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Transactional Metaphors and Education

ABSTRACT

The paper presents traditional and contemporary interpretations of the metaphor, which appears in numerous scientific disciplines and different manifestations of everyday life. Metaphors and their meaning, not only linguistic, are invariably a subject of reflection and an inspiring area of research in many fields of science and academic disciplines, including anthropology, literature studies, philosophy, pedagogy, psychology, and psychotherapy. Metaphors have always been present in psychotherapy: from the first works of Sigmund Freud and emergent psychoanalysis to the present day. Milton H. Erickson noticed the particular relevance of metaphors in the therapeutic process. In practice, metaphors are often used as a method of interaction in situations where a client exhibits resistance. The specific language used in transactional analysis, a psychotherapeutic concept, is full of references to the colloquial speech and terminology used in fairy tales and mythology, which is a specific trademark of this concept. This specific language creates a unique opportunity to use therapeutic metaphors. The article lists a number of such notions. Additionally, metaphors can prove to be useful in teaching and education as beneficial features of the cognitive process. Among the authors interested in both transactional analysis and its applications in education, Giles Barrow uses the metaphor of an educator as a gardener—someone who follows the development of children and young people entrusted to his care and reacts to unfavorable circumstances in the best possible way. Educational transactional analysis should exploit the possibilities offered by metaphors more frequently and to a greater extent.

KEYWORDS
metaphor, metaphors in psychotherapy, language of transactional analysis, metaphors in transactional analysis, education and transactional analysis

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Introduction

In the introduction to *Metaphors in our lives* by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1988), Tomasz P. Krzeszowski remarks that so much has been written about the metaphor that each new publication may be suspected of being a mere reworking of someone else's earlier views (Krzeszowski, 1988, p. 5). At the same time, however, it is hard not to notice that the concept of the metaphor and its meaning, not only purely linguistic meaning, have proven to be a fairly enduring subject of academic reflection and an inspiring avenue for further research in many fields, such as anthropology, literary studies, philosophy, pedagogy, or psychology, along with psychotherapy. I would like to present one such perspective in this article. The angle I focus on concerns the opportunities and educational implications resulting from an analysis of metaphors found in the psychotherapeutic concept of transactional analysis (Jagieła, 2015, 2017a, 2017b).

Traditionally, the understanding of the metaphor is drawn from Aristotle's definition: "A metaphor is the application of a word that belongs to another thing: either from genus to species, species to genus, species to species, or by analogy" (Aristotle, 1998, 21, 1457b, 5-10). Thus, from time immemorial, metaphors have accompanied human communication. This was the case in antiquity: metaphors were present in Roman and Greek myths and in stage allegorical dramas about the fates of gods or heroes (e.g., the *Iliad* by Homer, *Oedipus Rex* or *Antigone* by Sophocles, etc.), or in biblical parables laden with rich metaphorical symbolism—e.g., trees in various contexts (the olive tree, fig tree, vine, hawthorn, etc.)—and Christ's parables, through which he illustrated his teachings. Thanks to the metaphors, the parables of the Good Samaritan, the Prodigal Son, the Widow's Offering, the Sower, the Pharisee and the Tax Collector, and many others became deeply embedded in the consciousness of the faithful. These parables were usually characterized by vivid imagery and simplicity in portraying everyday life. They functioned on two planes: the literal story and the level revealing hidden and profound truths. The Bible also often contains proverbs or memorable maxims (e.g., "The first will be the last, and the last will be first" from the parable of the Workers in the Vineyard). Truths expressed metaphorically, rather than as explicit statements, were more powerful and indelible

than strict moral orders or prohibitions. As a rule, they communicated an age-old conflict between good and evil. Currently, metaphors crop up in countless works of art, musical pieces, literary texts, fairy tales, stories, anecdotes, proverbs, and—finally—in current, popular, and humorous internet memes. It can be said that today film and television have taken over the role of the old-time storyteller who, wandering from village to village, entertained crowds and brought "stories of whimsy and wonder."

