It is actually very important to me to keep organic shapes.

M:When you were talking about landscape, it seemed very much like an organic landscape. Because there's growth. Part is definitely growing out because it's new, it's more crisp.

K:Yes. And that spiralling is definitely there. I can see it and feel it. It's interesting that you say fish, because fish is a symbol that I don't yet understand. I dream about fish. One of my most significant dreams, when I was at university, which actually started when my thesis started, and which was a similar image to the one right at the beginning of the process today, was a shape that looked like a bird.

M:…an aeroplane or a bird. I mean I didn't want to be too obvious with you (laughs).

K:I put it aside, and I wanted the feeling that it was watching over the clay sculpture. In this dream, it's in a tree. It's a bird, and then there's a fish, a fish caught in this web or spiral of string: a big ball in which the fish is caught. The feeling in the dream is that somehow the bird's got to unpick this. But the danger is that the bird has got a very sharp beak, so it can damage the fish (laughs). It means that the fish can become tightened in the web. The fish can somehow get destroyed in there.

M:And the coil? You know, if you wanted to look at the kimono, and the tail-like shape…

K:I also had that feeling that I'd like to carry on with it and put a base onto it, so that it could have more of a sense of that emergence out of the ground which is included. But there is that, and then there's…I don't know what it really means. For me the bird became a very intellectual sort of thing, a roll of finer sorts of things. Once I put the finer things into boxes and into lines… once I know, I can raise them. And I thought maybe I will leave them. The idea is that I always do these fine little intellectual things. I might

want to write something, or make a little sort of mark, or, I might want to put an elaboration on it. Right in the beginning I was making these little spirals and I thought I'd like to make a sculpture where I could actually hang these forms. For me it is like the bird things, the thoughts, but, at the same time, you know, it's really sharp. It's not round, it's the edges and it's that part that would see something as fake, and say, "no this is all too growing and organic, I want to make it more intellectually kind of penetrating", or something like that. So, the bird is there, for me, but the fish is much more to do with life's processes.

M:Yes, because when you talk about a bird, there was a stage where the form was very phallic-like, but also there was a bird there, a bird of prey that sits: the eagle. Looking at it from behind, for a moment, I thought it was going to be an eagle. The image didn't hold but was part of the process.

K:For me this does have a feeling of that. One thing creating like this does is that it requires waiting with the ideas. It keeps you to a structure and then there is that sort of watching. If it's a figure, and a creation of a mother or child, or some other, there's a sense of turning and watching over. And somehow it's almost like the mother. It's what I've learned to, kind of, establish more.

M:What you're in touch with. Yes

K:And, you know, when I try to link in up with biographical stuff, part of my wildness is not having a father. So from the age of five, I was on the loose.

M:(Laughs)…in the world, as it were.

K:Like, there was my mother, you know. I sometimes think I was brought up without a parent, although my mother was a very holding person. But that, somehow, my creativity, my projects… there was no…It was totally like water. It was just like slosh all over the place. There was no actual…

M:…invitation.

K:Yes, so, somehow this kind of process, the structuring process, seems to have improved. It's something that I've learnt as an adult.

M:Yes, but there was such a difference in approach from the first image to the final image. Having known the biographical detail, there was such a difference.

K:Really?

M:Yes, about how you set out the first part, and then there was that closure, and then the second part started to emerge after you'd managed to build it up. In the beginning you were distant and you were working on the world in a certain way, sticking back the world. There were shapes, so it was very much you making your marks rather than letting them occur to you. Then you started waiting for it. I mean, waiting for the image to come. Yes.

K:That's very interesting. We are doing a lot of stuff at home at the moment. I told you, we started two years ago now putting in sash windows, extending our patio. We're building with carpenters over the weekends. But it's actually taken two years to get the image of what we want. And I think, if I could have had that capacity to know what to do from the beginning, to have the idea first…I'm a long way from that, you know. I actually treasure that ability. Like Michelangelo set out to carve a David. You know he didn't…I mean there must have been that waiting process. I want to hold that, that sort of being guided by…

M:…something.

K:Yes, and the will. You see I'm a bit suspicious of this process still. Somehow I'm learning that artists do work with feeling, and they see that they have made something they didn't plan to. And they work with that, and they elaborate an outcome, a main theme. But, somehow I still have this fantasy that good artists don't do that.

M:Oh, really? (Laugh together).

K:Yes, good artists know what they want to do from the outset. So, in a way I've discovered that this is not so, but still, I have the idea.

M:The hangup's still there. Seeing we're talking about Michelangelo, that's a huge debate. Were his figures there because he was blind and infirm, or had the stone given him the idea? In effect they're emerging from stone, and they're following its form. They're definitely coming straight out of the stone, so the stone has given him the idea. The stone led him to create them.

K:It's interesting. Well, that theme is central to this. It's somehow around the creative process, and it's around my own mistrust of feeling. I don't know if you can call it a feeling…it's not a feeling in the emotional sense. Somehow I'm saying that I still have this idea that I must be guided by my head.

