Generative Metaphor Intervention: A New Approach for Working with Systems Divided by Conflict and Caught in Defensive Perception*

FRANK J. BARRETT
DAVID L. COOPERRIDER

This article proposes that one way to help a group liberate itself from dysfunctional conflict and defensive routine is through the introduction of generative metaphor. By intervening at a tacit, indirect level of awareness, group members are able to generate fresh perceptions of one another, thereby allowing for the revitalization of the social bond and a heightened collective will to act. After exploring insights into the recent literature on social cognition and selective perception, a case is presented in which generative metaphor was successfully used to help a dysfunctional group build (1) liberated aspirations and the development of hope, (2) decreased interpersonal conflict, (3) strategic consensus around a positive vision for the future, (4) renewed collective will to act, and (5) egalitarian language reflecting a new sense of unity and mutuality in the joint creation of the group's future. Stages of the generative metaphor intervention are discussed, and propositions are developed concerning those factors that will likely enhance the generative potential of metaphor as an agent for group development and organizational change.

INTRODUCTION

Under conditions of intergroup and interpersonal defensiveness, how can an organization engage in dialogue seeking to create a common vision, a positive image of a collectively desired future? This dilemma, which raises many core questions about the dynamics of social cognition, stereotyping, and the mechanisms of awareness, has been faced by many managers and organization development (OD) consultants who have worked with groups paralyzed by anxiety,

defensiveness, and negative attributions. Too often we have failed to understand the nature of human cognition that leads to the formation of negative stereotypes and self-perpetuating attributions. Our efforts to transform defensive routines, when attempted at all, have conventionally been problem focused. However, direct

*Portions of this paper were presented at the 1988 meeting of the National Academy of Management, OD Division, where it was recognized with a "best paper of the year" award.

Frank J. Barrett is an assistant professor in the Department of Administrative Sciences at the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA 93940. David L. Cooperrider is an assistant professor of organizational behavior in the Department of Organizational Behavior in the Weatherhead School of Management at Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH 44106.

efforts to solve such problems often heighten the very problems they attempt to solve: When attempts are made to make people conscious of their negative attributions toward others and of their defensive attributions in relationships, they all too frequently respond by becoming more defensive. How is it even possible then to foster dialogue among competing members of an organization whose impressions and judgments of one another have been well ingrained? We propose in this paper that (1) working at a tacit, indirect level of awareness through constructing a generative metaphor that deliberately fosters formation of new impressions and judgments allows new meanings to be given birth, and (2) building an appreciative context rather than a problem-solving context helps generate the positive affect required for building social solidarity and a renewed capacity to collectively imagine a new and better future.

This article is divided into four sections. First, we explore insights from the recent literature on social cognition and selective perception. Second, we introduce the concept of generative metaphor and argue that such metaphor invites new openings for fresh perception, especially when a deliberately supportive or appreciative environment of inquiry is constructed. Third, we illustrate the use of generative metaphor in a case study on intervention method. Finally, we conclude with a set of propositions about how active yet indirect inquiry into a related domain can liberate a group in ways that more conventional OD problem-solving methods could not begin to effect.

Social Cognition and Selective Perception

Social cognitive psychologists have provided dramatic evidence in the last decade regarding how the availability of information in the memory affects human judgments and the fundamental cognitive processes involved in the acquisition, retention, retrieval, and use of information about others (Hill, Lewicki, Czyzewska, & Boss, 1989). They have shown how people do not easily change their interpersonal theories, assump-tions, expectations, and impressions, even when evidence contradicts them (Cantor & Mischel, 1977; Higgins & McCann, 1984; Hill et al., 1989).

Once judgments and theories about others have been formed, those judgments have a tendency to persevere even in the face of totally discrediting information, especially if one is engaged in forming a causal explanation to account for the impression or theory one has formed (Anderson, Lepper, & Ross, 1980). The simple process of explaining why one has a certain theory about someone may in fact have the unintended consequence of strengthening the impression and making it more resistant to change, even if the information upon which it is based is completely discredited. For example, imagine a situation in which a traditional team-building intervention is being done with a group of managers who are divided by competition, jealousy, and "turfism." A direct intervention, as advocated by many conflict resolution theo-ries, would call for managers to articulate why they see one another as troublesome or problem-atic. Following the perseverance effect in social cognition theory, once one puts forth a causal explanation for one's belief, the belief is actu-ally strengthened. Therefore, if one were to say one sees a co-worker as crabby and unapproachable because the co-worker is self-ish, moody, and insecure, the chances would be greater that, merely because one formed and articulated this causal explanation, one's belief about the co-worker would be stronger. One becomes even more convinced that the co-worker is selfish, moody, and insecure.

What happens when people perform behav-iors contrary to the stereotype we have formed? When people do perceive behavior in one an-other that is inconsistent with the original schemas, they may notice the inconsistency, but it often tends not to alter the original impression. One study (O'Sullivan & Durso, 1984) showed that evidence that disconfirms an impression is noticed and remembered, but the original im-pression itself is not altered. When subjects

were shown information that was atypical of a previously formed stereotype, it actually facilitated their recall of the original stereotype. Seeing a core incongruency may require more information processing, but actually facilitates recall of the original impression. So, for example, imagine again that one has a well-formed image of one's co-worker as selfish, moody, and insecure. Even if the co-worker were to engage in action contrary to this image (e.g., the co-worker offers to take one out to lunch, or makes a large contribution to charity), one would process this atypical information, but the original stereotype would likely remain—and in all probability the negative image would paradoxically be strengthened. One would tend to explain the core incongruency in terms of the stereotype (recall that the act of putting forth an explanation will strengthen the original schema). So, to continue, one might then say to oneself, "He [or she] is only taking me to lunch because he [or she] wants something" or "He [or she] is contributing to charity because of feeling guilty about being so self-oriented." Thus, if we were to appreciate the nature of this dynamic when applied to traditional OD, we would see that many of our activities, such as diagnostic action research or encouraging direct and candid "confrontation meetings" among differing groups, may unintentionally reinforce those very dynamics they seek to amend.

Nobody has synthesized the processes of selective perception better than Goleman (1985), who argues that (1) the mind often protects itself against anxiety by dimming awareness, (2) this cognitive process creates a blind spot, a zone of blocked attention and self-deception, and (3) such blind spots occur at every level of system, from individuals to groups, to organizations, and to societies. When people are threatened with anxiety, there is a strong human tendency to deny parts of the world. When, for example, one feels threatened and begins to prepare oneself for a stressful event, one tends to bias many pieces of information as confirming the appraisal of threat (Beck, 1967). The active denial

of the world to allay the threat of anxiety takes many forms, including avoided associations, numbness, flattened response, dimming of attention, constricted thought, memory failure, disavowal, and blocking through fantasy (Horowitz, 1983).

Similarly, it appears that one's present affective state or mood largely determines what one is able to perceive, learn about, or recall from memory. According to the work of Alice Isen and her colleagues, mood, cognition, and action form an inseparable triad and tend to create feedback loops of amplifying intensity. Studies have demonstrated, for example, that people who are "primed" into a negative mood state are able to recall significantly fewer pleasant memories of their past than are people in a positive mood state (Isen, Shalker, Clark, & Karp, 1978). Likewise, it has been shown that a negative mood state cues a person to think about negative things (Rosenhan, Salovey, & Hargis, 1981) and increases a person's capacity for perceiving mood-congruent or negative things in self and others (Bower, 1981; Isen & Shalker, 1982).

