INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

UMI

A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor MI 48106-1346 USA
313/761-4700 800/521-0600

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

THE GROUP AS VEHICLE AND AUTHOR OF TRANSFORMATION: ADULT DEVELOPMENT IN ITS CULTURAL CONTEXT

by

Bobbi Linn Renderer

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Psychology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

1993

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

UMI Number: 9820981

Copyright 1993 by
Renderer, Bobbi Linn

All rights reserved.

UMI Microform 9820981
Copyright 1998, by UMI Company. All rights reserved.

This microform edition is protected against unauthorized
copying under Title 17, United States Code.

UMI
300 North Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

° 1993

BOBBI LINN RENDERER

All Rights Reserved

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Psychology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

9/30/93
Date

Chair of Examining Committee

9/30/93
Date

Executive Officer

Laurence Gould, Ph.D.

Arietta Slade, Ph.D.

Carol Fleisher Feldman, Ph.D.

Supervisory Committee

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Abstract

THE GROUP AS VEHICLE AND AUTHOR OF TRANSFORMATION:
ADULT DEVELOPMENT IN ITS CULTURAL CONTEXT

by

Bobbi Linn Renderer

Advisor: Professor Laurence Gould

This study examines the processes of adult development as they are mediated by the particular sociocultural setting within which they take place. It takes the premise that members of a small group culture jointly construct a social reality, and shows how this local reality delimits the range of possibility that is available to members of the culture. This demonstration is accomplished through the analysis of narratives told by 16 individuals belonging to two small theater companies, treated here as two miniature cultures. An individual's narrative procedures, it is argued, display features of theme and structure that correspond to the patterns of organization and interpretation which that individual imposes upon experience. The narrative analysis and a group process analysis are aimed at identifying such patterns in the two group cultures that are related to their members' development.

The construction of a cultural setting and the human development within it are complexly interrelated, however.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The study therefore further explores the ways in which the construction of social reality within a group is influenced by the psychological and developmental needs of its members. The two groups studied formed their respective companies as members embarked on the phase of adult life that Levinson labels "Entering Early Adulthood" (Levinson et. al., 1978). At the time of data collection, the members were in the phase he labels "The Age 30 Transition." The two cultures are examined and evaluated as solutions to the tasks of life facing members at the time of group formation, and as evolving vehicles supportive of their members' continuing development.

The evidence shows that one group created a culture that more adequately supported the tasks of early adulthood, and that that group experienced ongoing growth. Members of this group appear to be making a smoother transition to the next phase of life. The second group created a culture that did not so successfully support the tasks of young adulthood, and the members' development seems to have been constrained. The genetic thrust of development is moving them forward, but the Age 30 transition is more difficult and conflictual for this group.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to first express my gratitude to my advisory committee. My chairman, Dr. Laurence Gould, introduced me to the study of group process and adult development, founding an interest that grew into this dissertation. Throughout the process he guided me with insight, unwavering support and encouragement. I am also very grateful to Dr. Arietta Slade for her commitment to my learning and development as a student and an advisee throughout my graduate career. The depth and clarity of her thinking remain a standard of aspiration for my own intellectual efforts. And a very special thanks goes to Dr. Carol Fleisher Feldman. Her generous and sensitive mentorship has provided me with a consistently profound, stimulating and challenging dialogue that has enriched not only my psychological thinking, but my personal development in nearly every aspect. I cannot thank her enough.

I would also like to thank my readers, Dr. A.J. Franklin and Dr. Gilead Nachmani, for their participation. Dr. Franklin has been a supportive advisor throughout my tenure at City College, and Dr. Nachmani is a very valued supervisor whose voice continues to animate and inspire my clinical thinking.

The present research was supported by a Spencer Foundation grant to Dr. Carol Feldman: "Genres as mental

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

models: The role of cultural exposure," 1990-91. It was conducted in the laboratories of Dr. Jerome Bruner in the Department of Psychology at New York University. A special thanks to David Kalmar of those laboratories for his technical support and his steady, encouraging friendship.

I am most indebted to my sixteen subjects, who gave thoughtfully and openly of themselves and provided such vivid portraits of their cultures. Without such frank, detailed and expressive accounts, this study would not have been possible.

And thanks, finally, to Scott Renderer, whose love, humor and companionship make my life so meaningful.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The Group as Vehicle and Author of Transformation: Adult Development in its Cultural Context

CHAPTER ONE

Theoretical Introduction

In 1991, in an off-off-Broadway theater in New York City, a young actor said of the city he works in, "New York's prohibitive. The theater's being crushed here." A couple of weeks later in a theater a few blocks away, another young actor said, "What's great about New York is there's a huge community here which is really supportive." It might simply be said that these two actors have two different ways of looking at the same thing. But the human capacity to make and discover meaning cannot be separated from the act of perception itself. In the very act of representation, the two actors construct two worlds, worlds which are mediated by the two separate cultural contexts within which the actors reside (Bruner, 1990). The two worlds, once "made," will have differential effects upon the two young men as they, in turn, become the contexts for subsequent acts of representation and interpretation.

One may argue that the two young men who experience two different New York Cities do not reside within different cultures. But although both are members of the City's theatrical community, and their worlds therefore

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

overlap in many respects, they belong to two different theater companies. Geertz's widely adopted definition of culture describes it as a shared "web of significances," a construct of meanings that determines how events that take place within its context are to be interpreted and evaluated. The meaning of human behavior "varies according to the pattern of life by which it is informed" (1973, p. 14). These two theater companies, sharing many "realities" but representing them differently and thus existing in essentially different worlds, can be defined by Geertz's notion of cultures.

Organizational researchers have borrowed the concept of culture from anthopologists like Geertz, and used it to guide studies of organizations that emphasize "the meaning, socially established and sustained, through which people engage and experience their organizational world" (Smircich, 1983b, p. 162). A key premise of the cultural view of organizations is that meaning is emergent and intersubjectively negotiated, but that even as it arises from a group's symbolic processes, it in turn guides and shapes behavior and expression (Louis, 1983). Menzies Lyth (1990) notes that Fenichel made this observation in 1946, "Social institutions arise through the efforts of human beings to satisfy their needs, but social institutions then become external realities comparatively independent of individuals that affect the structure of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the individuals themselves" (p. 50). Although today we place more emphasis on the individual's role in maintaining the "external reality," Fenichel's observation reminds us that this maintenance takes place largely out of awareness, and that, once constituted, cultural forms are perceived as continuous and prescriptive, not to be easily altered through simply changing one's point of view. It is therefore of clinical interest to explore the ways in which cultural contexts promote, or fail to promote, the well being of their members.

