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Srivastva, Suresh; Barrett, Frank J.

Tavistock Institute of Human Relations

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The Transforming Nature of Metaphors in Group Development: A Study in Group Theory

Suresh Srivastva and Frank J. Barrett

Case Western Reserve University

It is proposed in this paper that members' creation of metaphors facilitates further expression and development of the group. Few methodologies for group inquiry help us in understanding the tacit awareness (Polanyi, 1959) of members as the group is in the process of interacting. One way of discovering members' awareness is by paying attention to their language, specifically their creation of metaphors. We would like to put forth propositions concerning metaphor and group process that suggest how: (1) paying attention to metaphors are indicators of a group's phase of development and can lead to a discovery of the tacit awareness of group members; (2) metaphor facilitates learning and overcomes resistance to otherwise difficult subjects; (3) metaphor is generative and facilitates contact between group members and in this way supports the growth and development of the group; and (4) as individuals articulate metaphors to express their feelings and perceptions while attempting to understand their experience in the group, they are constructing their own social reality. Therefore, to look at the group's metaphor is to see the group development, to identify the social construction of reality in its nascent stages. To support these propositions, we will cite data from various laboratory group experiences.

INTRODUCTION

Numerous theories of group development have provided a useful lens in explaining individual and collective behavior in a group context and group culture (Bion, 1959; Slater, 1966; Bennis & Shepard, 1956; Srivastva, Obert, & Neilson, 1977). But few methodologies for group inquiry help us in un-

¹Requests for reprints should be sent to Frank J. Barrett, Department of Organizational Behavior, Weatherhead School of Management, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland Ohio.

derstanding the tacit awareness of members *as the group is in the process of interacting*. While theory helps explain and anticipate behavior during states of development, it remains a challenge to understand the tacit awareness of group members as they are living in the present moment of group life.

While these theories serve as useful explanations for group behavior, they do not always help us to understand the group's existential life *in vivo*. We know the group is developing, but how is a new social reality being created? How is the group constructing a shared culture of meaning? If group development involves members' appreciating each other's complexity, what are the cues and benchmarks that tell us that the group is working through dependency/counterdependency issues, that members are becoming more autonomous and achieving richer, more complex understandings of one another? We hope to throw some light on these questions by looking at the role of metaphor in group development, how metaphors are clues to the group's construction of reality, and how metaphors function to generate new, complex understanding for individual members and the group as a whole.

One way of discovering the tacit awareness (Polanyi, 1959) of group members is by paying attention to the individual's and group's own language, specifically their creation of metaphors. The aim of this paper is to explicate some principles of metaphorical constructions, define metaphor and identify its properties not so much as a linguistic construct but as a unit of thought and illustrate their relationship with the process of group development. We would like to put forth propositions concerning metaphor and group process that suggest how: (1) paying attention to metaphors are indicators of a group's phase of development and can lead to a discovery of the tacit awareness of group members, (2) metaphor facilitates learning and overcomes resistance to otherwise difficult subjects, (3) metaphor is generative and facilitates contact between group members and in this way supports the growth and development of the group, and (4) as individuals articulate metaphors to express their feelings and perceptions while attempting to understand their experience in a group, they are constructing their own social reality. Therefore, to look at the group's metaphors is *to see* the group development, to identify the social construction of reality in its nascent stages. To support these propositions, we will cite data from various laboratory group experiences.

It has been assumed that groups experience a transformation over time. Various theories of group development have set out to show that groups can create a progressively more developed culture through time and work. In this context, let us review some of the more significant theories of group development that have come to populate our literature and our thinking and revisit what we have come to mean when we say a group "develops."

Tuckman (1965) reviews research on group development and concludes that groups go through the following stages of development: (1) forming,

(2) storming, (3) norming, and (4) performing; as roles become more clearly differentiated, hindrances to communication are overcome and interdependence is possible.

Bennis and Shepard (1956) created a theory of group development in which group activity is centered around two principle issues: authority relations and interpersonal relations. The group first works through their ambivalent feelings toward the leaders which then allows growthful contact and valid communication to occur between members. Members move from counterdependence through a concern with individual autonomy and eventually tend to achieve a more realistic understanding of one another.

Srivastva et al. (1977) put forth five stages of group development which highlight three basic elements of social interaction, inclusion, influence, and intimacy, as its members are concerned with establishing personal identity in the groups. They move through the influence stage as members' behavior is centered around gaining the support of the group vs. a sense of panic at the prospect of the inability to influence others. In later stages, issues of intimacy begin to emerge as the group exhibits efforts to include and appreciate members.

Bion's (1959) scheme of group life is not explicitly developmental. He sees group process as a function of unconscious defense against anxiety. Members tend to act from core basic assumptions that can interfere with the work group, i.e., the functioning of the real task of the group. Groups often act from three basic assumptions, dependency, fight-flight, and pairing, that can interfere with the explicit task of the group. If the basic assumption is dependency, for example, the group acts *as if* members are protected by an omniscient, omnipresent leader. When these basic assumption behaviors are predominant in a group's life, members are acting out of fantasy, acting impulsively, uncritically, and are frequently unable to "own" their own basic assumptions, thereby hindering learning. The more the basic assumption life of the group becomes conscious, the more the work group can emerge and complete the task.

In Slater's (1966) view, the group revolt against authority is an essential phase in the development of the group. Members continue, however, to deal with identity and boundary dilemmas, the wish/fear dilemma in the desire to fuse with the group, yet maintain autonomous identity. While he sees groups progressing and becoming more adept, boundary establishment and identity maintenance are re-occurring issues.

These theories emphasize that, in order for the group to develop, members need to face their ambivalence toward authority that appears in the form of dependence and counterdependence and abandon the need to define the self in relation to authority to achieve a more realistic view of the leaders. Another common theme in group development theory is the continuing dilem-

Table I. Progressive Theories of Group Development^a

Tuckman:	I. Forming	II. Storming	III. Norming	IV. Performing
Bennis and Shepard	I. Dependence/authority: a. Dependence b. Counterdependence c. Resolution		III. Interdependence: a. Enchantment b. Disenchantment c. Consensual validation	
Srivastva, Obert, and Neilsen	I. Inclusion	II. Inclusion— IV. Influence — Intimacy	Influence	III. Influence V. Intimacy

^aTheories that emphasize reoccurring issues in group development: Bion: Group is continually facing dilemmas of Task Group vs. Basic-Assumption Group (dependency, fight-flight, pairing). As tacit assumption become explicit, the group is better equipped to complete its task. Slater: After replacing the leaders with a new order, members continue to face identity and boundary dilemmas in relationship to the group. Progress occurs when members become more autonomous, differentiated, and interdependent.

ma of maintaining a sense of identity in the face of fear of engulfment (Slater, 1966), frustration and "disenchantment with others" (Bennis and Shepard, 1956), and the fear of being isolated or unable to influence others (Srivastva et al., 1977). Development, then, involves an increasing sense of identity and autonomy, and an ability to appreciate the other's autonomy and establish interrelationships in which understanding, appreciation, and valid communication can occur. The mature group, like a mature person, becomes adept at overcoming anxiety and other obstacles that get in the way of action and attain a level of understanding of the other.

In order to bring group theories of development to life, to understand how group members experienced their participation, how they perceive themselves and their world, and how they give meaning to radically new experience, one needs to look at their own language. In fact, it is through a person's very participation in the world that language is created. An undifferentiated mass is transformed into an experienced world of perceptions and concepts through language (Lee, 1959). The discovery that a person can construct a system of symbols, that a name is not bound to a thing or individual, but could be changed as circumstances required, and that meaning itself could be created by man or woman "giving" names to objects, was a watershed event in human development. Hence, the universal applicability of symbolism in human language lends magic to the world. Language also is essential to the maintenance and development of the self. Through language, through naming, I construct a world which makes sense for me to move in, a world in which I can act, establishing for myself a center of awareness.

The process of giving language to experience is more than just sense-making. Naming also directs actions toward the object you have named be-

cause it promotes activity consistent with the related attribution it carries. To change the name of an object connotes changing your relationship to the object and how one will behave in relationship to it because when we name something, we direct anticipations, expectations, and evaluations toward it.

Language not only provides us with the ability to name the world and give status and recognition (Lee, 1959) to physical reality, the language of a society is also a conceptual system for organizing and putting limits on available experience; it dissects and segments the underlying continuum of reality (Whorf, 1956). It can pre-select how the world is experienced, an imposition that shapes a culture's perceptions, thoughts, and behaviors.

SOME PRINCIPLES OF METAPHOR

Metaphor posits a way of seeing an object *as if* it were something else. It acts as a way of organizing perceptions, a framework for selecting, naming, and framing characteristics of an object or experience by asserting similarity with a different, seemingly unrelated object or experience. Metaphor transfers meaning from one domain onto another and in this way enriches and enhances it, makes some sense out of something in a new or different way.