Hence, what we see from this important research is the natural human tendency to form judgments and notice traits in others based on previously formed categories or on current mood states. Further, these categories and mood states are often primed and made ready to guide perception through social interaction. This process of cognitive cueing, which is part of the natural process of enculturation or socialization, often remains outside of a person's or group's awareness. Further, once impressions and judgments are formed, as in the halo effect or pygmalion dynamic in the classroom (see Jussim, 1986, for a review), they tend to persevere. Furthermore, when the context is marked by feelings of fear, threat, anxiety, and protectiveness, the dynamics of perception become even more entrenched (Goleman, 1985). Under conditions of fear and anxiety, individuals and groups will dim awareness and deny what is going on in the world. Hence, people often guard against seeing the very things that might allay their fears. To

understand this paradox is to understand one of the central challenges of working with systems divided by conflict and caught in defensive perception.

Generative Metaphor For Opening Perception

With all these forces acting to constrict aware-ness and attention in ways that people seem ill-prepared to control, under what conditions can their well-ingrained interpersonal perceptions be expanded? If attention is prefocused under conditions of anxiety, and if people have formed judgments of one another that persist in spite of inconsistent behavior and discrediting informa-tion, what process can be engaged to enhance and enrich interpersonal perception? How, as OD practitioners, can we intervene to help groups out of self-perpetuating defensive strategies without the direct and often reinforcing con-frontation of these defensive routines?

To answer these questions, we discuss the concept of generative metaphor (Schon, 1979; Srivastva & Barrett, 1988) as a way of support-ing the cultivation of fresh perceptions and the acquisition of new schemas of others. But first, it is important to discuss a number of important properties or principles of metaphor.

Principles of Metaphor

1. Metaphor is an invitation to see the world anew. Metaphor presents a way of seeing some-thing as if it were something else. Metaphor transfers meaning from one domain into another and thereby enriches and enhances both do-mains. Metaphor acts as a way of organizing perceptions and provides a framework for se-lecting and naming characteristics of an object or experience by asserting similarity with a different, seemingly unrelated object or experi-ence. The subsidiary subject of the metaphor organizes perceptions of the principal subject by selecting and emphasizing certain details and 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 more on the delicate, beautiful nature of human beings blooming to fruition, going through season-like changes. Metaphors are, therefore, filters that screen some details and emphasize others. In short, they "organize our view of the world" (Black, 1962). Further, metaphor acts as a subtle transaction between contexts, as an entire set of characteristics can almost spontaneously be transformed from one set to another to create new contextual meaning. For example, in the metaphor "man is a wolf," my picture of man acquires more colorful detail: I now see him hairy and on all fours, saliva dripping from his mouth, with piercing and ferocious eyes and long fangs awaiting his prey. Also, in the interaction between domains, the wolf begins to take on human qualities: I see the wolf as purposeful and intent, having feelings and thoughts.

Because metaphor can instantaneously fuse two separate realms of experience, it is transfor-mative. As Robert Nisbett suggests, metaphor is powerful because of its capacity of semantic and cognitive reconstruction:

> Metaphor is, at its simplest, a way of proceed-ing from the known to the unknown. It is a way of cognition in which the identifying qualities of one thing are transferred in an instantaneous, almost unconscious flash of insight to some other thing that is by remote-ness or complexity unknown to us. The test of essential metaphor ... is not any rule of gram-matical form, but rather the quality of seman-tic transformation that is brought about. (Nisbett & Ross, 1985, p. 4)

The potential for semantic transformation is what makes artists, poets, leaders, and scientists alike so attuned to the power of metaphor, and aware of its potential for directing perception, enriching awareness, and transforming the world. Good metaphors provoke new thought, excite us with novel perspectives, vibrate with multivocal meanings, and enable people to see the world with fresh perceptions not possible in

any other way.

2. Metaphor facilitates the learning of new knowledge. Petrie (1979) proposes that in confronting radically new knowledge, metaphor can be useful. As anomaly is created, an experience is apprehended that is outside one's present frame. It is through immersion in the experience, active thought experimentation, testing, and correction that expansion of cognitive frames begins to occur. Thus, for the young science student who is cognitively blocked in trying to grasp the structure of the atom, the metaphor "the atom is a solar system" could indeed be useful. The student might begin to "see" neutrons and electrons revolving around the gravitational center. He or she might then engage in such active thought experimentation long enough to allow a new understanding of the atom to emerge.

3. Metaphor provides a steering function for future actions and perceptions. Social order and social structure are not preordained, but are achieved through members' construction of reality. Social action achieves form through the metaphor in actor's heads (Turner, 1974). As Pepper (1942) pointed out, "root metaphors" provide the social group with a whole set of categories through which the social group interprets the world. For example, in the 17th century the universe was seen as a machine, which effected not only the activities of physical science, but whole fields of moral philosophy and human psychology. In the 19th century, for example, Marxist theory operated according to an embryonic metaphor. Social orders were seen as proceeding from the "womb" of preceding others, with transformation periods likened to the "birth" of a new order. The state of capitalism was seen as carrying "the seeds" of its own destruction. These metaphors spawn categories and terms that drive people to initiate actions congruent with the metaphors informing their beliefs. One example of how a group's or society's root metaphors can provide a steering function for future action is that of the United States's involvement in the Vietnam War: It can be argued that its involvement was connected to the cognitive categories that emerged from one root metaphor—the domino theory. Once the U.S. began to see Communism taking over countries, causing them to topple one after another, policy makers were left with little choice but to stop this "evil" momentum.

4. Metaphor invites active experimentation in areas of rigidity and helps people overcome self-defeating defenses. Milton Erikson's work in psychotherapy provides perhaps the best example of this principle (see Haley, 1973). Erikson's approach is to circumvent the patient's areas of resistance and to work with the neurosis indirectly and metaphorically. Learning becomes transferred to the area of difficulty and "suddenly" the patient is able to change previously rigid perceptions and behavior. Erikson discusses, for example, the case of a couple having sexual difficulties. Rather than confront this delicate area directly where patients resist revealing their insecurities, he begins to work at the 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 rush through to satisfaction. Together they discuss their eating habits: The man's tendency to rush to the main course of meat and potatoes; the woman's preference for leisurely enjoyment of the appetizer, the atmosphere, the pre-meal activities, and the preparation. Erikson then deliberately instructs the couple to engage in another meal and this time to prolong each course and attend to their positive sensations. Such experimentation begins to have an effect on their sexual relationship: Learning is subtly transferred to the area of difficulty and the couple begins to change their behavior. Defensive routines are not confronted head on; they are circumscribed. Problems are not identified, discussed, analyzed, or even challenged. In fact, Erikson is careful to avoid such discussion because the couple, as he explains, are least in need of further "education" into the unfortunate mess their lives are in. They already know about it. Thus, it is active experimentation and

involvement in the metaphorical domain that helps the couple overcome resistances in the area of rigidity. Imagine, for example, what would happen if Erikson used a direct problem-solving approach with the troubled couple. Suppose he were to sit down and face the man and say, "So what seems to be the problem you are having in bed with your wife? We must discover the causes of this dysfunction because it appears you're not making her happy." Such an approach would challenge the man's self-esteem and in all likelihood would trigger defensiveness, insecurity, embarrassment, and painful self-consciousness. Under such conditions of threat, it is unlikely that either person would be open to learning or rational behavior change. Rather, each person would begin to look for reasons and excuses to explain her or his behavior. Perhaps each would even begin to blame the other and possibly experience a worsening of the sexual relationship.