This study asks individual members of each of two theater companies to "tell the story of their company." The analysis will focus on the two cultural meaning-systems that inform these two companies, will attempt to explicate the worlds they entail and to compare these worlds. For it is an interesting feature of these young theater companies that they were not inherited by their members. Instead they were deliberately created by their members to embody and facilitate their ambitions, values, and dreams. In addition to being a place to locate and achieve career aspirations, they also comprise their members' social, leisure, educational and political lives to a large extent. Thus the companies have a significance for their members larger than the typical task or "work group" (Bion, 1974). Even though the members could certainly state the companies' purposes in terms of task,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

these companies are multifaceted environments that were created by their members. They are more like what Turner calls "star groups" (1986), groups to which members direct their loyalty and concern, and from which they derive a variety of tangible and intangible benefits and rewards. Because the groups are thus entwined with cognitive, conative and affective dimensions of their members' lives, I am taking a cultural view of the groups to discover the ways in which such group membership both reflects and shapes the members' worldviews, and thereby effects the quality of the members' lives.

The comparison of the two group cultures will be guided by the concept of adult development as conceived by Daniel Levinson (Levinson et al.,1978). In Levinson's model, adult development proceeds through a sequence of structure-building phases alternating with structure-changing phases. From the perspective of Levinson's theory, the two group cultures are interesting because they were formed as their members embarked on the structure-building phase of early adulthood that Levinson calls "Entering Early Adulthood" (age 22 to 28, approximately). Now, at the time of data collection, the members are in the phase Levinson calls "The Age 30 Transition" (age 28 to 33, approximately), which is a structure-changing phase involving reevaluation of the life structures created in the earlier, relatively more

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

stable phase that preceded it.

In the phase of Entering Early Adulthood, young people face a dilemma in trying to negotiate two important developmental tasks as they try out a variety of initial choices in the spheres of occupation, love and friendship, values and lifestyle. The first task is to "explore the possibilities for adult living: to keep [one's] options open, avoid strong commitments and maximize the alternatives....The contrasting task is to create a stable life structure" (Levinson et al., 1978, p. 58), to take on adult responsibilities and test the self within the adult world. The two group cultures I will examine can be thought of as two solutions to this developmental dilemma. The forms in which the two mini-cultures resolved their developmental tasks, and the implications of the two respective resolutions for the members as they reassess and reconstitute their lives in the next phase of development, is highlighted in this analysis.

Levinson's model of adult development is particularly suitable for an investigation of constructed worlds and their implications for their members, because he explicitly accounts for the "interpenetration of self and world" (1978, p. 47). The central concept of his theory is the "individual life structure." Each person, through his or her choices and commitments at any given time in life, creates a "life structure" that encompasses three

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

components. The components are the sociocultural world, the person's participation in that world, and the aspects of the self that are expressed and lived out within that structure. With the concept of life structure, Levinson intends to "examine the interrelations of self and world -- to see how the self is in the world, and how the world is in the self" (p. 42). Adult development, in this view, is not a process of development in any single aspect of personality, or even solely "within" the personality, per se. It is instead an ongoing evolution of the individual life structure, that is, of the relationship between an individual and his or her sociocultural world. Levinson's concept of the life structure is consistent with the consensus among most developmental theorists who assume that the process of development comprises an interaction between the developing organism and the changing environment (Scarr, 1992). For example, Nemiroff and Colarusso (1990) find that three components are always present in development: "the biological organism, the psyche, and the external environment, coexisting and influencing each other at any point in the life cycle" (p. 165).

The present study expands upon Levinson's model in two ways. One is to explicitly consider the fact that individual life structures, as Levinson conceives them, inevitably overlap with the life structures of others.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The sociocultural world, one of the three components of the life structure, is a world that is jointly created with other members of one's culture, and its properties are interpersonally negotiated. Its elasticity, for example, will influence the degree to which an individual's relationship with that culture can evolve. Through mediation of the representation and interpretation of experience, then, the sociocultural context of a group influences the individual development of its members.

Secondly, Levinson's model describes a normative but content-free sequence of change within the adult life structure. Change is precipitated by the evolving concerns of the adult as he faces different tasks at different phases of life. A multiplicity of life structures may be appropriate for a particular time of life and the work on the tasks specific to it, for Levinson evaluates appropriateness based on how viable the structure is in the world, and how well it suits the individual. Moreover, an individual may proceed through the phases of life evolving a life structure more or less smoothly, and may address the tasks more or less well. Thus, although Levinson's model will help us determine the nature of the concerns facing the subjects at present and at the time of group formation, and will provide a basis for evaluating the groups as life structures, it is still necessary to supplement his model with some ideas about

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the process which characterizes the movement of development itself. This may help us recognize and understand the process of adult development, or absence of it, despite its broad variety of manifestations; and, further, may help us identify features of the group cultures that contribute to or inhibit development.

Freeman and Robinson have advocated thinking about development "in terms of the continually revised ends that pull us from what we come to realize is an inferior state of being to one that is arguably or demonstrably a better one" (1990, p. 56). Their proposal avoids prescribing an optimal endpoint for development, yet emphasizes that ends of one sort or another -- a cognizance of the difference between what is and what might be -- underlie developmental movement. Furthermore, the concept suggests that if development was only toward a preconceived endpoint, one's receptivity to other modes of experience would be constricted. In the authors' words, "development has to do with living with an eye toward better ways of living while recognizing that these better ways can never be the last word" (1990, p. 61). This entails a difference to the experiencing individual between former meanings and present ones, and ultimately the supersession of old meanings as newer ones are created that work better for present experience.

Freeman and Robinson see the process of development

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

as characterized by four subprocesses: 1) recognizing a disjunction between what exists and what is posited, however tentatively, as a more ideal state of knowing or being; 2) distancing oneself from the existing modes; 3) articulating or defining the recognized tension -- the moment of identification of the difference between the old and the desired, and 4) integrating the difference into a superior vision. This final subprocess of development is, importantly, not an end in itself, but a new beginning that will lead to a further cycle of development.

Settlage (1990, 1988) offers a similar model of the developmental process. He views it as a sequence that proceeds from a triggering developmental challenge that reveals the need for new thinking or behaviors, through stages of tension, conflict and resolution leading finally to a change in the individual's self representation. This model explicitly predicates change upon "developmental interaction." The notion is implicit in Freeman and Robinson's model as well, for their process of change is triggered by the recognition of difference between two entities. Settlage, however, conceives of the interaction as specifically taking place between two persons -- initially the child and his mother, later any two-person relationship that embodies developmental potential. Potential is determined by the difference between the individuals involved.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

These formulations echo two other important ideas about the process of development and settings that promote it. One is Vygotsky's concept of a "zone of proximal development" (1962), the zone beyond a child's present capacities but within which he is capable of functioning at higher levels with the assistance of another person. The second concept is the special kind of transitional phenomenenon that Winnicott calls "potential space" (1971). This is an intermediate area, not fully inner reality and not fully external reality, but the product of the two. Initially it is the space created between the child and mother in which the child's creative impulses are met by her -- a space in which the child's imaginative acts have an impact on the environment, and thus become part of his developing identity. Taken together, these theories point to the importance of a dialectic in the process of development, a calibration of self to other that aids self-definition and scaffolds change.