Nowadays, metaphor (in Greek, *metaphorá* or transfer) is defined as: "a stylistic figure in which at least one word acquires a different, figurative sense but one that is grounded in the primary literal meaning." Metaphorical is the same as "figurative, expressed figuratively" (Kopaliński, 2007, p. 367). Today it is not believed that a metaphor must be expressed solely in words, although language is undoubtedly its domain; it can reveal itself symbolically, e.g., in various manifestations of art or in the expression of acting.

Over time, the metaphor has become the subject of highly abstract philosophical considerations. For example, Andrzej Falkiewicz links metaphorism with human existence

> To exist is to go beyond one's own physicality, and thus to exist metaphysically, figuratively. Only this intersection, the borderline, is certain. Sometimes I consider myself to be a metaphysical being inhabiting two worlds at once, but in essence I am a metaphorical being. Being is becoming, whose instrument is the metaphor. Being is the desire to exist, directed outward. (Falkiewicz, 1996, pp. 390–391)

Indeed, someday I would like to understand how my desire to exist is directed outward through metaphor. We will have an opportunity to refer to this type of scientific narrative in the future.

Metaphors have been present in psychotherapy almost from the outset, beginning with the first works of Sigmund Freud and emergent psychoanalysis, in which the relationships between consciousness and the unconscious are figuratively illustrated symbolically and metaphorically as an iceberg floating on the sea. The conscious part is visible and protrudes above the waves, while the unconscious part—much larger—is submerged below the surface of the water. The pre-consciousness is the boundary between the water and what lies underwater. When the defense mechanisms of the psyche begin to fail, then a person—with their neuroses and mental disorders—collides

with this iceberg like the Titanic. Frederick Crews, defending psychoanalysis, stated that the allegation that psychoanalysis uses metaphors is true, but easily misunderstood (Crews, 1981, p. 301).

Thus, representatives of this trend often emphasize that insight cannot be limited only to the cognitive domain, but must also involve emotions (which should be manifested by the eureka effect; Grzesiuk, 1994, pp. 198–199). Metaphor, as argued by Philip Barker (2000, pp. 32–33), engages the emotional parts of our being to a much greater extent and fulfills certain neurological functions, as it is processed more by the right (affective) hemisphere of the brain than the left (rational) hemisphere, which in itself increases the effectiveness of the message, endowing it with an emotional impact.

However, the use of metaphors in psychotherapy does not end with psychoanalysis. Browsing the literature on the subject, it is easy to see that the therapist who used this type of influence on his patients the most was Milton H. Erickson. Therefore, I have no alternative but to refer the reader to the extensive literature in Polish on this subject (Haley, 1995; Erickson & Rossi, 1996; Yapko, 1996; Zeig, 1997). Erickson's masterful approach consisted in the perfectly combined use of metaphors, the use of hypnosis, and uniquely understood trance states. Based on my own practice, I can confirm the great value of using metaphors. In situations where the patient is not ready to accept the therapist's forthright messages, the use of a parable, anecdote, or short story with an apt presupposition turns out to be particularly useful. Of course, this does not guarantee a completely foolproof resistance-lowering effect, but it creates an irrefutable opportunity. At the same time, it should be noted that the use of metaphors in the process of psychotherapy is one of the less invasive methods, and even people with less professional experience are often able to use them very successfully.

The powerful symbolism of the metaphors expressed through facial expressions, tone of voice, gestures, motor and body cues, or movements of dancers, does not detract from the fact that language is still the dominant carrier of this type of message. In this context, the language created by transactional analysis (TA) is a separate and unique phenomenon worth paying attention to.

Language in Transactional Analysis

My exploration of metaphors in TA will be closer to cognitive linguistics, represented by the aforementioned George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (Lakoff & Johnson, 1988), than the transformational-generative theory originally conceived of by Noam Chomsky. They believe that metaphor is a central category in our daily use of language, and that it influences the way we think, experience, and act.