Generative metaphor, then, is an invitation to see anew, to facilitate the learning of new knowledge, to create new scenarios of future action, and to overcome areas of rigidity. There is a subtle, indirect component to generative metaphor. As Nisbett noted, fresh insights are transferred instantaneously, almost unconsciously, bringing about semantic and perceptual changes. In Milton Erikson's clinical practice, areas of resistance are bypassed (in a sense "fooled") only to become the object of sudden transformation.

A CASE STUDY: THE MEDIC INN

The Medic Inn is a 380-room hotel facility with two dining rooms, a bar, several meeting rooms, and a large ballroom. It is owned and operated by the Midwest Clinic Foundation (MCF), a large tertiary care center with a 1000-bed hospital. The Medic Inn was privately owned and operated by a hotel chain until it was purchased by MCF in 1981 to offer lodging and food to patients and their families. MCF recently expanded and built a new, large clinic facility on the east side of the hotel, and with the expansion the hotel was also renovated: A large, elegant lobby was built, the dining room was renovated, and the top floors were converted into elegant, high-priced rooms especially designed to serve foreign dignitaries.

While changes were made in the physical facilities, MCF retained the managers of the hotel to operate it. As one MCF administrator put it: "We're not in the hotel business and we really know nothing about running one, so we decided to keep the people who were on board." We were hired in 1984 originally to do a benefit, compensation, and job audit through the Human Resources Division of MCF. As an entry intervention, however, we proposed to do an employee attitude survey. We met with the four top managers of the Medic Inn, and they belatedly agreed to our proposal to conduct a survey of all 260 employees.

The managers of MCF were suspicious of us from the beginning. It soon became clear that their suspicion and distrust extended to the Medic Square Hotel Company, the for-profit group of administrators set up by MCF. In conversation with the general manager, it became apparent that he was afraid of losing his job. We conducted an employee attitude survey and continued to work with the group in team-building sessions and by facilitating various task force meetings. What became increasingly clear after almost 14 months of working with the group was that the management group was divided by interpersonal and interdepartmental conflicts and had a history of little cooperation. The four top managers were aware that the administrators of MCF wanted the Medic Inn to become a four-star facility, a designation granted to high-quality hotel and restaurant service facilities. Since the Medic Inn had a long way to go to achieve this status, this goal added pressure to the group. It is difficult in a short case description to give a flavor of the degree of interdepartmental conflict, but we cite a few examples to help clarify the climate.

Among the top four managers, consisting of the general manager, the manager of food and

beverage, the rooms manager, and the accountancy manager, there was a history of backbiting and what they referred to as "sandbagging" one another. When the four held their weekly planning meetings, the meetings were laborious, and they had a difficult time arriving at a decision. Below is one example of the kind of exchange that occurred between them. This dialogue comes from a meeting that occurred approximately two months before the intervention we describe in this article.

John: (general manager): What's changed since we started these regular meetings?

Tim: (manager of food and beverage): Nothing.

Fred: (manager of accounting): I agree. All we do is bicker.

Long pause.

Rick: (manager of rooms): There's more separation between the Food and Beverage Department and the Rooms Department than ever before.

Long silence.

Tim: A year ago we agreed to move toward a four-star status. We've taken care of some of the physical things and it looks nice, but we haven't taken care of the people things. We still don't have a common goal. And before we even try to talk about a common goal, I want to hear a personal commitment from people. I don't feel it, I don't see it. Sometimes I hear people say it. But I wonder how deep people's commitments are to this. I don't know where Rick is.

Rick: Could we keep this discussion on a business level and keep personal relationships out of it?

Tim: The way some of the departments have been run, I'm not sure everybody even wants to be part of this team.

In private conversations, the four managers were even more candid about their frustration with one another and their hostility. One said of the other: "Tim thinks he's better than everybody else. He blasts and sandbags people behind their backs."

Among the next level of managers, 13 middle managers who reported directly to the four top managers, interdepartmental conflict was also evident. This is how some members described the group.

The people are confrontive and insecure. It seems like people are involved in too many power plays instead of just working together. Ron [a food service manager] and Fredricka [a rooms manager] can't even talk to each other. They're supposed to work together to plan the new construction of the 17th floor dining room, and every time they try to discuss something they end up yelling at each other. I think they actually try and make each other look bad.

I think people are jealous of each other here. It seems like food and beverage managers get raises all the time. They get taken care of. We [room managers] are ignored when it comes to raises and promotions.

Members were defensive, and some felt that their efforts to help and cooperate were treated with suspicion and interpreted as intrusions. This frequently led to the withdrawal of energy.

The other day I told Fredricka about the party of 30 we are catering a week from Thursday. I tried to talk to her very carefully and gently. I asked her if there's anything we could do to help. She bit my head off again just like I knew she would. She goes, "Nobody ever tells us anything. You think I don't know how to do my job here or what?" Stuff like that. It makes me want to just avoid her.

The interpersonal tension and competition that existed became an obstacle to people's capacity to generate a vision and strategic plan for the future of the Medic Inn and what needed

to happen to make it a four-star hotel. Most members found it difficult to generate ideas and struggled with a pessimistic response and deficiency orientation.

When managers met to discuss the future plan for the Medic Inn, there was little sense of hope or belief in their own efficacy to create the future. Many members generated passive, cynical accounts, often belying a fear that MCF would withdraw support for any strategy they enacted. As one manager put it:

> MCF has not given us a vision. I don't trust the plan they talk about. They keep calling to get new numbers. That shows how insecure it is. It's a game they keep rewriting.... It will just be a cost decision and they will keep spending it [money] until someday they'll say, "This has gotten out of hand," and I'll be gone.

Members continued to generate scripts of impending doom. During planning sessions, accounts of fear and debilitating thoughts emerged. These versions of constraint and doom operated like depressive cognition (Beck, 1967) and fostered withdrawal from action and responsibility.

> Fred: They've given us a blank check.

> Karl: We get money way too easy. No one rejects anything we ask for. Doesn't that bother anybody? Am I the only one who's bothered by it?

> Rick: I agree. I'm just waiting for the hammer to fall ... I'm afraid they're going to wake up and discover this thing can't work like this. There is no way. They're going to pull the plug on us.

The group needed to engage in dialogue in order to develop consensus about goals and a vision of what is possible in building a four-star, excellent organization. And yet there was an inherent dilemma: How could a group of people divided by competition and turfism engage in dialogue with one another? Further, how could

a group with depressed aspirations talk about how it could become a four-star hotel? When they looked at themselves and at one another, they saw only deficiency and unmet expectations. It was as if the worse was always expected, and had just not happened yet.

As consultants, we were faced with a dilemma: The traditional problem-solving approach to HR/OD would call for us to analyze the dilemmas in the group, feed back the problem themes, and ask the group members to face the issues, and generate solutions.