As a dialectic is important in the process of development, we may expect it to be an important component of the group culture that can be said to foster development. Winnicott's concept of potential space is therefore relevant in one further respect to our investigation. Although potential space is a place that is established in early childhood, it is important to the individual throughout his life. For this "third area,"

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the place of creative playing, is central to one's experience of living creatively, fully, and in a way that is meaningful to the self. Winnicott says:

> It is in playing and only in playing that the individual child or adult is able to be creative and to use the whole personality, and it is only in being creative that the individual discovers the self (1971, p. 54).

For Winnicott, creativity refers not just to the creation of works of art, but to an attitude toward life that is essential to health and satisfaction. It is an attitude in which the "true self" is engaged with the world, in contrast to a relationship to external reality characterized by compliance or withdrawal. Thus creativity is an important component of any adult's life, but I propose it is of particular importance to the subjects of this study. These are people who have chosen a career in the arts, and therefore they are likely to be particularly attuned to their artistic and creative development and the ways in which it does not conform to their desires. The quality of the potential space that group members find in their group cultures will have an important effect on the quality of their creative development.

Levinson sees the components of a life structure as vehicles, in a sense, for "living out certain aspects of the self and for engaging in certain modes of participation in the world" (1978, p. 44). But he points

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

out that the choice to live out certain aspects of the self involves the inhibition, repression or neglect of other aspects. In this sense, although he doesn't conceptualize it in just these terms, Levinson gives the life structure a narrative job to do. Constructing a life structure is rather like choosing a storyline. Just as every genre is governed by a set of norms that provide a template for the construction and interpretation of a certain kind of story, so may a life structure embody certain themes that frame the evaluation and interpretation of events that occur within it.

But some kinds of stories, and some life structures, define themselves more rigidly than others. A life structure constructed at one point in life will reflect the developmentally-linked motivations of that time, but it will also exhibit a more or less rigid degree of defensiveness toward rejected components. However, theories of development lead us to expect that the same aspects of self that are sources of anxiety and rejected at one point in life, later become tolerable and even challenging, and may trigger development if the context supports it. A culture that has created a storyline that provides for change will presumably find growth and development easier to integrate.

The analogy between life structures and storylines suggests that we might access the interpretive web of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

meaning entailed in a life structure through attention to the storyline that it embodies. Schafer, writing about narrative competence in the analytic setting, has discussed the usefulness of being alert to the storylines implied in the analysand's language and behavior (1983). He asserts that the narrative strategies exhibited in the analysand's telling reflect the set of narrative constraints and possibilities that operate to organize his or her experience of life. Edelson (1992), too, finds it useful to think of his patients as "in the grip of a story." He tries to infer the particular "master story" that "determines what [the patient] chooses to perceive, including what perceptions he acts to bring about, how he interprets what he perceives, and how he responds to these perceptions" (p. 131). Edelson suggests that a close interpretive focus on the actual stories and parts of stories told in analysis is the best way to piece together the complex story that is patterning the patient's existence. And Freeman (1985), in a similar vein, contends that "one's narrative procedures embody the world and one's understanding of it at once and together." There is not only an increasing appreciation among clinicians for what the features of a patient's narrative can reveal about his mental processes. Clinical researchers, too, have begun to show relationships between patterns of narrative and patterns of health and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

pathology. For example, Main, Kaplan and Cassidy (1985), working in the field of attachment, have found patterns in the organization of language corresponding to three major attachment organizations. These "mental models" provide rules for the direction of behavior, the appraisal of experience, the organization of attention and memory, and access to certain kinds of knowledge about the self, the attachment figure, and the relationship between the two.

For these reasons, the data of this study are the stories the group members tell about their groups and their places in them. These stories are not treated transparently as clues to a life that the members "really have." Rather, the text itself is treated as an analogue of the culture; the relative well being of the two groups should reveal itself in the tellings themselves. A world will emerge through the pattern of convergences in the members' narratives, a particular "storyline" that grips each participant. At the same time, the stories represent members' efforts to reconcile the subjective with the objectified, to fit in while yet retaining their individuality. Patterns of nonconvergence may point toward members' efforts to create space for themselves as they locate themselves culturally. If subjects are to grow, their stories must permit them to belong to the group even as they experience their own agency and potential, and the differences that underlie a

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

development-promoting dialectic.

One of the tenets of narrative analysis is to take account of the framing inherent in the context of the telling. According to Schafer, "the historical account changes whenever the major questions change; for in the context established by each such question, different aspects of events and people and activity come to the fore in distinctive ways" (1983, p. 204). He goes on to say that one may characterize personal development as change in the questions it is important to answer. This point returns us to the developmental imperative currently facing the members of the two group cultures. For as they are asked in this study to tell the story of their company, their telling will reflect the questions they are asking of themselves as they negotiate the Age 30 Transition. They are, at this time, implicitly reappraising their existing life structures, exploring various avenues for change in themselves and their worlds, and moving toward the choices and commitments that will become the basis for new life structures in the coming, relatively more stable phase of life. During this transition, they will be pressured by the need to form life structures through which their own dreams and values can be realized. The question of how those dreams and values have evolved, and how members expect their group cultures to support their realization in the future will,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

in part, organize the tellings of the group stories.

Levinson finds that the neglected aspects of self are more urgently felt during life's transition periods. It may be that these "missing" self-expressions are part of what stimulate the reappraisal of one's life at these times. Levinson borrows Capote's phrase, "other voices in other rooms," to evoke the experience of becoming aware of possibilities set aside in the present life structure. It is therefore expected that some tension exists between the needs experienced as personal and those related to the perpetuation of the group cultures. As mentioned earlier, the groups to be studied here not only offer a frame of meaning to their members, a common way of construing and understanding their experience. They are also groups in the sense that both rational and irrational group processes and role demands will constrain the behavior and mental life of their members. At the time of the study, the members are dealing with individual developmental imperatives that may not be in harmony with the dominant group dynamics. As the member develops, he may attempt to transform some aspect of the group to make more space for himself within its framework, to achieve greater synchrony between the self and what the group demands of him. But a group culture is a living thing, and "resists, irrationally and vehemently, any changes in the activities of the task system that might disturb established roles

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

and relationships" (Miller & Rice, 1969, p. 67). To the extent that the group culture provides social defenses against unconscious anxiety, fear of changes in the system of social relations will be even more heightened (Jacques, 1953). Even if taken as given, however, group anxiety and resistance to change will vary among cultures. I will look at whether the two groups here offer particular construals of change and growth that have different implications for the personal development of their members.

I should state explicitly that this interpretation will not be directed at individual members' personalities. The goal is rather to describe the frames of meaning that inform the worlds of the two group cultures, and to examine the problems of individual development within those contexts.