M:Yes, I would agree with that, because you did it, and then stepped back from it, or, stepped into it.

K:You see, while I was doing this, I accepted that the head will have the signature but that can still be there. While I was doing this I trusted a feeling process. But always there's a thought in the background, of, "you chancer". So obviously, I don't know where that leads to.

M:Yes, because clearly there is a signature at the end. It is not an unformed thing that you're left with.

K:Yes. I mean at the end I felt I wanted to have these little, certain things, almost like those ridges on a heater. And I often thought of fire at times as well. And parts were almost like gills.

M:Fins? It's a beautiful tail fin, you know.

K:Yes, so I wanted to have that. I thought I can put that on right at the end because that's `feelings': the sort of periphery of it.

M:Do you get an Eastern sense of it at all?

K:It has a slightly mystic feel to me, I don't know about Eastern. It is Classical in a way, some parts of it. When I look at it now it seems that it could also be a figure. It's hands are still bound. And, somehow, if I had to carry on working with… I think the work in my life will one day also be like something I felt, when I thought my hands weren't disconnected from my body, they were flapping around. I could move like that. At least I know when I work with the clay, my hands will get engaged. Somehow it would be amazing to have a figure whose hands were out, about to work. My wife gave me a lovely little sculpture for Father's Day. It's an old African man sitting at a pot. He could be making the pot, he could just be looking at it, or he could be drinking from it. But that sense of hand being engaged. I've always had this thing about my hands, that they aren't part of my life. Maybe I would like to have it bigger, working on something. That would be more complete for me.

M:Yes. It has a very vulnerable back.

K:I was aware that I didn't know the back of it.

M:It's very exposed.

K:It was funny because I was aware of the back, and I wanted to actually move around it. But, somehow when I did look at it, I thought it was fine. The back's not really interesting to me.

M:It's really soft. That's the unreal you, a sense of the back being really soft.

K:Yes. I used to think it was very important to be aware of my back, somehow. I once had this experience that I could actually see all around me, in other words that the back wasn't…

M:…as vulnerable as it was (laugh together).

K:It was amazing, you know, like a two second sort of thing. Somehow it was part of me. I see you have got a slightly different interpretation. I could see around it too. You think a back's always a back? I suppose I don't accept a back is a back, you know?

M:You don't like to accept?

K:I'm not sure.

M:It's a vulnerable place that you can't see, so that to pretend that you can see through your (laughs) individual vulnerabilities, kind of…

K:You see I still have that fantasy that I…

M:…that you're not vulnerable.

K:…that I don't want to be vulnerable. Yes

M:…or not accepting that it is a back, and that it's a place that you can see from…doesn't accept it as it is.

K:But when you talk like that, it seems very harmful here, with the hands tied. But I wouldn't say this is a spiritually tortured figure. I'd say that it seems like something of a sad figure, because the figure needs to be standing and working. It's somehow almost like a guy I saw on TV behind Chris Hani, standing in chains, during the June 16th marches. It was amazing, a piece of art. He had this heavy chain on him, just draped all over him, and he was just standing like that. That image really struck me. I just thought of that image now.

M:But that's a very interesting image because he put the chains on himself. It's not a true being held, in a sense. And this is also not a true being held. For me the arms are still having to come out. They need to be pulled up and out. They're not exactly bound, just hardly born yet. They need…It will come still.

K:Yes. Somehow the figure is strong enough and solid enough, and there's enough promise for me to… It is an emergent process.

M:Maybe from the back, they've got to emerge from the back.

K:Yes, it's somehow still too…

M:…forming.

K:Yes, but it is also, wound…um, bound up inside. Like, you get people that are only not free because of themselves. That sort of image.

M:That's what I wanted to say about the chains.

K:And, often with neurotic people you see that. I always say that to my wife when she's hassled: "Stop that crap". And, in a way, this is also self tortured. It's actually it's own boundupness. This is a very powerful aspect. I was very aware of this.

M:And, if you look from the back, there is a very interesting shape there. It's very clear, but I'm not sure what it's about.

K:Yes. I like the lines of it.

M:Lovely line.

K:I remember I had to smooth it a bit. It was important to actually have that flatness. Again it's the edges. I can't stand things that are just lumpy and round. For me something can't be beautiful unless it's got…

M:…it's contrast. And this does have contrast because from the hard part there's a lovely soft shadow. You say you like the small places. Look at that lovely soft light in there.

K:But, I'd almost say that shoulder, or that area is one of the strongest, most solid kind of things. I was aware at one stage of a very frog-like face (laughs). I mean, this almost seems like a pig.

M:It does. But it's still so joined up. It's like a tail. I don't know why there's a tail and snail and fish and… It's very much animal in your world, you know. I don't know, you never used that word really.

K:Yes. I don't know what else to say. I'd want to do something else and carry on working. I mean, it's very interesting, or a very valuable way to work, I think.