So ingrained is the problem-solving mentality that most OD consultants and action-researchers scarcely are able to envision alternatives. As Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) have shown, the language of the field continues to be guided by a deficiency model of the world. It is as if the field itself revolved around a root metaphor that says "organizing is a problem to be solved" and therefore OD equals problem solving; to do good action research is to solve "real problems."

So ingrained is this assumption that it scarcely needs documentation. Virtually every definition of OD, especially as it relates to action research, equates the discipline with problem solving, as if problem solving were its very essence. The language of "problem" is pervasive. For example, as French and Bell (1978) define it, "action-research is both an approach to problem solving—a model or paradigm, and a problem solving process—a series of activities and events" (p. 88). In terms of the Bradford, Gibb, and Benne (1964) definition, "It is an application of scientific methodology in the clarification and solution of practical problems" (p. 33). Similarly, Frohman, Sashkin, and Kavanaugh (1976) state that the discipline's essence is "a particular process model whereby behavioral science knowledge is applied to help a client (usually a group or social system) solve real problems and not incidentally learn the process involved in problem solving" (p. 203). Echoing this theme, researchers at the University of Michigan's Institute in Social Research state,

... three factors need to be taken into account in an organization development [action-research] effort: The behaviors that are problematic, the conditions that create those behaviors, and the interventions or activities that will correct the conditions creating the problems. What is it that people are doing or not doing, that is a problem? Why are they doing or not doing these particular things? Which of a large number of possible interventions or activities would be most likely to solve the problems by focusing on why problems exist? (Hausser, Pecorella, & Wissler, 1977, p. 2)

When organizations are approached from the conventional deficiency perspective of the discipline, all properties and modes of organizing are scrutinized for their dysfunctional but potentially solvable problems. According to Levinson (1972), therefore, organizational analysis is done to "discover and resolve these problems.... The consultant should look for experience[s] which appear stressful to people. What kinds of occurrences disrupt or disorganize people" (p. 37). Similarly, French (1969) advises that the OD practitioner look for problems:

Typical questions in data gathering or "problem sensing" would include: What problems do you see in your group, including problems between people that are interfering with getting the job done the way you would like to see it done? And what problems do you see in the broader organization? Such open-ended questions provide latitude on the part of respondents and encourage a reporting of problems as the individual sees them. (pp. 183-185)

To repeat, as consultants to the hotel we were faced with a dilemma: Traditional problem-solving approaches to HR/OD would have called for us to (1) identify the key problems of the group—the "felt needs"—(2) analyze the causes of the problems, (3) feed back the problem themes, and (4) ask the group members to candidly face up to their issues and generate collaborative action plans. We decided that it would be counterproductive to do this. Members already knew about the tensions in the group. They already had multiple logics and compelling theories to explain and justify the current state. In fact, it occurred to us that the last thing the group needed at this point was further education—a more sophisticated education—on the dilemmas and seriousness of their plight. To face these issues and to develop elaborate analyses of the causes did not seem to be productive, and in fact might well have only heightened awareness of the tensions, constrained possible new perceptions of one another, and depressed aspirations even further. As in the myth of the two-headed hydra, we were beginning to believe that any one problem directly eliminated would be quickly replaced by two more. Our task was to break out of the current frame altogether.

Rather than ask the group members to directly face their tension, to become introspective, and to look at themselves and at their own problems, we proposed that they become active inquirers, focusing on a domain outside their own.

In the rest of this section we outline exactly what we did by discussing the four stages in what we now call the Generative Metaphor Intervention Process (GMIP), including (1) journey into metaphor, (2) poeticizing the world, (3) possibility expansion, and (4) return to the original domain.

Step 1: Journey into Metaphor

In an effort to enable the group to break through its ingrained schemas, interpersonal stereotypes, static perceptions, and dimmed awareness to protect against intrusions of anxiety, we proposed a generative metaphor for the organization: That is, we constructed a situation in which the system could creatively focus attention on another domain, in this case that of another organization.

Our choice of metaphor (another organization) was guided by two considerations. First, it

all seeming imperfections and deficiencies at the Tremont to discover those that exhibited fundamental strength and value in terms of the system's people, its management process, its culture, and methods of organization. Deliberately appreciative in nature, the inquiry into the new domain was to revolve around a number of core questions.

1. What were the peak moments in the life of the hotel—the times when people felt most alive, most energized, most committed, and most fulfilled in their involvements?
2. What was it that Tremont's staff members valued most about themselves, their tasks, and the organization as a whole?

3. Where excellence had been manifested, what were the organizational factors (structures, leadership approaches, systems, values, etc.) that most fostered realization of excellence?
4. What were the most significant embryonic possibilities, perhaps latent within the system, that signified realistic possibilities for an even better organization?

The overarching aim of the organizational analysis workshop was to reawaken the Medic Inn management team's "appreciative eye." Building on the philosophy of appreciative organizational inquiry (as outlined in Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987), we emphasized learning

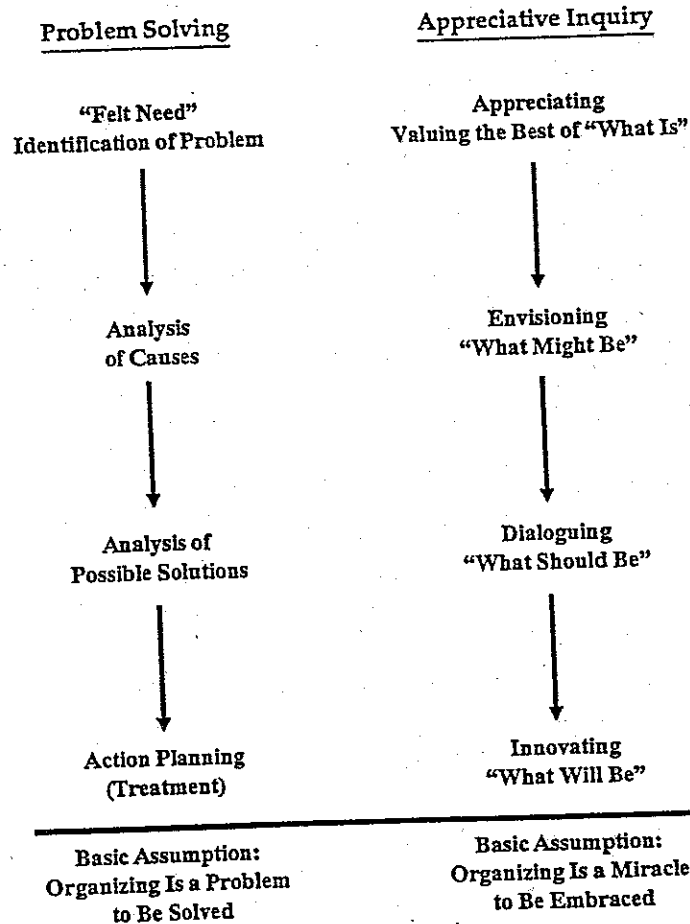| Problem Solving	Appreciative Inquiry
"Felt Need" **Identification of Problem**	**Appreciating** **Valuing the Best of "What Is"**
↓	↓
Analysis **of Causes**	**Envisioning** **"What Might Be"**
↓	↓
Analysis of **Possible Solutions**	**Dialoguing** **"What Should Be"**
↓	↓
Action Planning **(Treatment)**	**Innovating** **"What Will Be"**
Basic Assumption: **Organizing Is a Problem** **to Be Solved**	**Basic Assumption:** **Organizing Is a Miracle** **to Be Embraced**

Figure 1. Training Notes on Appreciative Inquiry

how to perceive organizations as creative con-
structions, as entities that are alive, vital, and
dynamically emergent. More than a method or
technique, the appreciative mode of inquiry was
presented as a way of living with, being with,
and participating in the life of a human system in
a way that draws one to inquire beyond superfi-
cial appearances to the deeper life-generating
essentials and potentials of organizational exist-
ence. The appreciative eye, we proposed, is
what allows one to value that which has funda-
mental value; it allows one to see what Bruner
speaks of as the "immensity of the common-
place," or, in Joyce's reverent phrase, "the
epiphanies of the ordinary" (in Bruner, 1986).