Hypotheses. The combination of group culture and adult development perspectives, and the use of narrative as an heuristic tool, leads to the following hypotheses, which organize my approach to the data.

1. The initial organization of the group cultures will embody a particular balance of the antithetical tasks of Entering Early Adulthood.
2. The formation of the group will embody a narrative trajectory as the beginning of a certain kind of story.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

3. The kind of story will be one that reflects a set of constraints and possibilities for the expression of various aspects of self.
4. Members of a group culture with a story that provides for change will experience less conflict around personal development.
5. To the extent that the group cultures were formed to defend against anxiety, they will have resisted change and members will feel more restricted in their personal development.
6. The developmental imperatives that influenced the formation of the group cultures will be less compelling now that members are in a later phase of development. Members will face pressure to reassess and revise the group cultures to better support the building of lives based on a fuller, more mature understanding of themselves.

In addition, the inclusion of two groups allows for comparison between them, and the opportunity to go beyond the confirmation or disconfirmation of hypotheses to ask questions about the features of group cultures that may enhance or inhibit individual growth.

To summarize, the study is a comparison of two groups. The groups are two theater companies, and they are viewed as miniature cultures that provide their members with a common worldview, a "storyline" that

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

patterns their interpretation and experience of events. The two group cultures are examined as vehicles for adult development, as they were created by their members in part as two forms of solution to the developmental problems specific to a phase of life. The study asks questions about the experience of creating and fitting into a culture that meets one's psychological requirements, and about the facilitation and complication of personal growth within a sociocultural setting. The analysis attempts to explicate the two worlds of these theater companies, including the operative group processes, and to compare them as developmental solutions -- how do these two "kinds of stories" support the process of development.

The significance of the study, however, lies not so much in the differences between the two particular groups under investigation. More importantly, it demonstrates the impact that a culture, once constituted, may have upon its individual members. Adult development is not just an endogenous process, but takes place in a dialectic with the surrounding culture. It is profoundly influenced by the psychology of the groups, or cultures, within which it takes place. A central aspect of this work is to explore a narrative methodology that permits the researcher to treat culture as a variable, and thereby access the interface of social and individual psychological processes.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

CHAPTER TWO

Method

I. Data Collection

Subjects. Louis (1983) has identified several features of organizations that tend to promote more extensive cultures. There are four that guided the choice of theater companies for this study: stability of membership; impermeability of organizational boundaries; membership restrictions; and, relative youth and smallness of the organization. In addition, the companies were selected to meet the chronological requirements of this study's interest in adult development: the companies were started by a group of 20 to 25 year old people, that is, people who were completing the Early Adult Transition and Entering Early Adulthood (Levinson, 1978); and, the members, at the time of study, are now ages 27 to 32, that is, embarking on and experiencing the Age 30 Transition (Levinson, 1978). (Characteristics of the companies, the Eastern Theater Company and the Sacred & Profane Players, and the subjects are summarized in Table 1, below.)[1]

From each of these two companies, eight subjects were selected. The number eight was reached in an attempt to balance the study's goals of breadth and depth. It was

[1]For confidentiality, the names of the theater companies and of individuals associated with them have been changed.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

expected that the perspectives provided by eight members of each company would be enough to both construct a valid and detailed portrait of the group culture, and to be a representative sampling of the experiences of its members. At the same time, a total of sixteen transcripts was judged to be a manageable number for the researcher to subject to detailed analysis.

Once the two companies were chosen and they agreed to participate, the goal of selecting a representative sample was implemented by asking the groups themselves who such a subset of their membership might include. The first step in this procedure was to ask the leader of the group to review the membership and choose eight who might be expected to give a rounded view of the company. The leader was specifically asked to name involved members who represent the diverse points of view within the company. This was an attempt to avoid a biased selection of subjects who represent just one faction within their respective companies -- for example, the subset of membership that supports the leader, should that be the case. Next, one of the members from the initial list was selected at random and, like the leader, asked to generate a representative list of eight members.

From among these two lists the eight were chosen as follows. First, the members whose names appeared on both lists were contacted (five in the Sacred group, four in

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the Eastern group). All nine of these members were available and agreed to participate. The remaining seven subjects were selected from the names remaining on the lists with an eye to matching the two groups for gender, age, role in the company and years of membership. Again, all seven asked to participate agreed to do so. These procedures resulted in the selection of two groups with little demographic difference between them except that they represent two different group cultures.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Table 1

Description of Theater Companies and Subjects

Characteristics	Sacred	Eastern
Theater Companies		
Year founded	1984	1983
# of members	28	20
# of non-founding members	5	2
Membership policy	strict	closed
Subjects		
Age at founding	21-25	20-22
Age at interview	27-32	27-28
Founding/Non-founding	6/2	6/2
Gender	5M/3F	5M/3F
Role in company[a]	1 leader	1 leader
	1 producer/ administrator	1 producer/ administrator
	2 directors	3 directors
	2 writers	

[a]Seven of eight subjects in both groups are also actors. The exceptions are a writer in the Sacred group and the producer/administrator in the Eastern group.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Interview. The goal of this study was to access the representations and interpretations that shape individuals' experiences of the world through an analysis of the subjects' narratives. A narrative method was selected in order to preserve the complexity and diachronicity of the subject of investigation, adult development as related to a particular cultural context. The suitability of the narrative method for such purposes is championed by Runyon (1982):

> Tasks such as portraying the social and historical contexts of actions and events and conveying their subjective meanings are handled more effectively through narrative than through the more traditional social scientific methods of measurement, correlation, and experimentation. Narrative is useful if not indispensable for indicating how people thought and felt, what they said and did, how their words and actions were interpreted by others, and the processes by which they interacted with their worlds over time (p. 182).

In addition, narrative not only provides the most comprehensive presentation of historical and emotional material, but it carries several levels of information. Narrative may be read for plot, theme, structure, character, figuration, and much more. All of these features together draw a narrative shape that reveals a view of self and the world. And, as discussed in the introduction, narrative reflects the narrator's current questions and perspectives toward the narrated material -- in this case the perspective of an adult turning 30 who belongs to a particular group culture.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Accordingly, the goal was to develop an interview that would elicit narratives and allow subjects to explore issues in depth and in their own language. These objectives are rather different from those of the traditional standardized interview, which attempts to eliminate issues of context, discourse, and meaning by circumscribing the variation in subject's responses. Support for a dialogic conception of an interview is found in Mishler (1986). He finds that narratives are more often forthcoming in open-ended interviews:

> We are more likely to find stories reported in studies using relatively unstructured interviews where respondents are invited to speak in their own voices, allowed to control the introduction and flow of topics, and encouraged to extend their responses" (p. 69).

An interview style that allows for personal responsiveness and involvement on the interviewer/listener's part will enhance the open, narrative expression of beliefs and values.