M:Yes. There's this one more thing we haven't talked about. If you look at it from the side there's a screaming, open mouth. Can you see?

K:Oh yes. Okay.

M:I just wondered about that. Or, even a snake opening it's mouth. But you've got to suspend everything else then.

K:You see I also have a bit of a more tortured side. I do want to see a tortured side in it. It almost looks like, *The Scream*.

M: Edvard Munch.

K:If this was a figure… It's an impression I worked on once: this kind of a scream in figures when I taught. This neck sort of goes into the face.

M:Yes, but it looks as if it opens. The scream comes out the back.

K:I hated it. I think it's there, in a way. I mean, it's a part of myself that I obviously haven't got terribly in touch with: that wrenching, kind of tortured… It brings up sorts of images that I am a long way from understanding. I actually have had some very strange physical experiences that are reminiscent of that sort of aspect. There were repetitive dreams as a child. I can't describe it other than as a feeling of density, like an unbelievable sort of weight, but not oppression: actually like death. If you could imagine that you could feel your body was dead, was clay. But it's all so strange. I

mean, I can give you an image, which won't hang together because I don't have any way of hanging it together. It is also a feeling. In the dream, I'm walking in this paddock. I can only call it a paddock because it's got this wire around and I've got my finger on the wire. The whole colour of the dream is like ochre, army green. And I'm walking along with my finger on the wire, just walking around and around this paddock. The wire makes a noise as I walk around. Then these huge, big trucks come in every now and again, and they dump this very, very heavy clay into the paddock. They're immense trucks, and I'm walking around. It's like on a plane. It's a sort of totally alienated experience. But even as I say that, it's not quite that. And I remember when I was in therapy, and I was lying on the couch, I started to have the same feeling as in that dream. The dream has actually got a strange feeling quality to it. I've given you the visual images because I've never yet put it into words.

M:Suffocating?

K:No it's not, because it's out there, (laughs). It's interesting that you say that because, yes, sometimes I feel cut off here, you know.

M:You feel impotent?

K:Yes, that I need to be capable. I don't know if that's not another thing, another experience. This experience is like *The Scream*. It kind of captures something of what I see in the image, but also, it's a much more primordial type of anguish than a psychological one. It's about existence. I think you can only paint or sculpture it. I don't even know what psychological language there is to describe that kind of thing. That's when I want to destroy. If I start to get into that, then there's no way of expressing it. Banging it against the wall would seem inappropriate. You know, WHRAAA… Can you imagine doing that, really smashing your brains into the wall? Those kinds of movements would represent it.

M:So, something like this wouldn't have a way of moving. You see, for me these two forms tied up. We don't know how this would move, really. It's got a tail but it also might have a leg that is tied up too. It's in the primitive. This is a primitive form. I mean, it's really kind of prehistoric in a way, but more than prehistoric.

K:Yes, an amoebic kind of…

M:Well, it's not a fish yet, and it's not amoebic.

K:But it's got a form, in a way.

M:Yes, it's starting to have a form but the taughtness of what it's going to be…Is it going to be a fish, or is it going to be a male, or is it going to be the bone and the fin? Those two things tie up.

K:That's a bit extreme.

M:Where you can't quite articulate what kind of movement you'd like to make in that state.

K:Yes. This is the openness of the whole thing. When you put it like that, it means it would not stay like this. This I put on last, and again this is the beginning of another whole process. The first process ended with this, and again there is an unformed thing happening. I would like then, if I was to work in this style, to just take this figure a step further. That is what I'd do now. This is a piece of research for a piece of sculpture. I'd have a figure working on something, forming something. And this would somehow be closed. This is like you write, you know. It does have that sense of…It's almost like what I was doing before, I took this and I built it up.

M:Well in a sense it can only sit on this. I mean it couldn't have been before. Only in a solid shape like this could this sit, and have power.