Poets, philosophers, linguists, psychoanalysts, and sociologists have long contemplated metaphor as a linguistic construct. Aristotle, in *The Poetics*, claimed that the command of metaphor is a mark of genius because it implies an "eye for resemblances" (Aristotle, 1952). Metaphor has been seen as a literary or verbal figure of speech (Abrams, 1957, p. 61). For some, it is useful to analyze metaphor as a linguistic construction. Richards (1936) introduced the term "tenor" as "the underlying idea or principle subject which the vehicle or figure means," and "vehicle" is the terms used to form the comparison; hence, in Burn's poem, the "tenor" is "my love" and the "vehicle" is "rose." Black (1962) introduced the terms "principal subject" and "subsidiary subject."

We treat metaphor, here, as a domain of awareness "beyond" what is given, processing one experience in the world by directing attention to a seemingly unrelated experience. The familiar domain of the metaphor organizes perceptions of the less familiar, selecting and emphasizing certain details, suggesting implications that may not have been seen. For example, in the metaphor "man is a wolf," the ravaging, predatory nature of man is given focus; whereas, the metaphor "man is a flower," focuses on the more delicate, beautiful nature of man blooming to fruition, going through seasonal changes. Metaphors are filters that suppress some details, emphasize others, in short, "organize our view of the world" (Black, 1962).

In this paper, what we choose to emphasize about metaphor is its *invitation* to direct perception and enrich awareness. The Greek prefix "meta"

means "along with, beyond, behind, among"; it also denotes change. Hence, it has a transcendent quality which invites a new enhanced meaning.

More than a displacement or shifting of words, metaphor is an interaction between systems of thoughts that produce a meaning larger than either of its subjects; through the resonance of possible associations and connotations, a new contextual meaning is created. Metaphor invites the listener to help create a new context by adding his or her natural associations. For example, the metaphor, "man is a wolf," encourages a picture of "man" to acquire more colorful detail: hairy and on all fours, saliva dripping from his mouth, piercing and ferocious eyes, and long fangs awaiting its prey. Also in the interaction, the wolf begins to take on human qualities: purposeful and intentional, having feelings and thoughts. Metaphor can allow new connotations to emerge and create new contextual meaning in a way that literal language is incapable.

Metaphor is more capable of capturing the continuing flow of experience than literal language; sometimes one can say through metaphor what one cannot express in literal language. Literal language dissects and segments the continuing flow of experience (Whorf, 1956) and is often inadequate in expressing the depth and richness of experience, and metaphor can fill this deficiency: "Experience does not arrive in little discrete packets, but flows, leading us imperceptibly from one state to another," and metaphor enables the invocation of a "chunk of characteristics in a word or two that would otherwise require a long list of characteristics" (Ortony, 1975). Imagine a child who cannot describe to his mother that his foot is asleep. He has no way of relaying this strange sensation; he doesn't know what is happening to his foot. In frustration, he says to his mother: "It feels like there are stars hitting my foot." Having no available literal terms, the child associates a new unfamiliar experience with one he understands. He has a sparkling, glittering, tingling sensation that seems to impact his foot from somewhat outside his body. At the age of four he is unable to say, "Mother, there is a certain numbness in my foot which is a result of an inadequate supply of blood flow which I inadvertently seemed to have circumvented." Indeed, even as adults, we use metaphor to relate this experience: "My foot is *asleep*." Or, imagine someone who feels an unexplained sensation of isolation and protective turfism in regard to his co-workers. At work, he begins to tell stories about street gangs. Metaphor can indirectly express experience that we are incapable of expressing because the experience is too large and unfamiliar, too threatening or frightening to identify and express directly. In this sense, metaphor can communicate an emotional reality that lies just beyond our conscious awareness. The metaphor might reveal a meaning much larger and fuller than its speaker intended, perhaps even outside his own awareness.

In summary, metaphor is (1) an invitation to see an object as if it were something else, focusing on seemingly unrelated characteristics and enriching the perception of the object, (2) an interaction between systems of

thoughts that produces a meaning larger than either of its subjects; through the resonance of possible connotations, a new contextual meaning is created, (3) more capable of capturing the continuing flow of experience than more literal language; one can say through metaphor what cannot be said in discrete, literal terms, especially when words are not available or do not exist, and (4) can communicate powerful, emotional experience that might otherwise resist conscious articulation.

In this section, we will discuss how metaphor functions within groups and how noting metaphorical processes helps us to understand the group's emerging awareness. We will show how a central metaphor, or root metaphor, is often at the foundation of a group's emerging collective view and *common construal of disparate experiences*. We will demonstrate that as members depict their world and construe their experience differently, different root metaphors emerge which reflect these transformations. We will also show how proposing a new way of seeing an event is proposing a new metaphor — invoking a different set of details from a different domain — and can generate alternative ways for members to construe events and experiences. And finally, we will discuss how a metaphorical process is functioning when the group is discussing anxiety-arousing topics. Indirect discussion in a more comfortable but related domain provides a safe area of inquiry when anxiety-arousing topics emerge.

METAPHOR AND INQUIRY INTO SOCIAL LIFE

One important focus of inquiry into social relationships is the interactive process of meaning-making among members, the process of members construing their experience. It is not so much the actions taken by the members of a social group, but the meaning attached to those actions that become the focus of the study. Not only individuals, but social groups create a context of common meanings through which to understand the world. Theories of group development invite us to see the traits and characteristic behaviors of groups at various stages. By focusing on the group's efforts to understand itself we would choose to study the meaning bestowed on activities at moments in the group's life. The meaning attached to new experiences occurs through a metaphorical process. Members of a group make sense of the unfamiliar by relating it to the familiar. The nature of the common meaning being created by the group can be understood by identifying a root metaphor that seems to be the foundation for the developing thought.

With these principles in mind, we would like to put forth eight propositions that relate to metaphor and group processes as we have witnessed in our experiences facilitating laboratory groups:

Proposition 1. Root metaphors are co-terminous and isomorphic with a group's phase of development.

Proposition 2. Looking at a group's root metaphors allows one to see the nascent stages of the group's social construction of reality.

Groups do, in fact, develop and can be observed in their transformations as they pass through stages. Root metaphors are the group's expressions of these passages. Root metaphor is a device to give general meaning to expressions of a common theme in a group as it promotes development of a larger context in which members feel comfort in the ability to communicate with each other without threat of personal victimization. Hence, root metaphor is a process of observing group talk and developing a theory for understanding the processes of group development while the group talk is taking place. To quote Pepper (1942) on the foundational nature of root metaphor:

The method in principle seems to be this: A man desiring to understand the world looks for a clue to its comprehension. He pitches upon some area of common sense fact and tries if he cannot understand other areas in terms of this one. The original area becomes then his basic analogy or root metaphor. He describes as best he can the characteristics of this area, or if you will, discriminates its structure. A list of its structural characteristics becomes his basic concepts of explanation and description. We call them a set of categories. In terms of these categories he proceeds to study all other areas of fact whether uncriticized or previously criticized. He undertakes to interpret all facts in terms of these categories. As a result of the impact of these other facts upon his categories, he may qualify and readjust the categories, so that a set of categories commonly changes and develops. . . . Some root metaphors prove more fertile than others, have greater power of expansion and adjustment. These survive in comparison with the others and generate the relativity adequate world theories (Pepper, 1942).

We would like to trace root metaphors for one laboratory group we studied. This group met for 12 3-hour sessions and two 6-hour sessions over one university semester. The expressions show how the group articulated their experience of reality through metaphorical language and how these metaphors, in turn, became the framework for interpreting action. Black (1962) suggested that to discover root metaphor would require a list of *key words* and *expressions* with a statement of their meanings in the field from which they were literally drawn. Turner (1974) studied cultures' understandings of their social worlds by identifying "foundation" or root metaphors which he traced to "key words and expressions" during transitional periods. Therefore, in an effort to find the root metaphors of this group, and trace their development throughout the semester, we have closely studied the "key words and expressions" articulated by group members. Our interest throughout this inquiry was to determine if the members of the group changed the nature of their social system by looking at root metaphors that can be extracted from their own language.

These sessions were taped and transcribed. Also as part of the class requirement, students were required to write papers and reflect on what

seemed significant to them in each session. We looked at the language in the papers as a cross-check and found that it validated these root metaphors. We reviewed the tapes and transcripts, noting "key words and expressions" that fell into a pattern that might be described as a "root metaphor." To meet the requirement of a root metaphor, at least one-half of the group had to use a word or phrase that could be related to it. If one individual made more than one remark, it was counted as one, so that the number of people, not the number of expressions, were emphasized when drawing these conclusions.

Twenty root metaphors emerged from the data. After consensually validating the themes and testing them against the data, we grouped them by sessions. All of these root metaphors were well supported. A few received very strong support. "The group is in a battle," for example, was supported by innumerable separate remarks in the second session alone.

After reviewing the root metaphors, we began to group them according to thematic patterns and sessions. After grouping the metaphors, we looked for a descriptive phrase that might reflect the flavor of those sessions. It is important to emphasize that the group's language and the group's metaphors generated the interpretive root metaphor, and from the collection of root metaphors we proposed a descriptive theme that we call "phase." The metaphors generated the phases in our classification scheme, not *vice versa*. Table II illustrates the root metaphors and the sessions in which the remarks were made. We cite these to illustrate the emergence of a group paradigm that transformed over time.