A view of the interview as discourse requires sensitivity to context, including the context of a particular response within the ongoing dialogue, the contexts from which both the interviewer and subject come, and the context of the interview encounter itself. This issue was considered in the selection of theater companies as the groups for study. I am married to a theater actor, one who is known to the companies I asked to participate (he is not, however, a member of the companies). This

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

factor was expected to enhance the mutual recognition of contextual references, to assure a context of shared assumptions that would not only help me interpret the meaning of utterances, but would encourage the subjects to speak in some detail knowing that I have some knowledge about and interest in their topics. In addition, I conducted every interview myself to have some sense of the context of the encounter. And, after each interview was transcribed in full (the dialogic context of each response thereby made available for study), I listened to each tape while reading the transcript to ensure accuracy of the transcript and recapture the nuances of tone and mood conveyed by the subjects' inflections.

The open-ended interview is presented in Exhibit 1, below. The first question was designed to encourage the subject to tell the story of the group thoroughly, however he or she conceived that to be. It allows the subject to select his or her own events, characters, emphases, and so on in the initial construction of the group's story. Once this original, unprompted version of the story is told, several additional questions follow. These were designed to get at specific narrative aspects of the story (for example, highlighting turning points and story genre), and to encourage the subject to look backward and forward in the group's history and consider how his or her feelings and thoughts about the group have changed and how they

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

continue to evolve. Although these additional questions make up the bulk of the interview schedule, answers to Question 1, telling the initial freely constructed "story of the company," account for the largest portion of the interview. For Eastern group members, the initial story of the company comprised, on average, 40.2% of the interview content; for Sacred group members, the initial story of the company comprised, on average, 46.1% of the interview content (R = 61, n.s.). The emphasis in the interviews on the subjects' freely constructed narratives gives this data set its specific flavor.

Finally, a brief survey section asked subjects to "rate their life" now, five years ago and five years from now on a 10-point scale, and to rate their feelings about their relationship with the company.

Each interview was audiotaped and transcribed in its entirety by a professional transcriber.

Exhibit 1

Interview Schedule

Q1 First, I'd like you to tell me the story of the _____ company from your point of view. And I don't mean a summary of the story, but more like you would tell it to someone who didn't know anything about it, who really cared and who had all the time in the world.

Q2 Have the goals or purposes of the company changed over the years?

Q3 Could you identify any particular turning point for the company?

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Q4 And have there been any turning points in your own thinking or feelings about the company?

Q5 What are the directions the future could take for the company?

Q6 If you had to predict, which way do you think it will go?

Q7 What have been the most important things that have kept the group going all this time?

Q8 Can you tell me about the most difficult situation that you and the company have faced?

Q9 And what is the story of the most satisfying experience?

Q10 Can you think of anything that has happened that surprised you, in the sense that it seemed out of character with what you would expect from the group?

Q11 What kind of company is this? How would you compare and contrast it to others in the city?

Q12 Could you talk about New York as a context for the group? What is it like to work in this environment?

Q13 What does the company mean to you personally?

Q14 What made you happen to go into theater?

Q15 Okay, for these last few questions, I'd like you to reflect back on what you've talked about so far, so that these are shorter answers that summarize your thinking about these things. And the first thing I'd like is for you to tell me the short version of the story of the group.

Q16 What would you say is the moral of this story?

Q17 And what is the most important idea that one could take away from the story, the gist of it?

Q18 Where does the story go from here?

Q19 And why do you see it going that way?

Q20-26 Age
Highest grade completed
Years with company
On a scale of 1 - 10, how would you rate your

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

life right now?
How would you have rated it five years ago?
How do you expect to rate it five years from now?
And how would you rate your feelings about your relationship with the company?

Setting. Subjects were invited to select a location for their interview that would be convenient and comfortable for them. The only stipulation was that it be a private place. As a result, interviews took place in a variety of private settings: in the interviewer's home, the subject's home, and in offices at the theaters belonging to the companies. This variable had no discernible pattern of effect on the length of the interviews or the apparent forthcomingness of the subjects.

II. Data Analysis

The data analysis in this study consisted largely of interpretive inquiry, and as such was circular: a hermeneutic process of establishing a preliminary perspective or pre-understanding of the phenomenon on the forward arc of inquiry, and evaluating and adjusting that understanding on the reverse arc (Packer and Addison, 1989). My starting place has been outlined in Chapter One. However, it was not possible or desirable to prescribe my procedures before engaging the data; fits and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

starts were expected to, and did, characterize the process of trying, refining, discarding and recruiting different approaches to the data as they proved to be more or less useful to my interpretive efforts. The analyses finally included in the study are briefly described below. Fuller descriptions and rationales are provided with the discussions of the analyses in Chapters Three, Four and Five.

Qualitative analyses. Qualitative analyses were conducted in three areas, deriving from essentially three "readings" of the text.

First, a reading for narrative qualities attempted to uncover features of the subjects' narratives that manifested properties of the frames of meaning provided by the group cultures, with a particular focus on those that relate to the interaction between development and culture. The narrative analyses include:

1. An analysis of synthesized narratives that are made up of the events included in the story of the company by at least three of the eight members of the group. The analysis focuses on the themes and storylines of these core narratives and their implications for the developmental trajectory of the group and its members. Events told by a majority of subjects (at least five) are treated as more central to the group's identity, their place as less optional for

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the individual constructing a story of the company. Events told by only three or four subjects are viewed as representing competing themes within the company, indicative of space between the dominant culture and the individual that may point to change or to differences between members.

2. An analysis of the figures of speech used by members of the two groups traces the root domains of meaning from which members of the same group draw their figurative language.
3. An analysis of disnarration, the subjects' references to what didn't happen, focuses on how the groups use this aspect of narrative differently to either preserve possibility and range of interpretation, or to limit them.
4. An examination of subjects' use of dialectic looks at how members of the two companies refer to differences and similarities between themselves and their fellow members.

Second, a reading for group process focused on group defense as it relates to the group cultures as settings for development. A more defensive culture is more resistant to change and its members will be less able to reconstruct it in ways that support their evolving needs. Analyses of the groups' conceptions of their primary tasks, their boundary management policies, their basic

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

assumption cultures (Bion, 1974), and their differing treatment of less accomplished members contribute to portraits of two cultures that vary trememdously in their abilities to accommodate change.

Third, a reading for adult development considers the initial formation of the groups and compares their suitability as settings within which to work on the tasks of Entering the Adult World. It further looks at the subjects' depiction of their groups' development, and their own individual development since the companies were founded. And finally, evidence is examined that suggests a difference between the groups in terms of how smoothly their members are accomplishing the Age 30 Transition.