During the training we contrasted the conven-
tional problem- solving model with the stages of
appreciative inquiry (see Figure 1) and did some
skill-building role plays to prepare the group for
appreciative interviewing. Most important, a
context was formed through philosophical dis-
cussion of appreciation as a way of knowing and
relating to the world. The diverse quotations
reproduced below (as quoted in Cooperrider &
Srivastva, 1987) begin to give a flavor of the
spirit we were working to cultivate.

> [Appreciation] thus makes immortal all that is
> best and most beautiful in the world ... it exalts
> the beauty of that which is most beautiful.... It
> strips the veil of familiarity from the world,
> and lays bare and naked its sleeping beauty,
> which is in the spirit of its forms.
>
> **Shelley**

> As soon as man does not take his existence
> for granted, but beholds it as something
> unfathomably mysterious, thought begins....
> Ethical affirmation of life is the intellectual
> act by which man ceases simply to live at
> random.
>
> **Schweitzer**

> The most beautiful and profound emotion one
> can feel is a sense of the mystical.... It is the
> power of all true science.
>
> **Einstein**

> If I were to wish for anything, I should not
> wish for wealth and power, but for the pas-
> sionate sense of the potential, for the eye
> which, ever young and ardent, sees the pos-
> sible. Pleasure disappoints, possibility never.
> And what wine is so foaming, what so fra-
> grant, what so intoxicating, as possibility!
>
> **Kierkegaard**

Generative metaphor, we argue, enables
groups to overcome defenses and liberates en-
ergy. In part, such liberation is achieved by
cutting through constrictions of habit and cul-
tural automaticity in perception. Generative
metaphor is, therefore, poetic in nature. It is an
instrument for seeing the world in new ways and
in new combinations—it opens our lives to an
expanded range of possible worlds. The poet's
function, argued Aristotle, is to describe not the
thing that has happened, but the kinds of things
that might happen (i.e., what is possible). The
poetic process helps us appreciate the fact that
many futures are possible and that human reali-
ties are both discovered and created. As Bruner
(1986) has elaborated, the function of the poetic
is to open us to the hypothetical, to the range of
meanings that are possible. He uses the term "to
subjunctivize" to describe the linguistic process
that renders the world less fixed, less banal, and
therefore more susceptible to re-creation. And
this is what is meant when we refer to phase two
as the phase of poeticizing the world. Through
appreciative inquiry, we hoped to stimulate
within the Medic Inn group as a whole an artistic
vision capable of seeing and creating possible
worlds.

One final comment is important. As partici-
pants began to experiment with the appreciative
mode, we observed a relaxation of tensions, a
new climate of lightness and freedom, playful-
ness and laughter, and a shift from the language
of problem solving to the language of learning
(e.g., "I wonder ... what I'll discover about the
Tremont's front desk operations"). Part of the
relaxation of tension was due to all the partici-
pants' attention being turned away from them-

selves as a group. The new common gaze was at the Tremont. At no time did we suggest to the Medic Inn managers that they might begin to look at themselves appreciatively. The entire emphasis was on bringing attention to another domain.

Step 3: Co-Creation of Possibility

The next day began with immersion in the experience. It was a day of data collection, active experimentation, and attention to the details in the metaphor domain. Again, the purpose of this approach was (a) to help the Medic Inn group become a learning system—to help them learn about themselves—but (b) in a subtle, indirect way by immersing themselves in the life and detail of another system by using an appreciative mode of inquiry.

Arrangements were made for the Tremont staff to meet with members of the Medic Inn staff. The Medic Inn group conducted interviews with their counterparts as well as with members from other departments. So, for example, the Medic Inn banquets manager interviewed not only the Tremont banquets manager, but also the rooms manager. They not only interviewed staff members, but because they stayed at the Tremont as guests, they were instructed to note in their journals as many other features as possible. They collected numerous details, for example, on how service was delivered, how their beds were made, how the washrooms were cleaned, how food was delivered, and how employees talked to one another and to guests. In addition to noticing physical layouts, they collected data on how employee meetings were run, who attended and what issues were discussed, and how training programs were conducted.

The following day of data analysis was designed for dialogue and reflection on the experience in the related domain. After dividing the Medic Inn managers into mixed subgroups, we asked for reports on every discovery. Indeed, the managers were keen observers. The groups generated list upon list of a myriad of factors that

were found to be associated with organizational excellence. And the data were inspiring. Said one manager, "I can't believe the things that housekeeping does. What they do in terms of employee recognition and involvement is so simple—but it works. Their room exhibitions are something any hotel could begin immediately, at no cost!"

Just as an artist intent upon expressing the positive values of a landscape would select the values the artist appreciates and would express these and not the indifferent features, the managers of the Medic Inn were beginning to give full voice to their own highest aspirations and values. During the "report-outs," it was not uncommon for people to "wander beyond" their data. Extrapolating from the best of "what was," the Medic Inn managers began to envision "what might be." For five and one-half hours the group discussed its most interesting and exciting discoveries. The energy level was high. Communications were flowing. Then the group members were given one more important task: They were to take the best of what they could find at the Tremont and use that to create a visionary portrait—a genetic blueprint—of the ideal "four-star" hotel operation. This portrait was to be shared the next day with all the Tremont staff in the form of a feedback meeting. It was to be given to the Tremont as "a gift."

The key point is that the Medic Inn managers were not merely articulating their findings. They, in concert with one another, were creating new values and new possible ways of seeing organizational life through the act of valuing. As Nietzsche once remarked, "Valuing is creating: hear it, ye creating ones! Valuation is itself the treasure and jewel of valued things" (quoted in Cooperrider, 1990).

Equally important, the attention was again focused on another domain. Among other things, this encouraged greater creativity in the envisioning process. Because it was not "their vision" for their hotel, the group members were freed from their habitual cynicism, doubt, and obstacle identification. Nascent ideas were given

a chance. People experienced being listened to and heard. The group had become an aesthetic forum for sharing and crafting new meaning. It had become a safe place, even if only indirectly, for people to share their aspirations, dreams, and images of possibility.

What became increasingly clear as the members were engaged in this exercise was that given this task, they were able to make private aspirations public ones. There were few obstacles due to defensiveness or negative attributions toward one another, ostensibly because the subject matter related to something other than themselves. In the meantime, they were becoming less strange to one another and less constricted in their exchanges. Indeed, people were beginning to experience more connection than disconnection, more consensus than dissensus, and more things to value about one another than to devalue.