This point of view,[1] probably as an intuitive feeling and not a calculated stance, was at the heart of the intention of Eric Berne—the founder of transactional analysis—to incorporate colloquial speech into the language of his conception and to initiate a new method of communication between the therapist and the client. It is known that communication plays an important—perhaps one of the most important—roles in the process of psychotherapy (Knapp, 2009). Thus, the language the partners of such an interpersonal relationship use is not irrelevant. Even Confucius said that in order to change the world we need to change the language. Wasn't Berne's "operation on the language of psychotherapy" a means of completely reinventing the therapeutic language, especially the traditional vocabulary of psychoanalysis? In concise, obvious, but also trivial words, we can say that how we talk depends on how we think, but also how we act depends on how we think.

In theory, the therapist's language is to become the client's language or the resultant force of the languages of both sides of this interaction. The use of colloquial language is therefore meant to bring the two interlocutors closer together. It is supposed to be a natural language, used by every person, which creates the possibility of effective communication. Sometimes, transactionalists use metaphors to describe everything that is invisible, everything that is a non-verbal message and a kind of "speech of space" articulated through gestures, voice intonation, facial expressions, etc. The context is also important here, which can prevent misunderstandings resulting from different interpretations of the phenomena that the conversation refers to.

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[1] This position is criticized by Andrzej Pawelec, who believes that the vision of Lakoff and Johnson is detached from the traditional understanding of the metaphor and rather obscures its understanding, though it may provide a strong impulse for research in this area (Pawelec, 2006, p. 55).

Eric Berne, however, was aware that the introduction of colloquial language into science would expose him to manifold criticisms and indictments: that he would be accused of "popularization" and "oversimplification," which—as he wrote somewhat sarcastically— remind him of the communist accusations of "bourgeoisie" or "right-wing bias" (Berne, 1998, p. 14). In order to be communicative, Berne made such a choice anyway, without giving in to the manner of masking one's uncertainty with long speeches and vague arguments. However, he perversely admitted, "Here and there I throw in big words so that—like a bone that is thrown—they distract the watchful dogs guarding the academic gates" (Berne, 1998, p. 14). Without a doubt, many representatives of the academic community turned language into a weapon of their struggle against both the addressees of their words and potential opponents. Due to the obscure phrasing, the fuzzy referents of many concepts, and the lack of clarity and specificity, they act as a veil for the shallowness of thoughts and invoke the impression that the recipients of such a message are admiring the heights of abstraction. Let us add here that the sheer use of metaphors in the language of science also raises distrust and suspicion among scholars as a rhetorical stratagem serving to falsify the objective reality.

The followers of Berne's concept corroborated his intuitions. "I believe that a psychiatrist must create a 'public' language," wrote Thomas Harris, "purged of technical jargon, suitable for discussing common problems in our society" (Harris, 1987, p. 10). He states further that "the vocabulary of transactional analysis is a precise instrument of therapy because, in language that anyone can understand, it describes things that really exist, talks about real experiences that genuinely happened in the lives of real people" (Harris, 1987, pp. 8–9). This is reminiscent of the words of St. Thomas Aquinas, who argued that one should believe not in formulas, but in the reality that these formulas express. It can be added that the crux of the matter is the reality of human experience and finding the right words to reflect the world in which we live.

It is impossible not to notice, however, that notions borrowed from colloquial speech—often metaphorical in some sense—when translated into other languages, may lead to a range of ambiguities and misunderstandings. A good example may be the distortions—as

Bruno Bettelheim writes—springing from the translation of psychoanalytical concepts, which changed their meanings with subsequent translations (Bettelheim, 1994). It is no different in the case of TA. In the introduction to the Polish *Dictionary of Transactional Analysis*, we can read that "in such a situation, the translator is faced with the overwhelming task of introducing colloquial, often culturally hermetic concepts that have no simple, obvious equivalents in the target language—hence the occasional inaccuracies, ambiguities, or even skewed meanings" (Jagieła, 2012, p. 8).

Surely, introducing such a peculiar language to therapeutic theory and practice was innovative for those times, and today it is an element that distinguishes TA from other psychotherapeutic schools and trends. The language of TA is therefore, as Thomas A. Harris claims, something unique and typical only of this method of treatment (Harris, 1987, p. 226). Metaphorical concepts play a major role in it.