The readings were guided by an essentially psychoanalytic strategy. Auerhahn (1979) has discussed some of the psychoanalytic "rules for reading," which I summarize here: psychic determinism is assumed and arbitrariness of linguistic choice is disavowed; surface structure carries information about connection, causality, and association; gaps, disjunctions, contradictions, unusual verbalizations, and affect often mark unconscious or private meanings, i.e., they call for interpretation; meaning can be derived from the apparently meaningless; through such operations as condensation, displacement, and pictorialization, images symbolize abstract contexts and often symbolize several simultaneously. My guiding

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

strategy, derived from these rules, was to view the data both concretely and abstractly -- concretely in the sense of reading literally for the information conveyed in sequencing, foregrounding and backgrounding, and choice of tropes; and, abstractly to attend to the categories to which instantiations belong, for information about symbolism, genres and patterning.

Because the data were approached in several different ways, the rationales for the analyses that comprise the final report are integrated with their results and the interpretation of the results. Each analysis that is presented was included because it contributes a piece to the overall puzzle of what each group culture is, existentially, to its members. The picture thus emerges gradually, and its implications are likewise developed gradually, rather in the style of a case study. This format is judged to present a more comprehensible and meaningful picture of the groups than would a presentation that separated the results of the qualitative analyses from their interpretations.

Quantitative analyses. Where it was possible to isolate and count linguistic features of the text, they were analyzed quantitatively to support the interpretations arrived at through qualitative analyses. For the most part these are ordinal data and were tested for significance with non-parametric techniques.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

An exception is an analysis that compares the frequency of word usage across groups in order to generate a list of frequently used words that characterizes and distinguishes the two groups. The method used was developed by David Kalmar in the New York University laboratory of Jerome Bruner and Carol Feldman. In previous studies of narrative cognition, the method was used to generate word lists that significantly distinguished the interpretive styles of subjects in three different age groups (Feldman, Bruner, Kalmar & Renderer, in press). A complete description of the procedure is provided in Appendix 1. In summary, the program first looks at all words used by all subjects. It determines which words are used by at least three subjects in a given group. It then uses a t-test (ANOVA in studies of more than two groups) to determine which of these words are used significantly more often in one group than in the other. All words with a significant t are assigned to the group that uses them significantly more often, so that a list of words significantly associated with each of the groups results. The word usage was then reviewed in context, and interpretations developed as to what the distinctive word lists could tell about the frames of meaning members of each group bring to experience. This analysis was performed on the entire text of each group's interviews, excluding the interviewer's language.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

CHAPTER THREE

The Narrative Reading

I. Summary Stories

Before I begin to discuss aspects of the groups as revealed by their members' narratives, I would like to acquaint the reader with the stories of the groups. This sketch will prepare the reader to absorb the more detailed information about the group cultures that follows. Rather than creating my own abbreviated summaries of the groups' stories, I will present the "short versions" of the stories as provided by two subjects in response to Question 15. These particular two responses were chosen to represent their groups for two reasons. First, they are among the more complete, in terms of event inclusiveness; and second, they encapsulate a distinguishing feature of the two sets of group narratives that will be explored in some detail in the analyses to come. Here, then, are the two "short stories." A brief discussion of an important difference between them will follow.

The Eastern group.

> Um, okay. Well, the story of the group is it is a group of students that studied with Phillip Rose a specific technique of acting which they found more accessible and more practical than the other techniques which they had been studying. They started out as a theater company in 1983 and since then have been embracing the Practical Aesthetic,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> which is what Rose's technique is, and have been trying to strive to embrace the technique and embrace this, uh, philosophy of theater and life to a certain extent in their work. Um, we've been-- we've done mainly new plays. Uh, and it's-- it's been a company about doing new work and striving for this technique and showing this technique and this philosophy of acting. And, uh, challenging ourselves. And I would say that would-- that would be about it.

> The Sacred group.

> Ooh. The story is a group of people who wanted to come together and act and read. Not necessarily to act, but just to find a home outside of the theater. Uh, developed into a group of people sharing artistic ideas in a variety of venues. Uh, became a producing organization. Was given a large gift at a very, um, early age. Wasn't quite sure how to handle it yet. Fumbled it, almost dropped it. Recovered. Learned from the experience. Grew as artists and individuals. Harnessed the power that is around us and are now, uh, looking towards a positive future.

With this introduction to the groups, the reader may well think that our investigation is over! Already we have met one group characterized by changing goals and individual development, and another that conformed to an outside vision and has been exemplifying it in the same way ever since. Indeed, this profound difference between the groups is at the crux of all the issues that are to be explored. Although an obvious difference, the investigation will show how far-reaching are its implications for the members of the two groups.

At this point I also direct the reader's attention to two other features of these short stories. One is that the Sacred group's story of "becoming" also points toward

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

a future, while the Eastern story of "having become" seems to end as the subject tells us what it's "been about." The second feature is the contrast between the playful, figurative description of the Sacred group's progress and the serious, effort-laden description of the Eastern group. These features, too, adumbrate the remainder of the investigation.

This introduction to the groups enables the reader to follow the hermeneutic process of the investigation. Armed now with an idea about the differences between the two groups, we will encounter the rest of the data.

II. Synthesized Narratives

Introduction. Any act of autobiography will reflect complex organizing strategies that influence the content, structure, language and other dimensions of the narrative. In part, those strategies are determined by the circumstances of the particular narrating event itself -- the various features of the event as an interaction (the participants, their relationship, the purposes for which the narrative is being constructed), and the narrator's current perspective toward his subject. In addition, the narrative will display the narrator's sense of the kind of story he is telling, of what it is about and what it means. It is this aspect of the organization that may reflect culture's effects on perception, memory and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

thought (Bruner & Weisser, 1991).

Let us begin with content, the narrator's selection of events itself. Out of the multitude of specific episodic memories that might be included in an accounting, a small number are actually selected. To the extent that individual members of a group select the same events to include in their stories of the group, they are showing conceptualization guided by similar strategies of organization and interpretation. We might begin to uncover the shared, or cultural, aspects of the underlying stategies by looking at those events that are selected by several members.

In the first step of this effort, I constructed a synthesized narrative for each group. I began by listing, for each subject, the events included in the story they told in response to Question 1 ("Tell me the story of the company..."). I made a master event list that included all events narrated by at least three of the eight subjects in each group. I then noted which events were told by a majority of the subjects in the group (at least five members), and called these "core events." The remaining events, told by only three or four subjects, I called "supplemental events." (Events told by fewer than three subjects are not included in the present analysis.) The subjects' own language and individual points of view are not included in the synthesized narratives. Rather,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

this initial content analysis is in the interest of abstracting the underlying strategies of organization and interpretation -- strategies that reflect the frames of meaning that the group cultures bring to experience -- that are given shape in the individual narratives.

The synthesized narratives lend themselves to a search for the dominant storylines and themes that organize the narratives. I will also attempt to draw further implications from the analysis by attending to the differences between the core and supplemental events. By putting the events into a dominant or subordinate category, it may be possible to access the dynamic interplay of themes in the groups.