To illustrate this phenomena, we will describe the context of the sessions in which these metaphors emerged and we will present each root metaphor with a few supporting remarks that members made. In the interest of illustration, for the first root metaphor, "the group is in a battle," we will list all of the remarks we extracted from the data that supported it. For the remaining root metaphors, we will include a few sample statements. We include them to give a flavor of members' language but in the interest of space we will not include every supporting remark. Again, only after surfacing these root metaphors did we subdivide them into the following four phases: (1) the group is stuck in a battle, (2) the group is moving, (3) members want to be connected but not swallowed, and (4) members want to impact each other and help each other grow.

Phase 1: The Group is Stuck in a Battle. The group's attention was focused on the facilitators and the lack of structure in the first session. Frequent requests were made about plans for class lessons and queries concerning the purpose of the class. When the leaders did not respond in a satisfying way, members become frustrated. Long periods of silence were punctuated by nervous laughter and short conversations in which members exchanged innocuous, descriptive details about each other. Members seemed relieved when they could find "safe" common topics to discuss: favorite sports, undergraduate

Table II. Summary of Root Metaphors

Stage I: the group is in battle	Stage II: the group is moving	Stage III: members want to be connected but not swallowed	Stage IV: members want to impact each other and help each other grow
Group is in battle	Order and peace are restored	Group is deep container	Members impact each other
Group is lost, stuck	Group is moving	Right language is ticket for membership	To step out and reveal self is good
Silence is large and oppressive	Selves can be partitioned and shared	Members want to be connected	Silence is loud, active
Something is trying to dominate		Group can overwhelm and swallow	We can help each other grow
Group needs something to break through the separation		Members want selves and others to be open	Members reach out, are drawn out
Salient issues			People are made up of layers
Dependency on leaders	Inclusion to influence: beginning sense of curiosity	Influence, attempts to expand group boundary, curiosity about dissimilar others	Intimacy
Preoccupation with obstacles to communication, uncomfortable with silences		Fear of loss of identity and engulfment by group	Concern that members are blocking their own understanding of each other
Inclusion issues: Each man for himself (Srivastva <i>et al.</i> , 1977)			

majors, recent movies, etc. Ten minutes before the end of the first session, Valerie said she wanted to leave early to watch a television program. A few group members gave their approval and she left. The following week, Marilyn began the session by telling Valerie that she disapproved of her early departure and hoped that it would not become a norm. Marilyn and Valerie engaged in a heated argument. Valerie became furious that the group members were expressing disapproval and she finally yelled at the group for withdrawing their consent. When some continued to question her, she remained silent and cold and refused to engage anyone until she finally left the room. Throughout these first three sessions there were long silences, much discomfort, confusion, and fear expressed by group members. When Valerie returned to the group the following session, members were relieved. Anger was expressed at the leaders for allowing this "incident" to occur. When the leaders said they did not see that as their role, confusion about the leaders' presence was again the topic. During these sessions the following six root metaphors emerged:

1. *The Group Is in a Battle*

"Valerie's outburst had a *chilling* effect on the group. She *destroyed* all communication. I *withdraw*."

"We never found *peace* until Valerie spoke up."

"To *force* someone into a good mood when they don't want to be is *self-defeating*."

"Valerie's *defensive reactions* put the whole group on the defensive."

"My car was *totaled* today so I can handle anything you *throw at me*."

"I figured you were thinking 'There goes Whitey; who does she think she is?' I was afraid you were going to *hit me*."

"I admired Marilyn for *venturing* out."

"I admire Solomon's *courage* to stand alone."

"I *carried* my *assertive self* [like a weapon] into the session."

"I was afraid Valerie would react to me with verbal *abuse*."

"Valerie *stormed* out of the room."

"Marilyn was *gutsy*. It was *brave* of her."

"I wanted to say something but I was afraid she might literally *hit me*. *Gang fights* I don't need."

"People have opened themselves and then were *attacked*."

"The group was so *stunned* by her acts that the conversation *retreated* from intense discussion to *superficial small talk*."

"I was afraid I'd be trapped in another meeting riddled with *conflicts*."

2. *The Group Is Lost on a Search Expedition, Stuck, Unable to Move*

"I was uncertain of what to do and *where to go*. The group was *looking* for structure."

"The group is *grasping* for meaning and purpose."

"The group is *regressing backward* to a *search* for a common goal."

"By her silence, Valerie was being stubborn and the group was *stuck in a deadlock*."

3. *Language Is Meaningless; Language Creates Chaos; Words Get Lost in a Chaotic Flow*

"I need a *Webster's* in this room."

"Solomon, your *statements are lofty*. I can't understand what you're talking about."

"I suggested a structure, but my *statement was part of a flow of other statements*."

4. *Silence Is Large, Chilling, Oppressive; Language Is a Relief from Oppression*

"The periods of silence were *very long*."

"Much of the time I was *relieved* that something verbal was going to *break* the tension."

5. *Members Feel Something Is Trying to Dominate Them; Language and Silence are Tools for Maneuvering.*

"I was feeling *put down* because I didn't have a B.A.?"

"I was infuriated that the group was trying to *impose a norm on us*. So I said I refuse to do it."

"*Get off my back* and stop talking about me."

6. *The Group Needs Something to Break the Block that Separates Members*

"I suggested we bring *ice breakers* to help us get to know each other."

"Maybe we should *split into two groups* or in pairs so we can get to know each other."

"I was relieved something verbal was going on to *break* the tension."

"The notebooks might *get in the way*."

Here we see the group's language as an effort to understand a frightening experience. These expressions and root metaphors reflect the context that the group created for itself in its earliest stages. Members felt anxious, unsure and disappointed that an authority figure was not protecting them and providing leadership, so that it felt like "the group is lost on an expedition." They were frustrated with the lack of response to their needs ("silence is large and oppressive"). Members felt initial fear of engulfment by the group and terror at the threat of loss of identity as if "something is trying to dominate" them. In struggling to establish and maintain their identity in the face of fear of engulfment by these strange faces, each man must fend for himself as if "the group is in a battle." Isolated and anxious among strangers, they seek one form of contact so "the group needs something to break through the separation." Attempts to bridge the isolation take the form of exchanges of superficial, innocuous data about themselves. The energy is directed toward providing data about self in an effort to secure an identity (see Srivastva et al., 1977) rather than making attempts to understand the other, so "language is meaningless and creates chaos."

Phase 2: The Group is Moving. The group met for an extended Saturday session. Following one member's suggestion, each person brought in two personal objects to share with the group as a way for members to get to know each other better. One object would represent the "outer self," the public self that one presents to the world; the other would represent the "inner self," the more private, internal self. Each person presented something safe and something more private about themselves paralleling the inclusion stage of Srivastva et al. (1977) in which "each man acts for himself." Marilyn and Valerie made peace with each other and members expressed relief and happiness when Valerie engaged more actively in the group. The leaders continued to be focal; members expressed surprise when the leaders took their turn like the other members in sharing something about themselves. The climate was a good deal warmer and more receptive as members shared their

"selves" with one another. During this stage the following three root metaphors emerged:

1. *The Group Is Moving*

"The group is *inching along its way*."

"In the all-day session we *covered a lot of ground*."

"We've made it through in finally *looking* for a structure."

"We were *making headway* as a group."

"The group made a tremendous *stride*."

2. *Order and Peace Have been Restored*

"A *trusting atmosphere* and communications were *restored*. We were once again a group."

"The sincere effort of all group members *restored* the trusting and open atmosphere."

"I was pleased that Valerie was acting *normal again*."

"I'm glad it's *safe* in here for everyone."

3. *Selves Can Be Partitioned and Shared*

"It is good that people give *parts* of themselves."

"I feel like we are becoming *part* of each other."

"I had *pictures* of all of you in my head."

"I'm glad you *shared part* of yourself."

Again these root metaphors reflect a changing social reality as members feel more comfortable with one another. Having spent some time with each other and after exchanging some initial data about themselves, group members felt some relief that they will not be destroyed in a battle, so "order and peace are restored." Members begin to tentatively turn toward each other to make contact ("the group is moving... selves can be partitioned and shared").

Phase 3: Members Want to Be Connected but Not Swallowed. Members began to challenge each other for the first time and thus the tentative peace of the third session was disturbed. Some individuals wanted to explore each other's life histories and current issues; they spoke with open emotion, while others were hesitant and "turned off" by emotional gestures. Some hesitant members felt uncomfortable with the efforts of certain individuals to "open up" and engage them in dialogue. A few dyadic pairings emerged among similar individuals: two middle-aged women frequently spoke up in support of one another, two white MBA students, both males, became friendly and supportive, and two undergraduate black females did the same. At one point, the group openly made fun of the leaders and eventually paid less attention to them. Members independently began engaging each other in dialogue and began to initiate more risks in expressing support and confrontation. Some open conflicts revealed the real differences between other individuals. Subgroups formed and one subgroup with a majority of members pressured others to be more expressive and demonstrative. They were frustrated with the lack of compliance and a few individuals were labeled "deviants." During this stage, five root metaphors surfaced:

1. *The Group Is a Deep Container*

- "I don't want to *get that deep* into emotion right now."
 "Don't you think sometimes it's not good to *get that deep* into the meaning all the time?"
 "I'm a private person and it's difficult for me to *jump in* and start talking."
 "You did a good job of *hanging in* there."
 "I was *pulling myself out* of the group and looking at the observer."
 "How do the books *fit in* here?"
 "What do you need to *be in here*, a P.H.D.?"
 "I tried an experiment in the *outside world*."
 "Try to find a way to *get in*."