Metaphors in Transactional Analysis

The search for metaphors in the idea of TA is a very intriguing enterprise that deserves a much more extensive study than the sample presented below. Looking at the entire discourse of TA, we can easily see that it can be considered (with much simplification) a collection of various theoretical models. These models, as valuable artifacts, bring us closer to understanding the phenomena related to TA's area of interest and unquestionably should be taken literally. They are used to describe, explain, and sometimes forecast essential aspects of human social and psychological functioning. A number of these models, though probably not all of them, can be viewed from a symbolic and metaphorical perspective. In many cases, such an approach to them can significantly broaden the area of cognition and interpretation of the message they convey.

A good example is the model of ego states, an original theory of the creator of TA. We can and should treat the theory of ego states literally, though this does not mean that it closes the door for further analysis, or even interpretation or reinterpretation. After all, Berne himself voiced such expectations. Therefore, it is difficult to disagree with the opinions of Gilles Barrow (2007, pp. 206–209) or Claude

M. Steiner (2003, pp. 9–14) that the "Parent-Adult-Child" model should be perceived not only as an ingenious intuitive solution, but also as any other metaphor which—thanks to its ambiguity—changes, enriches, and expands its various interpretations and transformations, which often yield surprising outcomes for understanding the phenomena that it relates to. The very use of terms such as "Parent," "Adult," or "Child" expands the context in which their meaning is used. Clients often enthusiastically take advantage of this possibility. I have encountered situations when they willingly went beyond the assigned meaning of these concepts and said, for example, "The parents in my head do not allow me to be the kind of father to my children that I would like to be," or coined aphorisms on this basis: "Whoever was not a child in childhood will not be an adult in adulthood." Such an approach to the categories which are fundamental for TA, extending and metaphorizing their meaning, is beneficial and useful within this framework. It helps to deepen the understanding of the structural model of personality, on which the entire structure of the theory and practice of transactional analysis is built. Reflecting on the complex and, as it were, latent content of this tripartite model, we come to conclusions that delve deep into the distant regions of the human condition and tradition.

It may seem that dichotomy is closer to human nature. We can easily find divisions into two types of energy with opposite vectors, most fully expressed in the juxtaposition of subject–object, but also of realism–idealism or pragmatism–mysticism, or in the oppositional thoughts of great philosophers, such as Aristotle and Plato. Nevertheless, not until we add the third color is harmony created (Jagieła, 2002, pp. 45–51). Two dimensions make an image flat, but adding a third one creates space, depth, and figurativeness. Two is a regularity in the two-step, but three is the real rhythm: one, two, three. Thus, duality in the history of culture and thought, but also in the most ordinary experience of human fate, is not more often discerned than the rule of three. Sometimes, we get the impression that the mind defends itself against seeing the world only in two limited dimensions. It does not want to feed on constant conflict, instead seeking balance and harmony. In the case of TA, between the two–sometimes antagonistic—ego states, i.e., the Parent-Self and the Child-Self, there is a state that brings balance and psychological harmony,

namely the Adult-Self. The stability of this structure results from its close ties with reality, from what is often referred to in psychotherapy as "the here and now." As Susannah Temple, one of the leading representatives of educational transactional analysis writes, the difference between the ego states of the Parent and the Child and the Adult opposing them is fundamental (Temple, 1999, p. 166). Both the Parent-Self and the Child-Self structures most often react instinctively and impulsively to their surroundings. On the other hand, the Adult state is an actual and fresh answer to this reality. The Parent and the Child, thoughtlessly and perfunctorily, or even "like and actor," as Temple says, replay the archaic experiences of a person. After activating these ego states, the person has no choice but to re-enact "old stories" again in their life and most often in almost the same way. On the other hand, somebody who is in the Adult state is capable of making decisions. Staying in touch with the real world, they can use their experience and potential, depending on their age and abilities.