In one unexpected transaction, for example, the two managers who were most at odds agreed publicly to "bury the hatchet." They literally had not spoken to each other in over six months.

The group applauded as the feud was put to rest with an open hug. One of the two broke out in uncontrollable laughter, exclaiming that he couldn't believe he agreed with almost everything the other person said.

On the last day, we suggested that the group members direct their attention to their own organization, and envision and imagine what activities and plans they could engage in to begin to achieve excellence. Again, we were surprised at the unexpectedly high level of energy and the number of creative ideas that people generated. Unlike the group process exhibited before the Chicago retreat, this one left us feeling as if we were observing a totally different collectivity. Members were able to wish, to imagine possibilities for themselves. Whereas before they saw only deficiency in one another, they now talked about one another's potential as we led them through a role-negotiation activity. For example, the dining room manger, who had frequently been at odds with the housekeeper,

sent the following message at the end of the workshop: "I never realized how much we take your work for granted. You have a tough thankless job ... and by the way, you're a nice person." Through renewed interpersonal ties such as these, discourse took on a whole new rational tone and substance. Broad consensus was reached on five primary dimensions of what would constitute a four-star hotel. At the end of the retreat, after discussing details of uniforms, behavioral norms, and policies, the group formulated for the first time a mission statement for the Medic Inn. Aspirations were liberated and a whole new sense of hope was stimulated. As one participant summed up, "The decisions and strategies agreed to here will completely change our future."

In the rest of this article we look more closely at the consequences of the generative metaphor intervention by looking at specific changes in the discourse of the groups in the months immediately following the Tremont retreat.

Consequences of the Generative Metaphor Intervention

Following Heidegger (1962), knowledge emerges within a horizon of possible meanings created and delimited by the given culture. It is this social horizon of cultural meanings that generates tacit knowledge structures known as schemas. The group, in a sense, is held together by a collective image or script that anticipates possible action. (Boulding, 1966; Cooperrider, 1990; Polak, 1973).

Prior to the Chicago retreat, this management group subscribed to a deficiency script for possible action. They did not imagine that it was possible to plan a positive future for themselves as a group. The horizon of meaning marked by this script triggered the negative images and schemas that managers held of one another.

As a result of the generative metaphor intervention, a number of consequences can be discerned.

1. **Liberation of aspirations and expressions of preferences for the future.** One consequence of the generative metaphor intervention

was that altered the collective horizon of possible meanings, expanding members' beliefs about the kind of actions possible in creating the future of the hotel. As Whitehead wrote, "Human civilization is driven forward by notions too general for its existing language" (Whitehead, 1955). Ricouer (1974) and others have noted that when humans begin to dimly perceive new notions, expressions are often metaphoric. Following Turner (1974), metaphor or collective imagery precedes the calculus for action. Following the Tremont experience, members began to put forth new notions of possible action in tentative, metaphorical language. At the first planning meeting following the retreat, members began to discuss what the Medic Inn should "look like." They began to propose what the bell stand and front desk should "look like." An entire list of renovations and alterations was proposed by the group making comparisons to the Tremont. There emerged a "four-star" language to reflect images of uniforms, behavioral norms, policies, and procedures. Members from different departments who previously could barely speak to one another began to develop a common language as details for physical revisions and personnel moves were discussed.

Once this common language grounded the group, there were expressions of hope and liberated aspirations. Members began to make reference to possible futures and abandoned the previous script of cycles of vengeance that had locked them into referring to past behavior. Members began to subjunctivize the world (Bruner, 1986), and to express preferences and wishes for the hotel's future.

For example, the following statements were taken from transcriptions of the first planned meeting after the Chicago retreat.

"You know, I'd like to see more energy from the employees,..."

"What got me really was the coffee club they started [at the Tremont] and I wondered, why wouldn't we do something like that if we could...."

"We could meet monthly if we decide and...."

Such subjunctivized talk represents a liberation from old static structures. For this group, it can easily be argued that discourse of this kind marked the beginning of its empowerment to create/re-create the sociocultural world in alignment with its values. But first, something else needed to be addressed.

2. A reinterpretation of the past in terms of ideological conflicts rather than in terms of interpersonal tension or personal deficiency. As Ricover (1974) noted, when new insight emerges, it is accompanied by a crucial reinterpretation of the past. It was not by chance, therefore, that members began to reframe the conflict-ridden past as a symptom of a "divided house," that lacked a common vision (even the choice of language "divided house," presupposes that members have developed an image of what a "united house" looks like). Reframing the past in these terms triggered a process whereby members began to attribute causality for interpersonal tension to a larger social-ideological framework. Conflicts among individuals could no longer be seen as a resulting from personality deficiencies that reside **inside** of members. Rather, they had come to be seen as manifestations of an ideological split between departments and department managers. A forthcoming example illustrates this point.

3. Members began to imagine that future planning for the hotel should be a collective endeavor rather than something "top managers" do. It became legitimate for members to confront and hold one another to the commitments made by the "Chicago Group." Whereas previously frequent references were made to those "know- nothings on top who have their heads in the sand," there emerged a new script for who could legitimately enter the dialogue/planning sessions. A new language emerged that remained active for years after the intervention (see Barrett, 1990). Members continued to use the term Chicago Group, conjuring up reminders of the commitments made and the possible actions pro-

posed by different departments. Not only was it deemed legitimate for the 16 managers to engage in the planning process, but it became legitimate for a middle manager to confront one of the top managers in the name of the Chicago Group. When members exhibited what was considered dysfunctional or unsupportive behavior, they were often challenged. After two monthly meetings, one of the members was dissatisfied with a top manager's directions and addressed him: "I don't know how we're supposed to do that. What about Chicago? Have we forgotten about Chicago?"

Six months after the Chicago retreat, an interpersonal conflict between two managers from different departments surfaced in regard to how a customer complaint had been handled. The issue was discussed at a meeting of the Chicago Group, and as the conversation progressed it became clear that other such recent incidents reflected a difference in ideological interpretation. As the group began to discuss the troublesome area, they began to discover that the two manager's differences were emerging from the different ideological signals they were receiving from their top managers. Finally, one member addressed the group:

> It's becoming clear that Kelly thinks what he's doing is right and Felicia thinks that what she is doing is right. And they're not getting this out of thin air. It must be a difference between you two guys [she points to Tim and Rick, the heads of food and beverage and rooms departments, respectfully). You guys need to get your heads together.

The top management team was appalled, and after a short discussion in private agreed that negotiation was needed and planned an off-site retreat for the next month. When the time came for them to address the issue at the retreat, there was a new urgency in their voices. As Tim put it:

> The Chicago group noticed something and they're right, we're marching to two different drummers. We have to straighten it out. We

owe it to them, actually. We'll look like fools if we don't.

To cite another incident, eight months after the retreat, Tim, the food and beverage director, was overheard making a statement criticizing the service delivery in the Rooms Department. That afternoon at the regular staff meeting, Jean, the front desk manager, confronted the group:

> I overheard a remark today made by one of the food and beverage managers that somehow the Rooms Department is holding this hotel back. Excuse me, but I thought we went to Chicago just to stop this kind of thing—to be a team. If someone has a complaint about how we are doing, he should bring it up in the open.

On the surface, this incident looks like a return to the old divisiveness and turfism. But upon closer inspection, we can see some key developmental differences.