2. *The Group Can Overwhelm, Swallow Members in.*

- "I feel like I'm going to be *eaten up*. I feel *contained*. There's a wall that keeps me out."
 "It's too easy to just go along with the group. You have to *stand up* for *what you believe* in so you don't get run over."
 "If you say stuff, everybody puts you on the *hot seat*. It is good that you *stand up against* this group."
 "Sometimes it's good to *probe into things*, but you can only take so much."

3. *Right Language Is the Ticket for Membership: Language Is the Price of Membership*

- "It seems you have to *get deep here* and I don't want to."
 "if you don't talk, how can I know you?"
 "I remember Kathy felt her *statements weren't deep enough*."
 "You're *making it deeper* than it needs to be."
 "You were just *talking about surface stuff*."

4. *Members Want Selves and Others to Be Open*

- "With you, stuff goes *in one ear and out* the other."
 "I wish you weren't so *closed and negative* all the time."
 "He didn't seem *open*. I wonder if he really heard what I said."
 "I'd like to feel *more open*."

5. *Members Want to Be Connected*

- "You have completely *lost contact* with me."
 "Well, you just *lost me*."
 "I was afraid they'd *leave me dangling* with my guts hanging out."
 "There is anger *loose* in this room."

The root metaphors in this phase reflect the group's striving to influence one another, to establish deeper relationships without losing their identity, a phase which somewhat parallels the influence stage of group development (Srivastva et al., 1977), and the issues of boundary establishment (Slater, 1966). Members express a desire to know each other, "they want to be connected" and "want selves and others to be open." They want to be included in the developing group and are concerned about talking to each other in a way that facilitates such inclusion, hence, "the right language is the ticket for membership." Yet, there is still concern that the "group can overwhelm and swallow members in."

Phase 4: Members Want to Impact Each Other and Help Each Other Grow. Members began to accept the differences in each other; rather than a source of frustration, differences became acknowledged as a source of richness. "Deviant" members were appreciated, seen as complex, and there was

less pressure for everyone to act the same. It was acceptable for some members to participate less or in a different way than others. Likewise, those who were silent and hesitant to participate began to be more involved and invested in the group. The group began to expand its boundaries to include all members. They began to speak of the unique complexity of each other, including the leaders and those who had been most distant and different from others. A budding sense of interdependence was expressed by some members who credited each other for saying impactful things and facilitating each other's learnings. Six root metaphors emerged:

1. *Understanding Others Can Be Blocked by the Self*

"Valerie's lack of eye contact was a *major stumbling block* in her attempts to reach or be reached by others."

"Some were able to *block out others'* feedback right through the last meeting."

"Jon *blocked feedback* by diffusing it."

"My background was a *cloud that blocked* the reality of your statement."

"He *closed the window* on other ideas."

"I learned that our own translations, conceptions, personal feelings can *get in the way* of understanding others."

2. *Silence Is Loud: Silence Is Active*

"I have begun to *read silences* and what they are telling us."

"In moments of silence I looked around and *connected* with others in the room."

"I used to think not saying anything was 'safe.' I learned when you don't say anything, people . . . might form an opinion of you that's not accurate."

"Your *silence is loud* sometimes."

"I can *heard you thinking*, Solomon."

"For a lot of people, *Silence is loud*. You're used to them saying something."

3. *To Step out and Reveal Self Is Good: Withdrawal Is Bad*

"The group's response to Marilyn's withdrawal was very defensive, like *withdrawal was an insult*."

"I was angry at Marlyn because she felt *out of it*."

"I learned it is okay to step out and *reveal self*. Not one group member took a chance to try something new."

4. *I Can See the Other Grow; My Self Can Grow; We Can help Each Other Grow*

"What interested me was the *illumination* of Valerie from sullen, avoiding, non-verbal to deep, charming, bright, charismatic."

"When a person doesn't self-disclose, *the growth is arrested*."

"I really respected Solomon for flexibility and thoughtfulness in *accepting our input* and having the fortitude to *adapt* to this feedback."

"I think Tim made *great strides* in his thoughts about difference, blacks in particular. I hope I had something to do with this."

5. *Members Impact Each Other*

"That statement *hit me* in the stomach and caused it to knot up. I felt empathy for her."

"I was really *moved* that I could inspire the courage she spoke of."

"Frank *hit a nerve* in his statement about four whites."

"At times the feedback *stung*, but after thinking about it, it was helpful and positive."

6. *People Are Made Up of Layers*

"Communicating involves *many levels*."

"I discovered I was exposing myself slowly, *revealing the layers*."

"I could try not to concentrate on your authority part and try to *understand the whole* and try to hear under what you're saying."

"It just occurs to me *how complex we all are*. Rick's not just negative, he's not just good. There are *different layers* in all of us."

We have looked here at the group's metaphors by tracing the group's changing language to demonstrate how the tacit awareness, discoverable in the group's root metaphors, developed and became more complex throughout the life of the group. Hence, it can be seen that the group did experience development as a social system. *As the root metaphors changed, the quality of interaction changed.* At first, the group began to see itself in a battle; members felt attacked and defensive. By the end, the "military" language was transformed to reflect the deeper level of interpersonal communication; members could impact (rather than attack) each other with sentiment and meaning. At first, the group was seen as "stuck, lost, unable to move," waiting for direction from the leaders. In session four, the group was seen as "moving ahead," and by the last three sessions, members could see themselves, each other, and the group as a whole experience growth, revealing a sense of expansiveness, not just movement. It was interesting that the group used metaphors that unveiled their own implicit attitude toward language, this vehicle for expression that both reflects and creates experience, and its *assumed* counterpart, silence. At first, language was seen as chaotic and meaningless and silence was seen as oppressive. The "right language" became a norm that people felt they needed to learn in order to be understood. By the end of the group, members felt more empathic and could "hear" each other even when they weren't talking. The group went from feeling that something, some mysterious force, was keeping them separated, to the sense that selves can be partitioned and shared, that members want selves and others to be open and approachable, and finally, to the feeling that disclosure is good, that, in fact, it is the self, not something mysterious, that blocks contact and understanding. Members need to "reach out" and understand the many complicated layers that make up each individual. The members' expressions demonstrate that the group did work toward "overcoming obstacles to valid communication" (Bennis and Shepard, 1956). In light of our earlier discussion of group development theories, we can see that the group did, in fact, "develop" both in terms of members' stance toward the leaders and the overcoming of obstacles to interpersonal communication. In the early sessions (Phase 1), the group's dependency on the leaders for direction can be seen in the metaphors of oppression/salvation; silence is large and oppressive, something is trying to dominate, and the group needs something to break through the separation. In the later sessions (Phase 4), the leaders were seen more as active members. Members took responsibility to further interpersonal communication: understanding self and others can be blocked by self, we can help each other grow, and members impact each other. Members achieved a more complex understanding of one another: people are made up of layers.

In a sense, then, it can be seen that the group came to realize that they could be creators of their own social reality, that if human understanding and contact were to occur, it would be because of their choice and by their effort. The group eventually had an awareness of each other's potential richness. They sensed that they, not just the facilitators, could impact each other in a powerful way. Perhaps, most importantly, they noticed changes in one another; they "saw" transformations and, with this realization, an important accompanying realization is not far behind: I can change, i.e., choose, myself.

Within the flux of social reality, it is possible to get a coherent picture of social dynamics by looking at the group's root metaphors. Social order and structure is not pre-ordained, as some theories of development would lead us to believe, but it is *achieved* and social change begins with metaphor. Social action achieves form through the metaphors and paradigms in actors' heads (Turner, 1974).

By looking at group members' "key expressions" (Black, 1962) and concepts, one can trace the root metaphors and perceive how the group is constructing its reality in its own language. Initially, the metaphors may be multi-vocal, with many meanings linked to a core meaning as it relates to a basic human dilemma of that social group. It then takes on a "steering function"² for future action and future perceptions (Turner, 1974). Since social reality is continually in flux, it can be misleading to apply theoretical stages onto their experiences. The group's root metaphors give a picture of the group's sense of its own development, the members own *intentionality* as a striving for meaning.

Proposition 3. Metaphorical expressions facilitate interpersonal communication and provide nurturance for group constructs because they invite members to make attributions toward creating common meanings and shared understanding of social reality. To the extent metaphors are holistic and impersonal rather than particularistic, they provide cues for members to create a group construct.

Metaphor can cue descriptive inquiry into social reality rather than evaluative or judgmental inquiry. In this way, metaphor is a catalyst for dialogue, separating the content being communicated from responsibility to act on it. This is especially evident when members are attempting to articulate difficult, intimidating experiences. Metaphorical expressions, in a sense, camouflage powerful, direct feelings while still communicating important information in a less threatening way.