The tripartite pattern can also be found in fairy tales: three wishes, three dreams, three spells, three trials to be overcome, or three riddles to be solved. If there are little pigs, it is usually three little pigs. If there are sisters, then they are often three sisters, for example, One-Eyed, Two-Eyed, and Three-eyed (the Brothers Grimm). The originator of TA, Eric Berne, also used the analysis of fairy tales, identifying in myths and fairy tales the earliest, most archaic versions of the script, i.e., the unconscious program of the life of an individual. The child then "develops their first palimpsest—a modified version of the script—which they adjust to a new perspective on their own environment" (Berne, 1998, p. 61).

Many trichotomic systems can also be found in psychology, starting with the Freudian structural system of the superego, ego, and id, which undoubtedly inspired Eric Bern to create his own system of the ego states. The triplicity underlying TA also frequently appears in other models too, e.g., in Stephen Karpman's Drama Triangle: Persecutor–Victim–Rescuer (Karpman, 1968, pp. 39–43), in Acey Choy's The Winner's Triangle: Assertive–Caring–Vulnerable (Choy, 1990, pp. 40–46), and in the triangular system of needs (transactional Hungers) according to Berne: Structure–Recognition–Stimulus (Schachner, 2016, p. 41) etc.

The introduction of the third element often adds a new quality to the understanding of the human personality or to an individual's fulfillment of specific psychological roles. It illustrates the states of equilibrium ("normality," so to speak). It also confirms one of the systemic principles that systems always strive for equilibrium.

Let's imagine that a human being could only move in two directions across an axis stretched between the *superego* and the *id*: they would be tragically torn, tossed between the world of their own desires, drives, and dreams and the requirements of principles, norms, and obligations. Fortunately, a third agent appears: their *ego*. It is no coincidence that a discipline referred to as the psychology of ego emerged in science.

TA proposes a similar solution to this antagonism. Our internalized Adult intervenes in the conflict between our inner Child and our Parent's introjections—of course, to the extent that we were able to develop that Adult within us. Each of the personality states has a role and significance. Without the Parent, we would have no internalized world of norms, values, and conscience; we would have to start every activity—even the simplest ones—from scratch, without ready and obvious scripts of action. Without the Child, in turn, we would not be able to be truly happy, sad, intuitive, or creative. The Adult gives us a tremendous chance to safely navigate the world around us, to choose what is best for us at the particular moment and in the given circumstances. When a deficit of any of these states appears, and a person goes to a psychotherapy session, the therapist becomes a kind of "advocate" of the missing ego-state. He or she is sometimes an advocate of the Parent (e.g., in psychopathy), of the Child (in neuroses), or of the Adult (in psychoses or borderline personality disorder). On the stage of the human drama, the Persecutor–Victim axis defines the most shattering tragedy, whereas the appearance of the Rescuer (Savior) turns it into a story, a romance, sometimes an epic, and sometimes a burlesque. These are not the only examples of tripartite psychological classifications, but we will not enumerate them here. It is enough to mention that fear is commonly believed to have three varieties: moral, realistic, and neurotic. Assertiveness, which is popular today, is postulated between submissive and aggressive behaviors. In pedagogy, it is also said that upbringing can be either rigorous, permissive, or "tailored to the child" (Édouard

Claparède), and that the resulting styles can be authoritarian, liberal, or democratic. An attentive reader will be able to point out at least a few similar examples. However, triplicity is first and foremost what everyone has experienced for centuries in a very concrete and direct way in their daily life: like the three elements, water, fire, and air; like being pessimistic, optimistic, or realistic; and like being suspended in time between what was, what will be, and what is. The meaning of the pattern of threes can also be experienced as the creative fulfillment that a man and a woman achieve in having a child.

An in-depth understanding of the structural model during training for this psychotherapeutic approach is a prerequisite for mastering other TA concepts. Using metaphors may increase one's chances. What is more natural and can always be referred to than the fact that we are born as children, then become adults, and in this adulthood the majority of people choose to become parents? Therefore, we must not miss the opportunities to build metaphors.