K:Yes. But this is still open here. You know, I would definitely have done something if I'd carried on working at it, and turned it around. I don't know what would have happened to this thing at the back. Maybe I would have moved this smoothness through and closed it and put a hat on it (laugh together), and then proceeded to work on this. Yes, definitely, although, I wouldn't want to touch it now, because it really speaks of a pregnant stage. But I think you're absolutely right. There's that feeling of it being similar to that walking around the paddock, and the feeling of panic when I'm writing a paper for my thesis, or something. It's like this is nowhere. I get this feeling there's nothing here. There's no thought here. It's all kind of misconstrued. It's like the first thing I was doing. There's no form. And I have that…The doubt can come. I don't think that doubt can come now, you know, with this. So there's sense in my life, with basically having a basic kind of stance. I've got a family, I've got certain ideas that I feel strongly enough about, a whole lot of things, but there definitely is, for the future, a kind of sense of lostness, you know? And, that kind of unformedness, overwhelmedness. God, you know, when I think of actual death, or when I'm next going to actually confront death… God, you know! So for me, its that kind of anxiety around. There's actually a kind of sweetness to death as well, you know. When you actually confront death it's very forming, you know? God, you know, something's happening (laugh together). It's like if I had to die, I just know that, in a sense, for my wife it would be very strengthening. Or, my children… They're still a bit vulnerable and it might actually damage them. You see, initially, when I was aware of what other people were doing at different stages, I looked at S's. He seemed to produce a whole lot of different things. I thought, in a way I'm glad I'm not there, where I understood him to be, because, somehow it's still all got to come together. That is sort of where I felt I started with mine. But I had a hell of a lot more bits, and I was putting them together. Somehow, we found a form, and that's very pleasing. That is me, you know, like the sense of being a self, a person, an individual. But there still are these openings: this is a grand opening in a way. This is a well, at the back here, of entry into…,and, this is a bit less so, because it could almost stay as an expression of unformedness, or an expression of the organic, or something. But certainly this is that openness. Yes, the whole thing is not finished. I mean, maybe <u>this</u> is finished, but the process of this …

M:…is not over. No, no.

K:…is not over. I mean there's a huge sort of…There's a lot to be said and a lot to be explored and done. Yes, I can't think of anything else. (Gestures to smash the sculpture. Both laugh). Why do I always have that in me?

M:I don't know.

K:It's always as though I want to preserve something. I'd like to keep it, and sort of have it as a little sort of thing, like a memory of where I was at. Now I find it moves me. I always had this kind of thing of, that same thing I spoke to you about. I thought, "don't do it". All the way through it was a temptation because of that initial thing. I quite soon started saying, "I've got myself in a position now where I could almost finish off what I'm doing. Just round it off and leave it". But, somehow, there's that temptation to just crash it all. And then, I wanted to close it up and sort of leave it and preserve it, and carry on and build on top of it. Eventually somehow, without breaking continuity, I was able to build through that to this, which was an important thing.

M:Yes, really positive.

K:…rather than destroy it and start again. That temptation to… I often fiddle around with painting and drawing every now and again, and then I do a weird thing. I actually cut it up and I make a collage.

M:…collage of it?

K:Yes, partly because it doesn't hang together. There are some parts that I really like, and sometimes I'll just actually take the whole thing out. I'll just cut out what I like and that's it. It always looks like a miniature. But at other times I'll actually make a collage of it and try and salvage it like that, eventually making, a collage of that, collage of that, collage of that. That's the chancer thing. It's a failure to hold it together.

M:It's a failure to hold. Yes.

K:And for me, fortunately, this has held together. I started working on my thesis again yesterday.

M:Oh really?

K:And I'm very much involved in this kind of process now, and it's very therapeutic to have done this because, with my thesis, I'm at that first stage, although I've got a whole lot there, a lot of little things made. I could say okay, or I could sort of slowly chance it up into something, you know (laughs).

M:Yes, build it in.

K:Yes. I had a sense of, if I chance it up, it will come into something quite clear and nice, actually. But if I… There is that temptation to…

M:(laughs)…blow it! (Laughs) Yes.

K:So that's the tension in it as well. It's satisfying me, the discipline of doing this and seeing it through, and wanting to have a finished thing. It was very important for me that it was finished. It is very pleasing to produce something out there. I think clay would be a good medium for me to be therapeutized in. For me to draw with pen, or something, would be the worst. It's too much…

M:…too controlled, like in the beginning. But there was change…I mean, it was amazing watching your body change in relation to what you were doing with the clay, and how you then became involved rather than working at a distance: taking off your ring, and then rolling your sleeves (laughs).

K:Yes.

M:Okay? Alright, thank you.

DATA BASE 1(d)

SS: Experience-near description:

Right from the start, I feel sort of quite able to be in my own internal world. The clay feels cold and clammy and wet, and I kind of enjoy embedding my fingers into it. It is just a nice, tactile feeling, burying my fingers in the clay, instead of using my palms and the insides of my fingers. I like to actually bury my fingers and nails, and get both sides into the clay, and also give it a good squeeze. It isn't an aggressive squeeze, it is powerful. I punch it. That doesn't work.

I try not to force, or stick with any thoughts. One thought that comes up is of walking in mud. It is just that squishy sensation that makes me think of being a child. There aren't any specific concrete recollections, but I just indulge in it, in quite a childlike way.

The music at first prevents me from feeling melancholy because it's quite cheerful music and I feel quite cheerful. I am at ease and mellow throughout this time. I am aware of the feeling that I am allowing it: I am trying not to focus or concentrate on anything at all. It is interesting to just to do this, and to go with the feeling that goes with it, rather than watching what I am doing. The feelings come, then everything else.

I am kind of momentarily intrigued by what all three others are doing but don't get caught up in trying to mimic them, or allow myself to be influenced. But K. is obviously working on something, and I am still just wanting to feel the clay. We were told to work at it for a while.