In the existential present of the group experience, members often feel a myriad of sensations simultaneously: love-hate, approach-avoidance,

²As an example of how a group or society's root metaphors can provide a steering function for future action, it can be argued that America's involvement in the Vietnam War can be connected to one root metaphor, the domino theory. Once one begins to see Communism taking over countries, causing them to topple one after another, like dominos, one is left with no choice but to stop this evil momentum.

comfort-fear, unselfish curiosity-selfish defensiveness, etc. Often literal, explicit language is handicapped in expressing members' intentions. Feelings cannot be captured. The moment a feeling is explicitly stated, it feels only partially true. Metaphor has a transcendent function, capable of going beyond present limits of explicit language. Perhaps the power of metaphor is its inherent ambiguity. It invites members to add their own meaning to a proposed metaphor, or to construct their own metaphors that more accurately depict their experience.

Individuals in the early stages of a learning group might feel a sense of dependency and helplessness, perhaps a sense of terror and an almost primal sense of outrage at the leader for not meeting dependency needs. Too frightening to recognize or address directly, members often talk about the experience metaphorically. Witness this exchange that occurred in an early session of one laboratory group:

Ron: I feel like we're wandering here. It's like we're on a ship with no rudder.

Dick: This ship's got no rudder or sails. We're going in a million directions.

Ann: We need a captain.

Amy: I felt last time like I was in a sea of strange faces, but this time I feel a little more at ease. It could be because I've gotten to know something about most of you.

In this exchange, it can be seen how the proposed metaphor of "group as rudderless ship" became a stimulus for others to elaborate and add their own meanings. "The ship" metaphor cued different associations for each member; it developed multi-vocal meaning, but gave members an opportunity to talk about the same experience. "Ship" becomes a group construct, and while it encourages descriptive projection and mapping, it allows members to safely talk about a threatening experience. At this point in the group's life, it is easier to discuss a ship without a captain than it is to confront the leader for not steering the group. Perhaps members were not even fully consciously aware of anger toward the leader. But they are aware of what happens to a ship with no rudder. Following this exchange, as Amy expanded the ship metaphor with her associated attribution about feeling in a "sea of strange faces," members began to address more directly the issues of getting to know more about each other and feeling more comfortable in the group.

Proposition 4. To the extent that metaphor captures powerful emotional feelings in a way that explicit language is incapable, it provides face-saving ways to talk about important experience.

In the last session of one T-group, members were expressing their experiences of ending the group, reflecting on the members' impact upon one another and the process of "saying goodbye." For 40 minutes the group talked about trying (unsuccessfully) to arrange a picnic with one another, when the facilitator suggested that they were unable to admit that the group was going to end. After a long silence, various members asked Valerie to offer her impressions of them and her feelings about the group experience. Witness

that for Valerie this powerfully emotional experience was too difficult to address directly:

- Marilyn: Valerie doesn't seem to want to talk about this.
 Solomon: If this is like death, there is a process we should be aware of.
 Valerie: At a funeral, I don't view the body (Valerie is not looking at anyone, but staring at the floor throughout the entire session).
 Solomon: I feel I've connected with just about everybody here in some way,
 Frank: Now is your chance.
 Solomon: I feel I've connected with just about everybody here in some way, some on different levels. I know some more than others.
 Silence.
 Marilyn: I've really enjoyed getting to know you, Valerie. (Valerie, still looking at the floor, addresses Frank, a musician who had said in an earlier session that he feels uncomfortable touching people).
 Valerie: I was thinking about Frank. You said touching was a new thing for you. I always think musicians are friendly. I went and saw this jazz group Saturday night. Even though the player didn't touch me physically, he touched me with his eyes and his music. I thought it was strange that touching is a new behavior for you. I don't know how you could be a musician who doesn't touch.

Indirectly, through metaphor, Valerie was saying that it was painful for her to face the end of the group and in a sense have these members "die" out of her life. She cannot look at members directly and say how she experienced them. But instead of talking about the suffering involved in separation, she mentions how she feels when she attends funerals as if to say: "Having this group die is like going to a funeral, and at funerals I don't even look at the body and so right now I'm looking at the floor because I can't bear to look at your faces for the last time and recognize that I won't see you again."

When she does choose to speak about intimate feelings for someone in the group (Frank), she does so metaphorically. Valerie cannot tell Frank directly: "Frank, you really touched me in this group." Rather, she addresses her sentiments by telling him how deeply she was touched by a musician who reminded her of Frank. Her experience with the musician is a metaphor that defines the principal subject, the quality of her relationship with Frank.

At the end of the semester, Valerie turned in a paper in which she recalled this session, the group asking her to engage in farewells and their unhappiness with her apparent unresponsiveness. She relates how language was inadequate in summing up her feelings:

At the last group session I felt that everyone wanted last minute feedback. People expressed that they would like feedback from me... I couldn't come up with anything off the top of my head that I felt would be adequate.... I did not feel I could give quality responses in few sentences that could total up my experiences from this group.

However, through metaphors, Valerie told the group in a very rich way what she had been unable to suppress into "a few sentences." Indeed, in com-

municating significant emotional experiences, metaphors may be one of the most powerful modes of expression available in our language system.

Proposition 5. Metaphors are generative³ when they provide new, invitational ways for members to see each other.

Proposition 6. To the extent that members propose generative metaphors that become salient when connecting needs arise, the group will move to a more advanced stage of development and a deeper level of contact.

Proposition 7. Proposing a generative metaphor is a safe way to test for new consensus.

Interventions made at the level of metaphor can facilitate a more expansive, richer learning for a group than interventions made at the level of explicit language. Explicit language is binary communication. It can polarize and encourage a coalescing of one view; one is encouraged to either agree or disagree with an explicit interpretation, overlooking complexities. By providing alternative metaphors for a way to see a given individual or event, one can encourage a more expansive, complex vision, with a multi-vocal meaning, offsetting the natural human tendency to resolve ambiguity and paradox even at the risk of oversimplification.

Transforming individuals' views of a previously common understanding of reality involves the making of a new underlying metaphor, or a "generative metaphor." It is through the making of a new "generative metaphor" that we come to see things in new ways. Schon (1979) relates generative metaphor to frame restructuring in that it requires that individuals engage in co-inquiry, an immersion in the process, re-setting a problem, cognitively attending to new features, and re-naming and re-grouping these features.

Although metaphors are at once tacit and often outside of our explicit awareness, they represent a special way of seeing, a way of selecting and naming "facts" that can cause us to ignore or distort what we take in. In this sense, we are prone to making "normative leaps" in our sense-making process. We begin to pre-select "facts" that guide our definition of reality. Generative metaphor facilitates the learning of new knowledge and the building of a new sense of reality. Through generative metaphor, one can experience frame expansion to include new awarenesses. Generative metaphor is often useful in overcoming resistance to learning because it begins to address difficult subjects indirectly.

Petrie (1979) proposes that in confronting radically new knowledge, an anomaly is created, an experience that is outside one's frame; when this

³Donald Schon (1979) originally proposed the term "generative metaphor." For him, it means an alternative metaphor that allows for frame re-structuring when frame conflict exists. As our example will show, we extend the meaning to include a proposed metaphor that frames socially constructed reality in a new, more complex way.

is presented metaphorically, relating the unfamiliar to a more familiar domain, learning is facilitated. Immersion in the experience, active thought experimentation, testing, and correcting began to create an expansion of cognitive frame. Thus, for a young science student trying to understand the structure of the atom, the metaphor "the atom is a solar system" would be useful. The student might begin to "see" neutrons and electrons revolving around a gravitational center and, thus, this becomes for the student a generative metaphor. He or she may engage active thought processes enough to allow a new understanding of the atom.

Some awarenesses are difficult to actualize because of prejudices and a tendency to stereotype. In effect, stereotype and prejudice are forms of simplified or over-used metaphors, the habit of seeing many objects as if they are one and a sense that experiences or objects fit into one frame. In this sense, our notion of generative metaphor really involves re-generating, putting life back into a world that by encrusted habit, we have begun to see in a simplified, reified way.

This example involves Jon, a member who in one of the late sessions (the tenth of 12 sessions) received a good deal of negative feedback from group members. This was a culmination of some negative feelings members had felt toward Jon. At this point in group life, Jon was seen by most members of the group as negative, as one who easily rejects ideas and theories and rarely supports anything. Most of his contributions in the group were criticisms of others and their ideas. In the tenth session, members began to tell Jon that they experienced him as rebellious and rejecting. Below are a number of comments made by members in that session:

"I wish you'd stop being so negative."

"You reject things too quickly."

"With you things go in one ear and out the other."

"I wish you'd make a strong statement that's not a reaction against something."

"You just reject theories completely."

In the following session (the eleventh session), Valerie began the group by telling an alternative story of Jon and proposed a new, generative metaphor for how she sees him. Others began to re-frame their view of "Jon the rebel." She rejected the group's overall negative image of Jon and she recalled an event very early in the group's history (session four) when Jon had shared a story about his handicapped sister, Sharon. He had told the group that day how much he loves Sharon and how he refuses to see her as handicapped.

Valerie: I have an agenda. Does anyone have anything to start?