Though we are focusing on the triple structural model (Parent–Adult–Child), which is essential to TA, we must not forget that other issues constitutive of this theory are also an occasion to construct numerous metaphors. Let us then point out some of them. Different Personality Adaptations (Ware, 1983, pp. 11–19; White & White, 1974, pp. 5–17) allow us to search for related terms, other than the literal and strictly defined meanings. For example, the Schizoid Adaptation can be unmistakably identified in the protagonist of the famous film, *Léon: The Professional*.[2] In this case, it is surprising how accurately the filmmakers managed to recreate the transactional script of this character with this type of Personality Adaptation. It demonstrates not only considerable artistic skill, but also great clinical knowledge.

The concepts that we find in TA even encourage the search for metaphors that would aptly illustrate the theoretical and practical phenomena which they visualize. Below I will present just a few

[2] The film *Léon: The Professional* was filmed in 1994 by Gaumont International Television and Les Films du Dauphin, and was a collaborative French and American production directed by Luc Besson and starring Jean Reno and Natalie Portman in the main roles.

of the categories and terms that, as it were, naturally induce us to search for metaphors that deepen their meaning:[3]

- *Candy* – a symptom of distancing oneself from another person while showing fake acceptance towards them (Steiner, 1971);
- *The Fairy Godmother* – a positive aspect of the Mother, the Parent of her son's Child ego state, that influences the productive script of the son; its negative counterpart in the destructive script is *The Witch Mother* (Berne, 1998, pp. 149, 528);
- *Stroke* – a unit of interpersonal attention and support, which is essentially any act of recognizing someone's presence and being noticed by other people (Hay, 2010, pp. 185–193); the word has recently been superseded by the term *slot* – a place in the script for a specific person who is meant to fulfill a certain role or specific requirements resulting from the script (Berne, 1998, p. 528);
- *hot potato* – negative messages transmitted from one generation to the next by a parent who feels strongly that something is wrong and they don't want to deal with it; in such a situation, the parent transfers their bad emotions to their offspring in order to free themselves from the unpleasantness associated with the emotions (Berne, 1998, pp. 354–357, 530–531).
- *Jeder* (Everyone) – a mythical figure devoid of individual features, personifying all men living on Earth; his female counterpart is Zoe (*Zóe*, a Greek female name which means "life"; Berne, 1998, p. 91);
- *The Martian* – a mythical character who observes the events on Earth without presumptions, prejudices, or fixed views but completely naïvely: through a Martian viewpoint, a phrase that also signifies a methodological perspective of assessing interpersonal relationships in a completely objective manner (Hostie, 1982, pp. 168–170);
- *The Earthian* – a person who builds his or her judgments about the world on superstitions and prejudices, and not on an objective evaluation of reality (Berne, 1998, p. 533);

[3] Many more examples can be found in the relevant lexical works; see, e.g., Jagieła (2012).

- *Myth of the Cave* – a metaphor of Plato's cave as a technique to reveal the essence of the script and the psychotherapeutic process itself (O'Reilly-Knapp, 1989, pp. 32–34);
- *The Top Gun* – one of the roles of a narcissistic and competitive character (allusion to the western convention) in the group of games conducted by therapists, aimed at showing their professional advantage; Consequently, such games lead to competitive and devastating conflicts and a reduction in attention to the client's needs (Persi, 1992, pp. 144–152);
- *Rubber Band* – a stress reaction triggered under the influence of a current, painful situation as a behavior that is incomprehensible to the people around us, and which is a consequence of the activation of the script (Stewart & Joines, 1987, p. 333);
- *Button* – an external or internal stimulus that triggers a script behavior or an interpersonal game (Berne, 1998, p. 530);
- *Stopper* – script order or prohibition (Berne, 1998, p. 528);
- *The Santa Claus Illusion*, also translated as Waiting for Santa Claus – a child's imaginary expectation of a magical event that will change their whole life or a desire for a reward for good scripted behavior, e.g., a sudden win in the lottery (Osnes, 1972, p. 29);
- *Ogre Father* – a negative aspect of the Parent-Father that affects the daughter's negative script; a positive productive script equivalent is *The Jolly Giant* (Holloway, 1972, pp. 32–34; Berne, 1998, pp. 149, 529);
- *Family Parade* – passing down the script in the family from generation to generation (James, 1984, pp. 18–28);
- *The Don Juan Syndrome* – a set of psychological features of a seductive man and a set of games that he plays as a result of following a script containing a distorted approach towards relationships with women (Novellino, 2006, pp. 33–43);
- *The Pinocchio Syndrome* – a set of features typical of a narcissistic and antisocial adult, e.g., immaturity, seeking applause and recognition, impulsiveness, constant search for pleasure, failure to keep promises, manipulating others and not caring for them, etc. People with Pinocchio Syndrome resemble, in a way, a "human puppet" and in their script protocol we can