A culture (like a text) will contain any number of themes, which exist in more or less harmony with each other (Seung, 1982). They may be totally incompatible, in which case one must be rejected if the other is to be realized. In this case the rejected theme often lives on, however, because the pair of opposing themes is invoked to justify or illustrate the rightness of the accepted pole. But Seung distinguishes thematic opposition from "thematic tension" or "competition." The latter refer to pairs that do not logically exclude each other, but that can be in competition with each other. For example, the theme of concern with home life is not necessarily incompatible with the theme of concern with work life. But if both

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

themes exist, there is likely to be some tension between the two.

The important point here is that the themes of a culture are in dynamic relation to each other, and that their relationship in turn defines the existential dynamics of belonging to a given culture. Thematic tension within a culture is experienced as existential dilemma by a member of that culture. To give an example from one of our groups, a prominent theme in the Eastern company is the value of work, the importance of working hard to develop skill (expressed in the conviction that "if you worked at it, you would get better at it"), and the valuing in turn of those members who do work hard. Another theme is the priority of the play itself over the desires of individuals who may contribute to its production (expressed in such aphorisms as "serve the play," and "do what's best for the play"). These themes conflict with one another because those members who work hard have not necessarily become the better actors in the company, and may not best serve the play. Many group members find themselves torn between their conviction that hard work should pay off, their commitment to rewarding hard workers, and the undeniable perception that a less hard-working member may in fact be what's best for the play. Both Seung (1982) and Bruner and Weisser (1991) emphasize that although members of a given community will

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

show involvement with the same themes, they do not necessarily take a unified stance toward them. "Every thematic conflict is likely to produce conflicting alliances and allegiances among the members of a community" (Seung, 1982, p. 217). This contributes to the sense of existential anxiety that members of a community must manage as part of their involvement with that community, but may be necessary for the culture to evolve. Importantly, the interplay of themes in a culture may promote development by providing a dialectic that serves as contrast, comparison, challenge to the status quo.

In this analysis of the synthesized narratives, I will be attending to the differences between core (reported by a majority) and supplemental (reported by a minority) events, with an eye to developing the dynamic interplay of themes in the two groups. The core events capture the canonical framework of the group culture -- the most agreed-upon constituents of its story, the themes most central to its identity. But the supplemental events tell us about the degree of flexibility that exists alongside the canonical. They indicate the range of individual movement, play and growth that are possible within the context of the culture. The supplemental events will reveal differences within the group that may contribute to the process of development. Furthermore, the supplemental events may point to shifts in cultural

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

priorities over time, representing themes or storylines that are either in ascendance or descendance at the time of story telling.

Findings. The Summary Stories have already indicated that the Eastern group runs a much tighter ship, so to speak, and it is not surprising that the Eastern synthesized narrative includes 46% more core events than the Sacred synthesized narrative (19 vs. 13, respectively). The Eastern group has a total of 34 events in its synthesized narrative, and the Sacred group has a total of 27 events. The two have about the same number of supplemental events (Eastern 15, Sacred 14).

We cannot draw many conclusions from the numbers alone, but these figures do suggest that as individual Eastern members compose a story of their group, they approach their memories with a similar organizing strategy. There is more agreement among them as to what events must be included in their story. This impression is further supported by considering the lengths of the stories themselves. Eastern narratives average 212 lines in length, compared to Sacred narratives which average 253 lines. Thus the duplication of events between Eastern members is not a function of volume of talk -- telling such a long story that they naturally cover much of the same ground. Indeed, the reader of the Eastern stories almost feels as though this history is rehearsed. The

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

stories are shorter than the Sacred stories, yet there are several more events included, and these are related in economic accounts that are less diverse than the Sacred accounts.

This impression raises a question as to whether the Sacred group's greater volume of talk represents a wider range of events reported, or a greater amount of elaboration per event and/or extraneous to the events themselves. A count showed that the average number of idiosyncratic events (i.e., events told by fewer than three members of the group) was 4.4 in the Sacred group and 6.2 in the Eastern group. In itself, this finding points to the consistency among the stories told by members of each group. Given several years of lived time to distill into a narrative, it is remarkable that there should be so few individually related events. The finding further suggests that the Sacred group's greater volume of talk largely reflects more individuality of expression, i.e., they elaborate events more fully and their stories include more material that is extraneous to event reporting -- personal reactions, desires, and opinions, for example. Despite agreement among the Sacred members as to what events comprise their story, they apparently construct their individual versions with greater latitude than do Eastern members.

It is also interesting to note a key difference in

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the chronology of the two synthesized stories. The Eastern stories devote much more relative attention to the earlier phase of the group's history. Events from the first two years of its existence, or earlier, account for 58% of their total events. (This total includes nine events [26% of the total] that took place before the group became a company.) Only 18% of the events in the Eastern stories took place in the most recent two years. In contrast, the Sacred members tell stories in which events from their first two years or earlier account for 33% of the total. Events from the most recent two years comprise 44% of the total events. This finding suggests two implications at this juncture. One is that the Sacred group's story has undergone more ongoing revision than the Eastern story; it is able to integrate change while retaining its essential identity. The distribution of Eastern events suggests that the group's early history is much more central to its identity than is the same period to the Sacred group. It resists revision and may not easily accommodate the integration of more recent events. Another possibility to consider is that recent events in the Eastern group have triggered a preoccupation with the early days -- a compelling need to reify, rework or understand them.

A summary of these comparisons is presented in Table 2, below.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Table 2

Characteristics of Narratives and Synthesized Narratives

	Sacred	Eastern
Narratives		
Mean # of lines in story	253	212
Mean # idiosyncratic events	4.4	6.2
Synthesized Narratives		
# of total events	27	34
# of core events	13	19
# of supplemental events	14	15
# events from first two years or earlier	9	20
# events from most recent two years	12	6

The synthesized narratives are presented below. Events are numbered in sequence, and asterisks (*) mark the supplemental events. In order to attend to the differences between core and supplemental events, a discussion of the core events of the stories will precede consideration of the full stories.

Eastern Theater Company - Synthesized Narrative

(1) A number of students in NYU's drama department

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

took a six week seminar with Phillip Rose (PR), a famous playwright, in which he spoke about what was wrong with American theater and popular culture, and how they might be improved. He believed that good theater could help society confront its problems and suggest how those problems might be solved. The students found his presentation and his ideas compelling.

(2) Some had heard there would be the opportunity for more in-depth study with PR in the summer, but until the last class PR would not confirm this. During the last class he announced that there would be a summer session in Vermont, and anyone who was ready to commit to participating could sign up and come.

(3) So approximately 25 students attended an intense actor training workshop in Vermont, where PR and his colleagues introduced them to "Practical Aesthetics," his acting technique and a philosophy of theater.

(4) The students found his technique and his ideas to be more coherent and more useful than what they had been learning at their NYU studios. Unlike other methods, PR's technique consisted of practical skills. If a student worked hard and mastered them, he became a better actor.