It was prompted by Saturday and I hope I make it through it all. We talked about Jon's negativity. I heard a position from Jon when he spoke of his sister. After I left Saturday I was by myself and I cried for three hours. I want to show you a picture. (She hands Jon a picture.) There is a little more to the reason why, when I hear you talk about your sister the way you do.

These are my nephews, Jon, when they were newborn. I was responsible for naming Cory. The other one is Cameron. They were one year old when my sister moved to Cleveland. Cameron was the more active of the two twins. Cameron fell through a third floor window when he was 18 months. He suffered lots of damage. He is now mentally retarded.

I went to see him while he was in the Cleveland Clinic. It didn't bother me too much. My sister moved back to Illinois. I have a picture of him after the fall. His face is flat. His right eye is smaller. Two years ago I finally went to see Cameron. He looked pretty good. Cory took a protective role to help his brother out. I thought he was doing good but I found an x-ray of Cameron's head. His right front lobe was totally dark. My sister told me he'd never be normal again.

Jon, what I'm trying to tell you is, I put those pictures away and I tried to forget what happened. Sometimes the group gets down on you for your negativity. But I can't think of one professional who had such a *positive picture of a handicap as you had*. Usually they work from the angle, "Well, he's messed up, we'll do the best we can." But when you spoke of your handicapped sister, it was like, "We're not trying to correct it, we're happy just the way she is." I heard that positive statement. You can have such a positive attitude, you can accept and deal with it. You said she was "like a sheer joy" and I know professionals who don't look at it that way.

If you don't accept Bennis and Shepard's theory, that's fine. But it is very few individuals who can handle a handicapped person as well as you do. In my book, if you want to rebel just to rebel, to reject, in the areas that really count, your tops in that area. Maybe the Lord sent you down to me because I never thought about Cameron lately. I never dig out those pictures. Last week people were hitting you about negativity. It seemed very small to me, if you can love like that.

You described her as a sheer joy and I never heard anyone do that. It reminded me of my own failing. I had a hard time dealing with this handicap. Instead of focusing on a handicap, you focused on the good things about her; how you play with her, how you talk to her. Maybe I need to hear that. They were picking on something very small. It's hard for people to express that love. It seems so natural for you and I think the group missed that part of you. Most professionals take the negative angle: "Maybe he can be rehabilitated," etc. But you love her as she is. No one has ever come across as you did, describing your sister as a "sheer joy," not saying "let's rehabilitate her," but "I love her as she is." It's very few people I can talk to about this because it is a very sore subject for me. It was difficult to talk to my family because everybody feels guilty. We all shove it under the table. I had been intentionally avoiding my sister, but *I'm now going to try to see Cameron more often*.

Valerie's story had a powerful impact on the group's vision of Jon. She rejected the group's metaphor of Jon as a rebel and offered a new metaphor: Jon as the seer of sheer joy. The result was the group adopted a deeper, more integrated view of Jon. The group had been "selecting facts" congruent with the underlying metaphor of Jon as a rebel. In fact, by group consensus, Jon had become a rebel. With Valerie's proposed generative metaphor, members were invited to see Jon in a new way, and, in fact, a new consensus emerged in the group's view of Jon and Valerie. *Generative metaphor becomes the springboard for the group to make a transition to a deeper level of development*. Witness the conversation of the group following Valerie's story:

Tom: I'm really happy about this. *This support is like support for everyone and now my understanding of Jon is really different.*

- Elizabeth: I think *I understand you (Valerie) better now*, the way you expressed your care for Jon. *I wouldn't have seen* the positive side of Jon had you not shared that.
- Valerie: It's uncanny, It's not easy. I need to have Elizabeth say "yes" to me. I got everyone else's opinion, but *I need Elizabeth's to make it valid*. I don't know why.
- Jon: Valerie, *I see you as completely different*. At first you just talked and talked about anything that was on your mind. I didn't realize you were such a caring person. I used to think you were cold.
- Solomon: It just occurs to me how complex we all are. Jon's not just negative and he's not just good. there are different layers in all of us and *I didn't see that side of Jon* until you pointed it out because you had your own viewpoint. I guess if you really want to know people, you really have to take the extra effort to see all the layers because they are there. I was struck that I just didn't see it and I felt bad... because you showed me something I didn't see and I had been looking.
- Kathy: *What you (Valerie) said helps me*. I always worry about my sister having retarded kids. Maybe I shouldn't worry. It wouldn't be all that bad.
- Rachel: *I was glad to see you (Valerie) expose another layer of yourself*. I'm seeing a very sensitive person. My first reaction to you was that you were hard.

When the group considers a new generative metaphor, members are agreeing to see the intricacies and complexities in each other. Not only is the explicit awareness of Jon changed (in the example above) but the group's tacit awareness of itself is transformed as well. Valerie praised Jon for seeing the beauty in his handicapped sister in spite of the fact that professionals in the field saw only negatives and potential burdens (Valerie: "Jon, instead of focusing on a handicap, you focused on the good things about your sister"). In fact, this is a metaphor for what Valerie was doing for Jon in the group: The group had begun to define Jon as a rebel, as a rejecter. But she refused to "jump on the bandwagon" and see Jon's negatives and handicaps. Seeing Jon's strength is linked to her own strength and inner resource, the availability of that same skill within herself. Her ability to see Jon's caring is an enactment of her own caring for Jon.

Evidence that Valerie's vision was expanded in this experience is illustrated by her new stance toward her own nephew. She is now capable of caring for her nephew, Cameron, in a new way: "Now I see my nephew completely differently... I plan to visit Cameron more often." The group not only began to select different details to support their view of Jon, but also at a visceral level, they began to see a similar richness in Valerie, the teller of the story:

"I understand you, Valerie, completely differently."

"Valerie, I see you completely differently."

"You showed me something I didn't see."

"I was glad to see you (Valerie) expose another layer of yourself. I'm seeing a completely different person."

A group provides a generative metaphor by telling an alternative story (see Table III). Different ways of seeing come together to form an integrating image. Members immersed themselves in the process, not only reflecting on the

Table II. Generative Metaphor: An Alternative Story Becomes Catalyst for Shift in Group's Perception of Its Members

Jon as rebel	--	Jon as seer of sheer joy
Valerie as hard and rambling	--	Valerie as warm and caring

problem, but *experiencing the phenomena of the problem, cognitively mapping new descriptions and details, attending to the new features in their relation* (Schon, 1979). In this sense, the new metaphor is like a new hypothesis that the group experiments with. Members "test out" the new view by immersing themselves in the idea experiment, testing the new metaphor for consensus and the new selection of details for a "good fit" of the topic being considered. This active thought experimentation facilitates re-framing and the learning of radically new knowledge (Petrie, 1979).

Some proposed generative metaphors do not become "generative." Sometimes the group is not prepared to see something in a new way. Perhaps they refuse to consider new frames, or the other proposed selection of details does not fit or map into the object under consideration. In the previous example, the group developed a new view of Jon because the members were prepared to consider it. Had the proposal been made at an earlier time, before the group was finished seeing the negative side of Jon, the alternative view may not have gained consensus. Hence, generative metaphors are like bone or skin grafts, some "take" and some do not. Just as the body "accepts" a potential graft when the conditions are right, the group will achieve a new consensus when the conditions are right to re-order perceptions around a new generative metaphor.

The group will provide generative metaphors for itself as needed. When the group is prepared to move to a new phase, it will achieve consensus for a new generative metaphor. In effect, a marked change in group development is a generative metaphor. In this sense, the group is like a self-regulating organism that provides its own seeds for growth as needed.

Proposition 8. As a self-regulating organism, the group provides for itself a generative metaphor when difficult topics are being considered and when radically new knowledge needs to happen.

There is a human tendency to deflect certain phenomena in the world, to build up encrusted habits and resistances. In order to make the world safe for ourselves, we often must block out parts of the world that might threaten our tentative security. We diminish parts of experience by carrying over-rationalized abstractions, by making the world flat and one-dimensional, by distorting the world and adapting a rigid stance. However, *to consider difficult phenomena metaphorically can allow one to be more accepting and open.* If one is presented with similar phenomena indirectly, in a related domain, unaware of its relation to the area of rigidity, one is drawn into the paradox and may be free to see complexity. In the analogous domain, one may be liberated from the tendency to distort, to flatten, to

Table IV. Summary of How a "Safe" and "Distant" Topic Becomes a Metaphor that Facilitates Individuals' Understanding of One Another; Movement from Separation to Integration

Topic one:	Different learning groups: Discussion of dividing and mixing learning groups to look at differences in each group and understand intergroup relations.	
Topic two:	Subgroups in large society: Discussion of separate races in society at large, the different life experiences of blacks and whites, the acknowledgment that it takes a deliberate effort to understand the experience of a different racial culture.	
Topic three:	Subgroups within this learning group: Discussion of different life experiences of blacks and whites within the group. Recognition of differences leads to realization:	
	<u>Blacks in the group</u>	<u>Whites in the group</u>
	It takes a special effort for whites to understand our culture.	It is difficult to understand a minority culture.
	<u>Group realization</u>	
	In this group, you must make a special effort to understand racial experiences. New learnings are possible if we appreciate these differences because "There is a wealth of information in this room."	
Topic four:	Individuals in this group: Discussion of individuals' understanding of one another. Acknowledgment that it takes a deliberate effort to understand the other and "there is a wealth of information within each person."	

resort to rigid reactions, and begin to see a more colorful, complex world. In a sense, "wise" teachers have been aware of the power of this technique for centuries. Socrates' dialogues with Sophists and Jesus' presentation of parables to the scribes and pharisees were examples of this metaphorical technique. The presentation of apparent paradox in the metaphorical domain works to seduce the active thinker into considering a part of reality he would never consciously consent to pursue.