The first time round, at a previous workshop, I went and I thought, right, first thing I want to do is make a male torso", which I did. I decide I'm not going to do that here, and am really just going to concentrated on just being.

The clay warms up from my hands quite a bit, which is nice. I want to make it into a big body again. I kind of wish I was alone, and just able to talk, and say things, or have a pencil and a piece of paper handy, so that I can just think about what is going on. The clay kind of just starts taking a form: a kind of roundish form, a mushroom, or, actually I'm not too sure… I think a pizza. I am making a big pizza dough.

All the while I am feeling very at ease and at peace. I am going through a lot of emotional turmoil in my life at the moment, and I am surprisingly just kind of unaffected by all those things. I am fleetingly aware of them but without being caught up in them in a feeling way. I think of a wheel (I don't know why), a prehistoric wheel. When I hold it, it becomes almost flower-like, like an old flower. I want no particular form, but it just emerges. It sort of comes out, and I am just enjoying the feeling of making it. At this stage I just think it needs two handles. It has a handle on each side: two nobs. That big knob is sort of quite phallic. I want to hide it, to fold it, to put it away. I don't like it, so I squash it.

It connects to one of the issues in my life at the moment. It is something that I worked through with D. a bit. I had a group of about seven very close friends at university. There were three males, myself and these two other guys, and four girls in the group. Of the three, there were myself, C. and A. A. phoned me up yesterday morning just to tell me that a mutual friend from ten years ago, that I haven't spoken to for two years, died about two weeks ago. When I asked why, I was told he had AIDS. I was quite horrified. I asked how that had happened. I was told he picked it up from a man in London. Now C. had never been gay whilst I knew him. He'd been sexually quite active at university, and been, sort of, quite a womanizer. According to A. he had then gone through a homosexual spell, picked up AIDS, and died a couple of weeks ago. It was the very first person that I've ever had…who, at one stage of my life I had been directly involved with, without being directly involved, who has contracted AIDS and died of AIDS. It is just the whole issue of him having been heterosexual, and then suddenly having become homosexual. That is quite a disturbing thing for me.

I think that this is connected to the phallic knob that I felt uncomfortable with. I needed to push it back. The piece on the board, then seems to me to be quite female-genital: very much like a vagina. It is sort of closed up like lips, and is very non-sexual to me. It is quite warm and comforting in a powerful way, and soothing again. It was enfolding. It was kind of big as well, which is important. It could envelop me, encompass me bodily, not just my penis, but me. It takes me right away from the other issues: from C.

I really am feeling quite engrossed in what I am doing. For quite some time I haven't been distracted at all, for instance by others. It isn't big enough, I want more. I work with more. I am smoothing a little piece, and it becomes quite facial. I am quite happy to just make a fairly facial form. I`m reasonably adept at moulding: I picture something, and I make something look like what I'm picturing. I can do it, but I'm not trying to make any specific facial form. Looking at the face, it actually looks quite devil-like in a way, not in a particularly evil way, but naughty, perhaps influenced by shadow-type thinking. It surprises me that this face is so

devilish, like Old Nick, a kind of a friendly devil: a friendly little fellow, not a bad bloke, but definitely not good, definitely devilish. He's racy and sharp, with a windswept hairstyle, and has a psychic kind of energy. Later I take a chunk out of him without realizing that he isn't just a blob. Having done that I sort of put him to one side and am quite happy that he is not complete.

So then I work with another piece, and that then becomes bigger and bigger, and thinner and thinner. I think it is a piece of paper. I could just crumple the piece of paper. I think back to C. There was life becoming increasingly fragile, which I want to, or could, almost throw into a waste paper basket: Life just crumpled up, and gone. And I do it two or three times, as if it were paper. I crumple it. And I think of the power that did that to his life. I have a sense of awe for the fact that somewhere, somebody could have crumpled him up as a piece of paper, and a man was dead. It isn't a major emotional issue for me in the sense that I haven't seen him since 1983. I might have spoken to him once or twice on the phone. I mean, it was certainly by no means like a friendship of any kind any more, because we had lost contact, and had gone our own ways. But, having been thinking about it over the last twenty four hours, since hearing that he had died, and talking about it to people as well… There we were, seven of us filled with a naive optimism about the future, and really anticipating that everybody would achieve something: that they would be something, that they would do something with their lives. And when I last spoke to him, I didn't know why, but he was very evasive. He was living in a flat with his mother. He said his mother's married an extremely wealthy man, who bought him a flat, and he was simply living in the flat, and wasn't really working. He hadn't finished his degree. When I suggested we meet he said he was really busy, and that he had something that he had to attend to. It sounded evasive. Now I understand that he knew already then, that he had AIDS, and it might have been visible, and he obviously didn't want to see me. Its just such a sad process, from us being in our late teens, early twenties, with that vitality and the innocence of youth, with the expectation that life's merely good. And then it was not good. He's no more than a crumpled piece of paper, since I saw him. It is just a sense of waste, absolute waste, a piece of crumpled paper, just fragile, just crumpled up, and discarded from life, but not from me personally.