often find early abandonment and inadequate parental requirements and expectations (Novellino, 2000, pp. 292–298);
- *Sweatshirt* – an external, non-verbal manifestation of the slogan of the game or one's favorite type of game, revealing itself as a creed which is often noticeable in the person's superficiality (James & Jongeward, 1994, pp. 256–258);
- *Totem* – a specific animal that fascinates a person and influences their behavior through symbolic identification (Berne, 1998, pp. 212–213, 532).

These concepts seem to offer a chance to create numerous metaphors, stories, anecdotes, or references to symbols.[4] They also make one think about fashioning a collection of such narratives similar to those fashioned in the context of Milton Erickson's therapy. They would give the therapist an opportunity to show their inventiveness, their own ingenuity in creating parallel references to reality, so that the client could perceive their problem from a different, sometimes much deeper perspective. Similarly, metaphors can be created by teachers of many subjects, educators, or educator-therapists.

Educational Metaphor and Transactional Analysis

Education offers as many opportunities (and perhaps many more) for the exploitation of metaphors as does psychotherapy. Many researchers point out that the metaphor can be thought of as one of the most important ways in which the human cognitive process functions. By transferring meaning, it allows for a much broader understanding and symbolic illustration of highly complex phenomena, purely verbally and visually or through sound or movement, etc. Thus, metaphors can be used in many educational situations, in almost all subjects of the school curriculum, although art education presents particularly auspicious opportunities here (Limont & Didkowska, 2008). One can risk the claim that the use of metaphors opens a new and compelling perspective for pedagogy itself, but also for the

[4] The very concept of an interpersonal game, so characteristic of TA, may become an opportunity to metaphorically present the multiplicity of its meanings. See Berne (1987).

system of training future teachers and educators (Adamska-Staroń et al., 2007).

The comprehensive study by Monika Adamska-Staroń shows how promising teaching through metaphor is for the educational process (Adamska-Staroń, 2016, pp. 63–92). This method was used in classes with pedagogy students who visualized their knowledge of the basic concepts, theories, and paradigms of education science in a metaphorical (verbal, artistic, musical, and culinary) way. In the conclusion, the author wrote

> The metaphorical approach to teaching activates interdisciplinary thinking, does not lock deliberations on pedagogy in just one space, allows you to experience objective values, and to interiorize them; it allows you to actively express yourself and your views, recognize your own abilities and skills, and to act creatively. (Adamska-Staroń, 2016, p. 88)

The metaphor can therefore become another teaching and learning technique, a way of acquiring new knowledge and expanding one's cognitive horizon with new, previously unknown ideas.

It is no coincidence that the metaphor appears in school life in different contexts and different hermeneutic perspectives. It also reveals itself—which is worth focusing on—in the relationship between a teacher and a student. As such, TA may play a significant role as a theory and practice of building optimal interpersonal relationships and augmenting the autonomy of an individual. It could be said that transactional analysts dealing with education have noticed this perspective. One of them is Giles Barrow, who has created a positive metaphor for the educator as a gardener[5] who cares for the soil and the plants growing in it. Unfortunately, he adds reproachfully, such a metaphor is currently not fashionable in either the United States or Great Britain, although references to it seem to be very cognitively evocative (Barrow, 2011, pp. 308–314). An educator-gardener is someone who optimally tends to the development of the children and adolescents entrusted to their care and reacts optimally to hostile circumstances. Let us add, as a side note, that it is a pity the author