Milton Erickson was aware of this method in his work with psychotherapy patients (Haley, 1973). Erickson honors the patient's resistance and works with the patient's neurosis indirectly and metaphorically. Learning becomes transferred to the area of difficulty, and "suddenly" the patient is able to change previously rigid behavior. Erickson discusses a case of a couple having sexual difficulties. Rather than discuss this delicate area directly where patients resist revealing their insecurities, he begins to work on a metaphorical level. He proposes that the couple enjoy a long, leisurely meal, taking time to enjoy the succulence and sweetness of the food rather than rushing through to satisfaction. Together they discuss their eating habits: the man's tendency is to rush to the main course, the woman's preference for leisurely enjoyment of the appetizer, the atmosphere, and pre-meal activities. Their

experimentation begins to have an effect on their sexual relationship: learning is subtly transferred to the area of difficulty and patients begin to change their sexual behavior. Active experimentation and involvement in the metaphorical area helps to overcome resistances in the area of rigidity.

Group members' interventions made at the level of metaphor, facilitated an important and difficult learning for one of the laboratory groups studied. Members were able to "ease" themselves into an awareness of the delicacy of human acceptance and the subtle blocks that inhibit it. We had been struck from the beginning by a wide range of differences that existed in the group. The group consisted of Marilyn, a white woman in her late fifties, Rachel, a black woman in her late fifties, Jon, Tim, and Tom, white men in their early twenties, Kathy, a 24-year-old white woman, Elizabeth and Valerie, two black women in their early twenties, and Solomon, a 32-year-old black man. There were wide differences in age (from 20-60) and fairly equal racial distribution (five blacks and six whites). Coming from such different worlds, these people would have to make a special effort to understand one another, to overcome learned habits and resistances. The following dialogue occurred in the ninth session. Members had spent 3 hours in an all community session with members of five other cocurrent laboratory groups. Afterward, each group convened on its own for what was to be another 3-hour session when a proposal was made to split the group in two and exchange with another of the groups so that they could discover something about intergroup relationships. The group was about to separate and meet with another group. However, the facilitator voiced concern about the lack of contact and substantial dialogue between members and their hesitancy to talk directly to each other about other conflict issues that were present, but not addressed, the previous two weeks. With this intervention, he disrupted the group's virtual consensus to disband and presented them with a paradox.⁴

- Frank (WM): I could go along with splitting groups to learn about subgroups. It could be interesting. My preference is to keep the group together. This group hasn't gotten down to work today. I was thinking if people want to talk about subgroups, we already have subgroups in this room. I don't think it is an accident that four white people went to lunch together,
- Darlyne (BF): You've piqued my curiosity.
- Solomon (BM): How can we break up now?
- Tom (WM): You've addressed something here — this major thing you brought up. I'd like to address this as a group.
- Tim (WM): In light of the evidence presented by the prosecution, we should stay here and talk.
- Valerie (BF): Okay, let's talk about lunch together. I wasn't invited.

⁴The above codes are used to point out the gender and racial dynamics in the group: WM = white male, WF = white female, BM = black male, and BF = black female.

- Jon (WM): Yeah, you were.
 Valerie (BF): No, I wasn't. I didn't hear it.
 Tom (WM): Everybody was invited.
 Marilyn (WF): I didn't hear it either. Do you have something against tall people?
 Tim (WM): Just old people. . . . That's the humor coming out that you wanted.
 Tom (WM): I just said I wanted to go to McDonald's. I wasn't trying to break off.
 Solomon (BM): (The only black male) I went alone. I don't know how groups formed. I didn't go to lunch.
 Valerie (BF): I notice all the blacks are sitting next to each other on one side of the room right now.
 Solomon (BM): You brought this up, Frank. It seems like you're saying if another black man was here, I'd go to lunch with him.
 Jon (WM): I think your perceived patterns are all wrong. It's just the same subgroups that formed last Saturday.
 Tim (WM): That's right. We four went to lunch together last time.
 Marilyn (WF): I was surprised at the split.
 Tom (WM): Did you hear our interchanges before lunch?
 Solomon (BM): It wasn't bonding. I was driving by what I wanted to do in terms of eating.
 Jon (WM): Right. I'm not fond of chili. As soon as Kathy said, "Let's go to McDonald's" I said, "Let's go."
 Kathy (WF): I didn't think it was a big issue.
 Valerie (BF): I listened to Tim's comment about wanting a lettuce and tomato special, but like goes with like. Not just here. I noticed in college with my two white roommates. I was invited as a tag-along. It doesn't mean it was devious, but like just goes with like.
 Kathy (WF): The other way, too. Black goes with black.
 Valerie (BF): Not "white," "like."
 Jon (WM): If we have another luncheon, I'll invite you. A person is a person.
 Valerie (BF): You just tended to follow together; it wasn't a conscious decision.
 Tom (WM): I was insulted by what Frank said. I grew up in an integrated neighborhood.
 Frank (WM): It was a simple observation. What's so insulting?
 Tom (WM): I knew I was the catalyst for going to McDonald's. I feel I'm at the point of this.
 Solomon (BM): You said it was "no accident," implying it was purposeful. I was struck that there were two groups and I didn't go with either one either time. You might all feel a certain bond with each other. I feel more of a bond with a black because of history.
 Valerie (BF): I'm dying to say something to Tom. You said you were raised in an interracial area. Well, I wasn't. I actively tend to seek out black people. I actively seek out people who I think are like me. It takes a while to get to know people. With Frank there was a totally different feeling about him at first than I have today. I was raised around all black music, all black people. College was a culture shock for me.
 Darlyne (BF): Tim, Valerie, and Rachel have different perceptions of reality.
 Solomon (BM): I have feelings about being the only black man in the whole class. It's not the greatest thing in the whole world. I have feelings about it every time I come to class. I don't know if anyone else here has ever been in a group where they were the only one

of their race. It's hard for a black person to get through that. Valerie mentioned the first day she came in and spanned the room looking for another black. It's not negative, it is just the way we identify with each other. There is a difference, definitely. I think the rest of you should realize we have that difference. Maybe you'll understand us better when we come in here.

Valerie (BF): But if you're in the majority, it is difficult to understand the minority. You want something you can identify with. I lived only with blacks for 18 years and we were close knit. The only time I'd see a white person was at the grocery store. I feel it when I go to class. How about you, Elizabeth?

Elizabeth (BF): Yes I feel it. I feel it where I work, too. Blacks aren't supposed to be professionals; I'm known as the "black girl in the office."

Solomon (BM): I grew up in a black community. It's not a great thing for races to isolate themselves. Interaction is learning. Blacks are exposed to more white culture. I don't know if white people get that about blacks. I don't think they have to make an effort to really get to know us. A lot about the black experience is very unpleasant. . . . That's a large part of me and what I've come out of.

Frank (WM): Does that mean that we in this group have to make a special effort to understand you?

[This was the first attempt to begin to relate the issue of interracial understanding metaphorically to interpersonal understanding in the group].

Solomon (BM): Generally. . . there is something unique to me that is black and male and. . . if you want to understand me, that's the only way to do it. I takes an intensity of effort.

Frank (WM): What does it feel like for others to hear Solomon say this?

Tim (WM): I never saw it like that before. But I felt a little riled when he said it is up to me to get to know his culture better. I don't feel like it's my responsibility to go out and search out these cultures.

Valerie (BF): It was tough for me in the white culture, a real risk. Like learning to drive was a big thing for me, but I stuck with it, filling out insurance forms was a risk. Going to OSU with two white roommates was a risk, but I stuck with all those things. I had never even heard of the Rolling Stones.

Tim (WM): But those examples aren't risks, they're requirements. Things you think are really big and important, to me are really very natural.

Frank (WM): That's the point.

[The group begins to focus on this issue. The fact that Tim and Valerie are of different races becomes a metaphor for their individual world views. What is a risk for Valerie is natural for Tim. Making an effort to understand another's culture is a metaphor for striving to understand another individual].

Valerie (BF): If you're a middle class suburban family, everybody has a car, it is natural for you to drive. No one in my family has a car. So I had to go to Higbee's downtown and pay \$48 a lesson to learn how to drive and it was a big deal when I bought the car and insurance forms, that was a big deal in the white community. My car was totaled in a white neighborhood. The guy who hit me was white. I was afraid they'd try and get me and trick me out of my money. I was afraid they'd get together and insist I didn't have my glasses on and say it was my fault.