I want more clay and I want a bigger piece. I feel that piece, the female piece, has fabric around the back, and it isn't needed. When you turn it around, it starts off as being specifically sort of vaginal, but then in the end it is like a shroud, but not in the sense of a dead person now, but a cloaked face, with a kind of jacket round the head. There you can see it now, now that I've got it turned. It's got a sense of being warm and sheltered. It's hooded, but not a sense of hiding anything or death-like, yet it has a sense of a hollow shell. As I rebuild it the second time, it has that hooded feeling more than being the female.

Then I want a bigger piece. I want to make another form. And I feel the need to work off the base now. So everything up until now has been worked up in the air, off anything. And now I want to plant something on the base, and work it up and off that. I want to have something that is set on the board. Several of the forms that came up in the transpersonal workshop go through my head: There are some interesting shapes, not visually, but shapes that are quite meaningful shapes to me. The one was a Ying-Yang type thing, which another guy made. I didn't try and replicate it in any way, but I wanted to have my own form for that same kind of idea of two opposites. I was playing with the idea without specifically trying to do it.

I want a soft, graspable form, for me to grab onto. I kind of go through a couple of shapes like that, but then let them be. I do the next piece which becomes quite wave-like. It is a very definite wave: powerful, but not crushing. I kind of want to make a surfer on it, riding the power of nature, the power of life. But at the same time it is almost protective, as well, over the dancing foam across the leading edge of the wave, curled over with its power, but not something that is going to dash: to dash me down and crush me. It is a flowing forward: flowing with the wave.

And then I start flaking off pieces. It was something I did last time, and I don't know why. I just enjoy making a little flake, and then putting it onto the next one, almost creating a sharp, bark-like effect. Some trees have a very, very rough bark, which is kind of abrasive to your hand as you run down it. I don't really get any feelings while I'm making this, just jagged edges, rough layers, quite oppositional to the flowing wave, flint-like, sharp, abrasivenes: liquid fluidity, and the flinty, granite hardness, ungiving, almost cutting, rasping and resisting, not resisting the wave, but opposite to the wave. I want it to have rough edges.

And then, I don't know why, I make a box. Those others are very natural forms and then this problem occurs of wanting to make geometric shapes for some reason or other. There's just a nice round ball, like a third dimension. The wave, the flint and then these very clean and geometric, static shapes, the sphere, a cube. They're almost, on thinking about it again, almost two opposites, a sphere and cube or square. Round and rolling, square and sitting. So they do look like the original opposites, sort of oppositional forces. My mood was quite morbid and morose, thinking about C., perhaps associated with the Old Nick. But then I become reflective and serious, but not tended towards sadness. It sort of moves away from the sadness and is quite, not lighthearted because it was still very serious, but reflective. Perhaps where I was earlier, more or less cheerful, but not sad, accepting, perhaps.

Then the front right becomes a spiral, an upward movement thing. I am thinking of growth, of movement upwards. This reminds me that just before that, in the face of the wave, there was a kind of attempt to create a heart-like shape, which I didn't think of at the time in terms of the two issues, of the two values that are the most important to me which are those of growth and love. It isn't a valentine's heart, it is very definitely intended to be a heart heart. It was kind of a heart-muscle, a heart-foot, which I felt should go in the wave. I think perhaps the love was there, and then the spiral went upwards. It is growth. It is quite good to think of, or judge what's happening in my own life, in terms of those two processes. I did the spiral first, then did the heart, I put in the heart-shape.

Ja, then I feel briefly at a bit of a loss. On the blind side of that kind of a tree view, I don't like the odd pieces I haven't been able to see. I just want to play with that. It just seems facial to me, this face moulded on, eyes, nose and the mouth. It is not in any kind of mood, but quite soleful in a way, having soul and life. I think it just stands for, or represents peopleness. I suppose in a way, oppositional to the piece of paper that I wanted to crumple and put in the bin. Here is something that had substance and life, something sort of quite friendly with life. It isn't some sort of dead person at all. It isn't personal.

I start getting a bit more detailed, put in eyes, then think no eyes, just a very general face, a

very rough, very generic face, just a very, nonspecific, but really life-like face.

In looking back, in general I found it to be quite a sort of a peaceful process in a way. I was largely able to shut myself off from the outside world. I didn't find myself trying to create forms. Sometimes forms invariably emerged. I wasn't trying to, to enforce them on an image which I had done in the previous session when I was at the transpersonal course. In a way it was just a very peaceful kind of experience to go through. I didn't find it tiring or strenuous in any way, it was just quite a relaxing thing to do.