(A) Members now have a shared script for what it means to talk openly to one another, to explicitly challenge one another's tacit assumptions. Prior to the Chicago retreat, there was no script to imagine what a conversation called "confronting the departmental split" or "challenging a top director" might sound like.

(B) Members now have a denotative language ("Chicago," "the Chicago Group," "team") that carries rich connotations. When one member says, "What about Chicago?" there are a whole series of reverberations of meaning triggered for each member, tied to a previously unimagined picture of a team working toward a four-star rating.

(C) Previously disjointed members were able to jointly create scripts for possible action. They were now able to put forth possibilities that were not contingent upon eliminating competing interpretations. Whereas previously subgroups would bond by creating negative attributions of out-group members or other subgroups, members could now bond around possible common futures. People previously seen as incompatible had become imagined as belonging in the same room.

4. Reframing the purpose of the hotel. Following Habermas (1981), critical consciousness emerges **through interaction and dialogue.**

Eventually through continual dialogue, the groups's critical reasoning began to take shape. For approximately 10 months the group continued to meet around strategic plans and to propose unique social and physical changes at the Medic Inn. The data collected from the Tremont continued to act as a subtle conduit to trigger ideas and necessary actions. Members, however, began to debate about the appropriateness of instituting some of the Tremont features at the Medic Inn. The Tremont, after all, was a luxury hotel designed to serve downtown business guests. The Medic Inn was built to serve the medical needs of patients and guests at MCF.

A whole series of questions were raised around certain details that pushed members to reflect on the unique purpose of their hotel, and on such issues as the need for a swimming pool, the need for a valet parking service, the appropriateness of 24-hour room service, and the appropriateness of building a first-class restaurant that might exclude middle-class guests.

Each of these ideas was debated, and some were approved while others were discarded as "inappropriate for a hotel that was built to support a medical facility." As differences emerged, members began to **differentiate** between the Tremont and the Medic Inn and to propose a unique purpose for the Medic Inn. Finally, members came to the conclusion that the traditional market-driven thinking that drives the Tremont and other hotels did not apply to the Medic Inn. As one manager put it,

> Let's face it. We're unique. We can't think like the Tremont. We're not here to make a profit from business guests. According to strict-profit sense, they shouldn't even give money to build anything in this hotel. But we're beginning to realize, **we're not in the hotel business.** This isn't a regular hotel. We're here to serve the Medic Foundation

and the participants.

Eventually fewer and fewer references were made to the programs at the Tremont Hotel as members began to create a unique sense of identity for the Medic Inn. The imaginative expansion that began in Chicago continued beyond even the consultants' expectations. To cite just one example, the group instituted a program in which employees elected their peers to sit as a "jury" and hear appeals and grievances employees had about their bosses. Employees who felt they had been unfairly treated could argue their cases before this jury, which had the power to overturn any previous decisions. The mere proposal of such an option would have been inconceivable to the cognitive ecology of the group prior to the retreat.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

In an environment in which managers feel a sense of insecurity and competition, they are likely to have developed schemas that include negative attributions of one another, category traits that frame one another in a negative light. We know from social- psychological research that these schemas and theories that explain others' behavior are not easily changed, even when evidence contradicts the traits we have attributed and even when we notice a behavior inconsistent with those traits. In fact, some research suggests that once we assign a trait to another, our noticing inconsistent behavior actually strengthens and reaffirms the original trait we have assigned. Furthermore, cognitive psychology research has shown that when we are under stress—for example, when we fear being verbally attacked by another or fear losing status or a job—we assume a protective stance. In such a state, we often feel cognitive intrusions of the imagined stressor event, anticipating the negative event as part of our defensive posture. As we guard against these intrusions and the symbolic reenactment of the stressor event, we pay a price: dimmed awareness and preselected at-

tention. We choose to notice certain stimuli and disregard others. Given an environment of insecurity (such as the one described briefly in this case), we can begin to appreciate the intrapsychic forces that would encourage one to relegate another into a restricted frame, thereby placing the self at a safer distance. We can begin to appreciate how attention becomes almost prefocused, how a competitive environment would encourage negative attributions toward others, and how positive gestures, when attempted, may not get noticed. Given these dynamics, we put forth the following propositions.

1. To enhance genuine dialogue toward building innovative and creative ideas for the future of the organization, an environment must be created that supports the possibility of cognitive reappraisal and new schema development by members. This should be a deliberately supportive environment that encourages members to direct attention away from familiar stimuli and habits that would cue familiar schemas.

2. Generative metaphor is an invitation to see the world anew and can be used as an intervention into intergroup and interpersonal conflict. The generative metaphor is a vehicle whereby learning is "suddenly" transferred from one area of strength to an area of difficulty, enabling problems to be "solved" without direct engagement with the problems.

3. Metaphor is generative to the extent to which it serves to break the hammerlock of the status quo, serves to reorganize perceptual processes and ingrained schemas, helps provide positive and compelling new images of possibility, and serves as a bridge for nondefensive learning among contexts.

4. For groups and other larger collectivities, the generative potential of metaphor depends not only on its content, but also on the processes of inquiry and interaction that are engendered. Processes of **co-appreciative** inquiry will heighten the generative potential of metaphorical intervention. Co-appreciative processes of inquiry will heighten the generative potential of metaphor because of the following.

(A) Appreciation is a poetic process that fosters a fresh perception of ordinary life. Unlike the evaluating stance of problem solving, which is based on the assumption of deficiency, appreciation refers to an affirmative valuing of experience based on belief, trust, and conviction (c.f. Cooperrider, 1990; Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987; Kolb, 1984).

(B) Co-appreciative inquiry processes create a learning environment that fosters empathy, hope, excitement, and social bonding among people around desired values.

(C) The appreciative mode engenders a creative stance toward life by drawing people to inquire beyond superficial appearances into the life-enhancing properties of organizational existence. Through affirmation of the best of "what is," the appreciative mode ignites envisioning into "what might be." Co-appreciation inspires the collective imagination and thereby opens the status quo to the joint creation of new possible worlds.

5. By regaining a sense of unity and participation in the joint creation of reality in a related but distinct domain, groups will be able to grow beyond their historical difficulties through an almost unconscious learning transaction between contexts. Generative metaphor is frame expanding, facilitates new knowledge, strengthens a group's sense of efficacy, and provides a group with a new, transferable ability to manage the subtle dynamics of building relationships and bonding around common vision.

Our effort discussed in this article is but one in a small yet growing attempt to generate new perspectives on the conduct of organization development based on recent insights into the dynamics of social cognition (e.g., Bartunek, 1984), as well as new understandings concerning the metaphorical basis of organizational existence (Morgan, 1986; Weick, 1979). Outside the field of OD practice, metaphor has

played an important role in therapeutic and educational encounters (Haley, 1973; Srivastva & Barrett, 1988) and has been shown to be an integral component for the development of culture and community as a whole (Judge, 1990). Although OD practice has paid little attention to the insights in this area, our experiences lead us to believe that excursions into metaphor will open exciting new vistas of research and practice previously unavailable to the field.