- Darlyne (BF): It makes more sense now why it seems like a risk for you to do those things. It was gutsy, innovative, as opposed to just hearing somebody got a car, hearing that it's difficult to go to college.
- Tim (WM): I guess it's a difference in perceptions. I think it is natural to go to college, it is natural to get a license and to do insurance forms. To me it is no big deal. To you it is difficult.
- Frank (WM): That's the line of thinking I was trying to pursue; you can't imagine someone not knowing the Rolling Stones or being shocked by all the whites at OSU. Things that are big risks for some people aren't for you.
- Solomon (BM): Would it be natural for you to go to an all black college?
 Tim (WM): Coming here was a different experience. I had never been in a community with so many blacks . . . I don't look at Caucasian people from a different viewpoint. I do definitely feel more comfortable with white people, here and at lunch . . . we had a lot of laughs together.
- Valerie (BF): Sometimes it can be difficult to accept another person's culture, not changing someone else's culture, but accepting it and dealing with it as it is.
- Tom (WM): This conversation highlighted for me that there is a wealth of information in this room.
- Frank (WM): Is there anyone else here who wishes that someone else in the room understand them better?
- Elizabeth (BF): Sometimes I'm not sure people understand me. It would help if people ask me questions if they want to understand me.

[Now others in the group begin to discuss the need to *make an effort* to understand one another].

- Elizabeth (BF): I don't understand Kathy very well, so I don't know how much she really understands me. I guess we both could talk more in the group and understand each other. A lot of things Solomon says are powerful understanding statements. I don't know if he understands me because I don't say that much.
- Kathy (WF): I heard you say you didn't understand me . . . I wonder how . . .
- Elizabeth (BF): I guess if I talked up more you'd understand me better . . .
- Kathy (WF): I don't think talk is the only thing that makes you get to know someone.
- Marilyn (WF): I don't really know you either, Elizabeth. You said you see me as the authoritative mother. I don't know how to get past that.
- Elizabeth (BF): You've said authority things that I've taken offense to. I could try not to concentrate on the authority part and try to understand the whole and try to hear what you're saying under that.
- Rachel (BF): I feel we've been more related with each other today, especially Kathy. I was pleased to have your input.
- Tom (WM): Nice things happened today.
- Elizabeth (BF): It's been meaningful for me to share and receive feedback—to know how I impact others.
- Valerie (BF): We all should do more about the understanding part, what we're looking for from other people. I don't know how Tim feels about understanding me. We all need to delve into that.

In this exchange, some members of the group were able to achieve a new level of understanding of each other. If the initial intervention had been more direct and literal, for example: "I really think the group should try to

understand each other so you can reach a new level of interpersonal contact," it probably would not have been a catalyst for these new awarenesses and, in fact, might have met resistance. However, statements about the racial differences in society are safer areas to explore and led to statements about racial differences in the room and the effort it takes to understand these differences became a metaphor for interpersonal understanding. The group was more able to see each other in a new way (see Table IV).

Empathic understanding between individuals involves appreciating each other's metaphors and the "systems of associated common places" (Black, 1962) that lie behind them. In this example, Tim could not understand Valerie's behavior until he understood the connotations behind her metaphor that "taking driving lessons was like a big risk." Valerie's feelings of riskiness seemed foreign to Tim who saw such actions as "natural." Until he understood the different systems of connotations, he could not understand Valerie and what it is like for a young black woman in a white man's world for the first time. He could not appreciate her terror.

We have chosen here to study the process by which a group constructs its own social reality and interprets events and actions, by looking at the group's own language. We are studying the group members naming their world, how new, unfamiliar events and actions are given language, and thus *become* familiar and meaningful. Language gives status, recognition, and meaning to the world and is essential to the maintenance and development of the self which can then act in a world that makes sense. Language also dissects and limits the experienced world by providing, *a priori*, a lens that can rigidly dictate meaning and order perception, pre-coding the flux of experience.

By paying attention to an individual's or group's own language, one can discover both tacit and explicit metaphors. Metaphor is an essential clue to the core processes of cognition and understanding, especially the process of making sense of the unfamiliar, because it proposes to understand or explain by comparison. Metaphor is an invitation to see an object as if it were something else, focusing on seemingly unrelated characteristics, offering a new perception. The comparison might enrich the meaning of the world if it is taken as an interaction of systems of thoughts and connotations, producing a meaning larger than its two subjects. Like bone grafts, some metaphors "take" while others do not; some become catalysts for new ways of seeing or begin the process of building a new consensus. Metaphor can communicate meaning when no explicit language is available, especially in regard to complex ambiguous experience.

We have tried to show here the power of metaphor as filter, a way of seeing and organizing the world, a creator of new contextual meaning. Metaphor can be more capable than literal language of capturing emotional, cognitive experience, metaphors are clues to the underlying paradigm of

a given social system and indicators of changes and development in that system's vision of its reality, and metaphor can be seen as frame-expanding, a facilitator of radically new knowledge. Metaphor at once shapes our perception of the world and is capable of transforming our selves and our world.

In terms of the mode of inquiry we have engaged in here, we have chosen to reflect on established theories of group development that populate the literature. Many of the themes presented in this group's root metaphors parallel these theories. "The group is in a battle" followed by "the group has restored order" resembles the forming, storming, norming, etc. theories (Tuckman, 1956); "The group is a deep container" and its consequence, "the group can overwhelm and swallow" are strikingly consistent with Slater's (1966) theory of the group as mother that threatens to envelope and overcome individual ego boundaries. This raises a question as to whether this mode of inquiry has led to any further discoveries.

We would like to address this from two perspectives, although they both point to the same phenomena: the human effort to find meaning within an evolving social structure that sometimes seems to subvert that effort. Freud (1961) was one of the first to recognize the process by which civilization stands in opposition to the individual, and the individual with his or her aggressive instincts threatens to disintegrate human bonds. Man internalizes a "voice" to which he or she submits and surrenders impulses, a voice called "conscience." Berger and Luckman (1967) recognized that the social world we construct begins to act back on man, as if it were a world not of human making. The product (society) begins to constrain the producer.

What can be seen in this study of the group's language, specifically, its metaphors, is how members maintain meaning and understanding in the context of their self-constructed civilization that threatens to "swallow" and overwhelm them. When the group created its view of Jon as negative rebel, the perception began to take on the character of facticity; the group's view had become reified. Almost all of Jon's contributions were now seen as "typical" of Jon the rebel. Valerie's alternative view of Jon, her new "generative metaphor," transformed the group's reality. By looking at this process, one can "see" the evolving, dialectical process of social construction, the striving of individuals to create new meaning in the face of their subtle enemy: their own fact-making powers. Through metaphor, members can safely test for a new consensus and propose new ways to see the world.

Similarly, the tracing of the root metaphors reveals the process by which the group members begin to take some responsibility for their social world and the quality of their relationships with others. In a sense, this perspective allows one to see members struggling to find their own "voice," a struggle to soften the "automatic," internalized "voice" of a suppressive civilization (Freud, 1961). We can hear the voice of self protesting its submissiveness

and surrender. At first, the group's root metaphors reveal that they perceive "something" trying to contain, overwhelm, and swallow them; some external force is keeping them from understanding and "seeing" one another. Eventually, they begin to perceive their own central role in making and re-making their relationships: it is not some external force, but the self that blocks my understanding of others and my accessibility to others. "Seeing" each other is not a formulaic, pre-ordained process that we either get right or we don't. I and the others are complex, many layered, and there are multiple aspects of self to reveal and behold. "Seeing" is a choice, and metaphorical expansion of awareness is an anti-entropic force, a process that offsets the human tendency to diminish the world and become solipsistic.

Most theories of group development focus on the individual as the basic unit of analysis. We have become accustomed to paying attention to individual language and behavior and indications of personal autonomy. While we pay lip service to the phenomena of the group as a unit developing, we continue to think of "group development" as a collection of individuals developing, becoming more autonomous. We propose here that metaphors can be seen as indices for the *group* as the basic unit of analysis. The group's metaphorical constructions act as paradigms, a set of explicit and implicit theories: the basic assumptions, beliefs, and philosophies which the group is continually constructing for itself and which underlie the logic, the perceptions, the judgments, and the selection and sorting of data. We have become well versed in creating indices for individual development. This is an attempt to propose indices for group development.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

SURESH SRIVASTVA has been Professor of Organizational Behavior in the Department of Organizational Behavior since 1970, serving as Chairman of that Department from 1970-1984 at Case Western Reserve University. Before coming to CWRU he was a Senior Professor from 1962-1969 at the Indian Institute of Management in Calcutta and was Visiting Professor at the Alfred P. Sloan School of Management at MIT from 1966-1967. After receiving his PhD in Social Psychology in 1960 from the University of Michigan and having taught at that University, Professor Srivastva joined the Department of Psychology and the Graduate School of Business Administration at the University of California in Los Angeles where he taught and did research from 1960-1962.

FRANK J. BARRETT is a PhD candidate in Organizational Behavior at the Weatherhead School of Management, Case Western Reserve University. He received his BA in 1975 in Government and International Relations and his MA in 1977 in English from the University of Notre Dame. He is also an active jazz pianist. He has worked with the Cleveland Clinic, University Hospitals (CWRU), General Electric, and municipal and county government agencies. His current research interests include the role of language, metaphor, and myth in group processes and the creative management of conflict.