DATA BASE 2(d)

Therapist D: Observation:

He was squeezing the clay. He seemed uninvolved, a little distant, blank, staring and not sure that he wanted to be here. For me it was difficult to see what he was working on, on the other side. He flattened out the clay like a mushroom. He held the clay, and seemed somewhere else. The first figure looked like a pumpkin, which he squashed up. Then he got more involved, and made a clearly phallic shape. This is an issue he is dealing with at the moment to do with a friend, and himself. For me it was kind of giving into quite a big, phallic symbol. But he was distant. I felt that he wasn't sure what he was doing. I felt that at times he was very dreamy and gazing, and he wasn't really there. And so I was wondering what he was thinking about whilst he was feeling the clay. Then again, he made another smaller, longer sort of a phallic symbol. He didn't want to recognise or acknowledge it. He seemed unsure of where to go. He twisted it, and I think he used it in that figure there. And then I saw the figure of a man's face. I saw a round ball. I think the other blob was also a ball: two round balls. To me those were symbolic of some kind of movement.

In the end what I saw was quite a masculine face, quite a strong masculine face. Then to me, the other symbol was of more confusion in terms of another self of his, another side of himself, the other side, the side he's not sure about. There was a lot of contradiction there, the roundness and the square. I was thinking it was more like a face, a conglomeration of face pieces. It was almost like two eyes and a nose. It showed me some kind of confusion in terms of his other side, his expressive side, that he is busy looking at, and that he is not sure about. The conglomeration of pieces signified confusion, a fragmented, other side of himself, an alter ego that was disjointed and not coherent. The process suggested an indecisiveness, a not wanting to engage, a not wanting to say "this is me".

DATA BASE 3 (d):

Dialogue between subject S and therapist D:

S:In general I found it to be a peaceful process. I was largely able to shut myself off from the outside world. I didn't find myself trying to create forms. Invariably forms emerged. I wasn't trying to enforce a form on the clay, which I had done

previously at the transpersonal course. I didn't find it tiring or strenuous in any way. It was just quite a relaxing thing to do. I started off with a roundish form that was a bit like a pizza with two knobs on the side. Then I folded it and made holes. It had a big knob on it, which I found sort of phallic. I, at first, wanted to push it away by folding it and hiding it, and then, I worked at it a bit more. Then, for a while, it was like a female genital. It was closed up and like lips. It wasn't a sexual thing at all, but very female, and, perhaps in terms of some of the issues we discussed yesterday, there was perhaps an element of that. The phallic part really triggered off the whole depth side of the Aids again. And I felt a little bit sad. Prior to this, while bunching and kneading the clay, I had felt quite relaxed and at ease, but then the first sort of tangible form that had any sort of meaning for me was that female piece which was warm and comforting in quite a powerful way, and really took me away from all the other issues.

I started making a face that originally looked quite devilish to me. As I said to B.D, not devilish in an evil way, but in a naughty way. I thought of him, not as Satan but as Old Nick, a kind of shadow issue. He was a friendly little fellow, he wasn't a bad bloke. Then, I wanted to make something that was planted on the board. I started by plucking the clay off him, by mistake. And I wanted to make a wave, like a wave in the sea, filled with a certain power, and good, not destructive, not a crashing wave but a driving wave: very flowing, and moving forwards. Then I began flaking clay. It looked rough, almost like the trunk of a tree with a very rasping, textured bark, sort of cut, almost cutting. Then, for no particular reason, I wanted to make something very geometric: almost man-made, I suppose. I first made the smooth sphere, then a square. This was quite oppositional, as these two had a flowingness, a wateriness, and the others had a sharp starkness. The ball rolls, the cube sits and the other is like a spiral, an upward spiral: something positive, growth. I thought of putting a surfer in the wave face, but decided it was not necessary. But then, I wanted to make a heart, not a love-heart, but a heart-heart. So I made a kind of heart-muscle, a heart-foot, which I felt should go in the wave. And then, lastly, I wanted to make a face, but I can't tell you why. It's very rough, a very generic face, a nonspecific, but really life-like face. There was another shape which I didn't explain. I made the one piece flatter and flatter till it was like a piece of paper. Then I crunched all the paper. It was going back to C: the sense of a life becoming increasingly fragile, and at a whim, from who knows where, being crumpled up and thrown aside. I did that twice, I think, at least twice.

D:Okay? You know, for me it was difficult to see what you were working on, on the other side. The first figure looked like a pumpkin or a pizza with two kinds of knobs on the side. I did notice that it could have been a phallic symbol, but it was more like a pumpkin shape. Then you moved on, and kind of crashed that up. Then you built quite a phallic object. From my side it wasn't a face, and I couldn't see the hollow as you described it, so for me it was giving into a big phallic symbol. But I felt that you were distant: You weren't sure of what you were doing. I felt that at times you were very dreamy and gazing, and you weren't really there, you know. And so I was wondering what you were thinking about whilst you were feeling the clay. Then again you made

another, longer sort of a phallic symbol, then you twisted it and I think you used it in the figure, the figure of a man. The other shape I saw as a round ball, which encourages some kind of movement. I think there were two round balls.