[5] In the original, Barrow uses the term *cultivator* which in English means someone who grows something, a gardener, farmer, grower or farmer; while in Polish, "kultywator" is an agricultural device used for aerating and mixing soil.

did not want to notice the subjectivism of his "discovery," which in the history of pedagogical thought has already had a long tradition, dating back much further in the past. To mention one example, Rousseau (1712–1778) wrote that "plants are shaped by cultivation, people by education" (1955, p. 8). Similar analogies can be pinpointed in the works of many writers from the New Education Movement at the beginning of the 20th century. We may find them in Henryk Rowid and Maria Grzegorzewska, as well as Maria Montessori and Janusz Korczak.

Conclusion

The use of metaphors may lead us away from scientific accuracy, precision, and objectivity, but it brings us closer to what is called craftsmanship, which sometimes escapes the rigors of scientific methodological accuracy, and yet makes the work of a psychotherapist, teacher, and educator more inspiring and creative. It does not mean that the understanding of the phenomena that psychotherapists or educators deal with becomes shallow, trivial, or simplified. Often, the exact opposite happens, and the metamorphosis makes sense as long as it serves such purposes. Therefore, TA, especially in its educational contexts, should also address this problem, which has so far been absent in the discourse of this subdiscipline.

A certain, perhaps minimal, level of skills in the field of therapeutic intervention seems to be a necessary element of a teacher's professional competence. Gail King argues so in the book *Teacher's Therapeutic Skills*, noting the problem of TA in students' transactional school games, which an educator should be able to manage (King, 2003, pp. 61–62). It is also worth realizing that, according to many studies, the number of school-aged children who exhibit various types of emotional disorders ranges on average between 10% and 20%. As Hornby, Hall, and Hall argue for this reason, teachers should know the basics of psychological counseling and use this knowledge in working with students (Hornby et al., 2005, p. 7). This also applies to contact with parents (Christopher, 2004), wherein the skills gleaned from the knowledge of TA also seem necessary (Hornby et al., 2005, pp. 205–206). The ability to use metaphors effectively can play a decisive role in these competences.

My own experiences of using metaphors in teaching TA are very encouraging. Students of pedagogy, to whom this message was addressed, often unveil great ingenuity and creativity in the metaphorical illustration of concepts and phenomena that they encounter for the first time.[6] The formula used in such cases, which can be regarded as an intermediate link between "scientific" and "metaphorical," may be mind maps or knowledge maps, which are helpful for structuring and broadening the knowledge of TA. One of the members of the Jan Długosz Educational Transaction Analysis Research Team at the University of Humanities and Pedagogy in Częstochowa has explored this problem more in-depth (Gębuś, 2014, pp. 139–150). Let us hope that further scientific work of this research group will bring a new and interesting look at the issues presented here.

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After writing this article, in the latest issue of the European Association for Transactional Analysis (EATA) newsletter, I found an interesting text by Olga Lichotinska (the issue was published in Russian) devoted to fairy tales (Lihotinska, 2018, pp. 26–27). The author, who works as a clinical psychologist at the State Neuropsychiatric Hospital in Kiev, uses fairy tales to creatively convey a number of TA concepts, and thus find common ground with patients. She takes advantage of fairy tales that she has composed—mainly in the area of building autonomy—and the resulting consequences for forging relationships with others. In her article, the author has presented several fairy tales written by herself (e.g. "Hedgehog," a fairy tale used to develop autonomous assertiveness, "Little Mole," for identifying the script prohibition "Don't be healthy," "Ant," for recognizing the script prohibition "Don't think," etc.). This work is therefore eloquent proof that the use of metaphors in the area of transactional analysis is beginning to find wider applications.

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[6] The subject Educational Transactional Analysis was introduced in the 2012–13 academic year to the curriculum of educating students in the field of social pedagogy and pedagogical therapy at Jan Długosz University of Humanities and Pedagogy in Częstochowa.

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