Part of the promise lies in the fact that generative metaphor provides a clear option for moving outside a number of the field's predominant and guiding assumptions. The first, which has been extensively documented, is the assumption that OD's essence is collective problem solving: To do good OD is to solve "real problems" (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). As discussed above, it is as if the field's overarching root metaphor has been that **organizations are problems to be solved** (as contrasted with "creative works of art," for example). Second, as Eric Neilsen (1984) has shown, the vast majority of OD practices are based on the values of direct confrontation or **candidness**:

> Organization Development is the attempt to influence the members of an organization to expand their candidness with each other about their views of the organization and their experience in it, and to take responsibility for their own actions as organizational members. (p. 2)

As a discipline we are in our infancy when it comes to intervention theories and practices that (1) operate out of **affirmative** or nondeficiency assumptions about the organizations we work with, and (2) emerge out of respect for the subtle and sophisticated mechanisms of **indirect communication forms,** which are in fact found in highly effective groups and growth-promoting relationships. If for no other reason than this, there seems to be ample justification for looking seriously at the case presented in this article. The case, which is offered more as exploratory illustration than proof, will be especially justified if it stimulates reflection on our basic OD assump-

tions, helps expand our options for action, and generates new research into the affirmative and indirect sides of human systems change and development.

There must be caution, however. While we acknowledge the considerable promise of generative metaphor, a number of critical concerns must be explored—in particular, the question of collusion. To what extent could generative metaphor, as a planned intervention, become an unwilling accomplice in the dynamic of group flight (Bion, 1959)?

Is generative metaphor just another form of flight? Does it, because it operates indirectly and outside of explicit awareness also serve to limit individual and group autonomy? Could it be misused as a tool of what Pages (1990) has called the hypermodern era, an Orwellian period whose basic concern is the control and elimination of conflict?

Obviously, these are more than just theoretical questions: They are moral ones. Part of the reason that generative metaphor is, in fact, powerful is that it shapes perceptions, cognitions, and relationships at a preconscious level, much like subliminal communications or even hypnosis. It is clear that we need to exercise a certain caution toward generative metaphor. But more than qualified hope, we need greater understanding: We must learn to distinguish between the creative and destructive uses of generative metaphor if we are to make a genuine contribution.

REFERENCES

Anderson, C. A., Lepper, M., & Ross, L. (1980). Perseverance of social theories: The role of explanation in persistence of discredited information. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 39,* 1037-1049.

Barrett, F. (1990). *The development of the cognitive organization.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH.

Bartunek, J. (1984). Changing interpretive

schemes and organizational restructuring: The example of a religious order. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 27*, 355-372.

Beck, A. (1967). *Depression: Clinical, experimental, and theoretical aspects*. New York: Harper & Row.

Bion, W. (1959). *Experiences in groups*. New York: Basic Books.

Black, M. (1962). *Models and metaphors*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Boulding, K. (1966). The image. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Bower, G. (1981). Mood and memory. *American Psychologist, 36*, 120-148.

Bradford, L. P., Gibb, J. W., & Benne, K. (1964). *T-Group theory and laboratory method*. New York: Wiley.

Bruner, J. (1986). *Actual minds, possible worlds*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Cantor, N., & Mischel, W. (1977). Traits and prototypes: Effects of recognition memory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 35*, 38-49.

Cooperrider, D. L. (1990). Positive imagery, positive action: The affirmative basis of organizing. In S. Srivastva, D. L. Cooperrider, & Associates (Eds.), *Appreciative management and leadership: The power of positive thought and action in organizations*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Cooperrider, D. L., & Srivastva, S. (1987). Appreciative inquiry into organizational life. In W. A. Pasmore & R. W. Woodman (Eds.), *Research in Organizational Change and Development* (Vol. 1, pp. 129-169). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Eden, D. (1988). Creating expectation effects in OD: Applying self-fulling prophecy. In W. A. Pasmore & R. W. Woodman (Eds.), *Research In Organizational Change and Development* (Vol. 3, pp. 1-38). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

French, W. L. (1969). *Organization development objectives, assumptions, and strategies. California Management Review, 12*(2), 23-24.

French, W. L., & Bell, C. (1978). *Organization development*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Frohman, M., Sashkin, M., & Kavanaugh, M. (1976). Action research as applied to organization development. *Organization and Administrative Sciences, 1*, 129-161.

Goleman, D. (1985). *Vital lies, simple truths: The psychology of self-deception*. New York: Touchstone Books.

Habermas, J. (1981). *The theory of communicative action*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Haley, J. (1973). *Uncommon therapy*. New York: Touchstone Books.

Hausser, D., Pecorella, P., & Wissler, A. (1977). *Survey guided development II*. La Jolla, CA: University Associates.

Heidegger, M. (1962). *Being and time*. New York: Harper & Row. (Original work published 1927)

Higgins, E. T., & McCann, C. D. (1984). Social encoding and subsequent attitudes, impressions, and memory: Context-driven and motivational aspects of processing. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 47*, 55-70.

Hill, T., Lewicki, P., Czyzewska, M., & Boss, A. (1989). Self-perpetuating development of encoding biases in person perception. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 57*, 373-387.

Horowitz, M. (1983). *Psychological responses to serious life events: The denial of stress*. New York: International Universities Press.

Isen, A., & Shalker, T. (1982). The influence of mood state on evaluation of positive, neutral, and negative stimuli. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 45*, 58-63.

Isen, A., Shalker, T., Clark, M., & Karp, L. (1978). Affect, accessibility of material in memory, and behavior: A cognitive loop? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 36*, 1-12.

Judge, A. (1990). *World governance through metaphor*. Paper presented at the Symposium on Social Innovations in Global Management, Case Western Reserve University,

Cleveland, OH.

Jussim, L. (1986). Self-fulling prophesies: A theoretical and integrative review. *Psychological Review, 93,* 429-445.

Kolb, D. (1984). *Experiential learning.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Levinson, H. (1972). *Organizational diagnosis.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Morgan, G. (1986). *Images of organization.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Nisbett, R., & Ross, L. (1985). *Human inference: Strategies and shortcomings of social judgment.* New York: Prentice-Hall.

O'Sullivan, C. S., & Durso, F. T. (1984). Effect of schema-incongruent information on memory for stereotypical attributes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 47,* 55-70.

Pages, M. The illusion and disillusion of appreciative management. In S. Srivastva, D. L. Cooperrider, & Associates (Eds.), *Appreciative management and leadership: The power of positive thought and action in organizations.* San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Polak, F. (1973). *The image of the future.* New York: Elsevier Scientific Publishing Company.

Ricover, P. (1974). *The conflict of interpretations: Essays in hermeneutics.* Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

Rosenhan, D., Salvoey, P., & Hargis, K. (1981). The joys of helping: Focus of attention mediates the impact of positive affect on altruism. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 40,* 899-905.

Schon, D. A. (1979). Generative metaphor: A perspective on problem-solving in social policy. *Metaphor and Thought.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Srivastva, S., & Barrett, F. J. (1988). The transforming nature of metaphors in group development: A study in group theory. *Human Relations, 41,* 31-64.

Srull, T. K., & Wyer, R. S. (1980). Category accessibility and social perception: Some implications for the study of person memory and interpersonal judgments. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 38,* 841-856.

Turner, V. W. (1974). *Dramas, fields, and metaphors.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Weick, K. E. (1979). *The social psychology of organizing.* Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Whitehead, A. N. (1955). *Adventures of ideas.* New York: Mentor Books.