S:One was discarded.

D:Those were symbolic of some kind of movement. In the end I saw what was like quite a strong masculine face, your generic man as you called him. The other form symbolised more confusion, in terms of another self of yours: the expressive other side of you, the side you're not sure about and that you're looking at. There was a lot of contradiction there in the roundness and the square. It's almost like two eyes, and a nose, like part of a face.

S:Yes, certainly. The confusion I'm in now: there's a definite sense of that, if you look at it as one unified piece. That on one side is actually one piece. On the other side is another piece. The one is certainly a hotch potch. It is very much a mess of things. Perhaps not a mess, but certainly a confusion of things.

D:Not a mess, definitely not, but more a confusion in terms of a contradiction and opposites: being able to express yourself in different polarities. You know, the square and the round, the spiral and the horizon, the heart and the pieces.

S:The bark.

D:…as opposed to the smoothness. So, from what we were speaking about yesterday, one seems like the dominant male but there's still another side that confuses the meaning sometimes with exploration. How do you feel about that?

S:It's probably a bit of an intellectualized response. I'm very aware…no, I don't believe that I know myself fully. I think that is a life long journey, and that there is a mass of material of which I'm not fully conscious, that I touch upon bits and pieces of from time to time. I'm obviously really interested in that side of myself, but at the same time, very unaware and ignorant of it, really.

D:It's almost as if they're different parts of you that you need to explore. There's not quite a whole yet.

S:Yes they're not integrated. They're slapped together.

D:And part of your process, in terms of the way you were working, is also changing. You're not quite sure, you know? You didn't work on one thing throughout. It kind of moved. And you've got a lot of options in working through things.

S:Yes, and many things all at once. And you said I seemed very reflective. I don't think I looked at much. For instance, the pizza: I wasn't looking at it. Only when I looked at it, did I sort of think that it was phallic, or whatever.

D.DSo there was not a total absorbtion. There was a distance between you and the clay, although it was close, because your thoughts were…

S:I was very focused on the inside. Only, when I walked through, and saw you guys looking at me from behind the mirror, I thought it must have looked a bit strange. I was kind of staring at one spot, for a long time, just kind of lost in my thoughts. I was just kind of letting the issues flow. I was not holding onto anything. Right at the beginning I started really getting into the clay. And again, as I said to B.D,. it's a bit like a child with my toes in the mud. And then I had a specific recollection of being in childhood because I was squeegeeing in the mud, not just working and creating forms, but really getting in and feeling it. So there was a kind of internal process that was being reflected in what I was doing, and only occasionally was the internal process trying to shape the clay. With the ball and sphere, I was definitely trying to shape the clay, even with the flaking, with the sharp and jagged pieces.

D:So, let's come to some agreement about your image. There is the face of the strong masculine man on the one side, and the incorporated kind of container, or vagina of the female on the other side. So would you see that, as being perhaps part and parcel of the same thing: that there's both a masculine and feminine side to you?

S:Yes. It was that. When I had first made that shape, I had no intention of changing it and felt that it was quite complete. Then, when I wanted to raid some clay, when I sort of took some part off from round the back side, or right side of it, I almost protectively wanted something to be on the other side. And just looking at it, it was just a face to me, straight away. And then while creating it, it seemed very definitely a generic face, but certainly quite masculine. It was interesting to me, because in the previous clay workshop we had had a big board, and I had put a very masculine torso on one side of the board, and a female piece on the other side of the board, and they looked…

D:…separate.

S:Yes, and way apart on opposite corners of the board, and now its in one piece.

D:There's a movement.

S:Yes.

D:Yes. So I think I was correct in what I assumed: that the two balls were some kind of movement and growth. And now that you've described Old Nick, so to speak, perhaps he's the wise old man, or some father image that you have?

S:Certainly there was definitely something…

D:…devilish, you said.

S:Definitely, as if I was holding onto the Devil, but a friendly old Devil. He was definitely naughty because of his eyes and his nose, and he had a sort of racy quality to him. He

got squashed. I can almost picture the tail and the naughty eyes. Naughty, not inherently evil: not bad.

D:But maybe not conventional?

S:No, not conventional looking, but likeable. Not a father-type figure at all.

D:Not?

S:No.

D:Well, you know, the face on the one side and the female form on the other is almost a Ying and Yang of the male and femaleness in you. You said that there was more of a surfer type?

S:Before you say that, I must tell you that I actually used, that word, when I described it to B.D.

S:In one of the workshops I was observing someone else do their's. He had created his own kind of Ying and Yang, and in playing with my piece, I was kind of going back and thinking those kinds of thoughts. He'd created a very particular shape which I didn't want to replicate, but it was that kind of…

D:…Ying and Yang, love and growth are important to you. But you still see the wave as a flowing, not destructive force?

S:But contradiction in the rough bark, the square, cube and sphere.

D:For me it’s the face with the contradictions and the opposites within, or the contradictions.