(*5) The following summer, PR was again offering the workshop in Vermont. Students who had attended the first session were welcome if they could demonstrate that they had continued to work on their voices. Several new students were interested in attending, having heard favorable reports from friends who attended the first summer. So PR selected new students by giving them a special test. A list of questions and tasks was passed out so students could prepare. They had to recite ten lines of Kipling, make a knife stick in the wall, and find the answers to mysterious questions such as, "why do commandoes lisp at night?" and "what is the meaning of kingside and ladyside?" The questions had answers, although they had nothing to do with acting, and students who demonstrated their determination and willingness to work hard by finding the answers were accepted to the program. Again, students found the workshop to be enlightening.

(6) Participants found the PR workshops to be so much more helpful than their other studios that they engaged PR to open a Practical Aesthetics Workshop (PAW) at NYU in the fall. Students could now keep

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

studying the PR technique instead of returning to their old studios.

(7) But before the end of the first semester, PR and his colleagues planned to go to Chicago to do a season at the Goodman Theater. They told the students that if they wanted to continue, they would have to come to Chicago and do internships at the Goodman.

(8) So two weeks later most of the students moved to Chicago, found themselves housing and parttime jobs, and studied by participating in all aspects of theater at the Goodman and taking classes with PR and his colleagues.

(9) At the end of that Spring semester, PR announced that he had taught the students all that he knew about theater. He said that now they must put their knowledge into practice by becoming a theater company. He said they could be the Eastern Theater Company, and he recommended that they go to Vermont and start producing plays. He promised to sit on their board and provide help when they needed it.

(10) PR had incorporated the Eastern Theater Company before he began teaching in Vermont, laying all the legal groundwork and establishing a board for the company. This he turned over to the students.

(*11) The students had several long meetings during which they set up a structure for operations and for dealing with each other. They found the process to be rather chaotic, and elected an artistic director to be in charge. A constitution was drafted to lay out principles and rules of procedure. They would be a theater company that practiced the Practical Aesthetics technique, and adhered to its principles.

(12) The company went to Vermont for a busy first season.

(13) At the end of the summer they had a vote to decide whether they would establish themselves in New York or Chicago. They decided to go to Chicago, since it was a smaller, less competitive, less expensive environment, and one where they had some connections. Several members still had to complete a semester at NYU, so they planned to reassemble in Chicago in January.

(*14) They attempted to produce a soap opera spoof

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

that one of the members had written. It was to be three episodes, and they were to perform at a nightclub that catered to transvestites during the later hours. The production just didn't seem to work, and they closed it before it actually opened.

(*15) They produced an evening of one-acts, not especially well-written and only related to each other in that someone was tied up in a chair in all three.

(*16) At about this time, some members dropped out and several took leaves to work with PR on his first film. One of those who went to work on the film was slated to be the next artistic director, and it was difficult to replace him.

(*17) That summer the group did not return to Vermont, partly because many members were away, and all were broke and needed to earn money. Some returned to New York. It was the first summer the group did not go to Vermont since they began going there to study with PR.

(18) They produced a play called "Been Taken," which was their first real success in Chicago. The show was doing so well that they could have extended it, but they were ready to move on.

(*19) They went immediately into production of an evening of one-acts that turned out to be a great disappointment. The building they rented did not have a license to operate as a theater, although its owners had said it did. After just four performances the fire department came in and closed the show down.

(20) Many members were unhappy in Chicago, feeling homesick, and experiencing financial difficulties. So they voted to return to New York.

(21) They remounted the successful Been Taken at a very small New York theater, but few people came.

(22) That summer they went to Vermont and decided to do as many plays as possible. They secured several good new plays, and planned an ambitious and extremely demanding schedule of eight productions in nine weeks. Most of the scheduled season was achieved.

(23) The following fall they planned to remount "Boy's Life," one of the plays from the summer

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

roster. They didn't have much money and were putting together a very low budget production.

(24) One of PR's colleagues and a former teacher from the Goodman, GM, was now the artistic director of Lincoln Center. One of his shows was not working. He dropped it, and PR suggested moving "Boy's Life" in to fill the gap. GM had seen the show in Vermont, decided to work on it a bit and give it a try. The company members would all have to join the stage union, Equity, to work in the professional setting.

(25) "Boy's Life" was an unexpected hit. It got great reviews, was nominated for several awards and extended several months. The company found themselves at the center of a lot of attention, suddenly celebrated on the New York theater scene.

(*26) The following summer they paid themselves according to the Equity scale, and went into debt. They returned to New York and did not produce anything for the entire season. It was a sobering contrast to the success of the prior year.

(*27) The next summer they began running the Practical Aesthetics Workshop for NYU students, essentially the same program they had taken as students but with themselves as teachers instead of PR. The school began to bring in the money the company needed for operations.

(*28) That fall the group was hoping that Lincoln Center would again pick up one of the plays they worked on during the summer season, "Women in Water." There were preliminary negotiations, but the writer was not satisfied with the company's production and insisted on replacing some company members with other, better known, actors. The company refused to replace any of its actors and the project fell through.

(*29) The following summer the group was invited to move to a larger venue in Vermont. The city of Burlington offered them space and support so they relocated. They also elected a new artistic director and hired a managing director, who worked together to set up a financial structure for the company.

(*30) Back in New York in the fall, the company produced a play about racism. It was not well-received and lost money for the company.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

(*31) In the most recent summer in Vermont the group performed an evening of Shakespeare and produced PR's adaptation of "Three Sisters."

(32) This fall they finally completed contracts for a theater in New York, something they had wanted for a long time, and had been negotiating for several months. They moved in to their own theater and began dealing with all the new responsibilities.

(*33) Now the company is going through a painful reassessment of its fundamental principles, with the members divided over whether new members should be recruited -- members who have not trained in the technique of Practical Aesthetics. Also under consideration is allowing directors who work with the company to include non-company actors in their productions. Some feel such adaptations would violate the very basis of the company, while others feel that not all company members have continued to grow as good actors, and that new membership is necessary if the group is to survive.

(*34) They plan to remount PR's adaptation of "Three Sisters," which they also performed in Philadelphia last month, as their first production in the new theater.

The Sacred & Profane Players - Synthesized Narrative

(1) Several young actors, many who knew each other from NYU, were beginning to work regularly, beginning to feel confident, and realizing that in order to do the kind of work they wanted to do, and to do it with friends, they would have to take the initiative themselves. They decided to get together and just see what would happen.

(2) The first meeting was held at a comfortable bar where they frequently hung out, and they talked about what they might do. They didn't have any specific goals, but they thought it would be fun to meet regularly and to have something going on in between jobs. They decided to start with the loose agenda of reading some plays together. They planned to meet a week later and tell other friends about it.

(3) They started meeting weekly and reading plays they liked. They'd meet at people's apartments or

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

borrow space where they could.

(*4) The size of the group grew rapidly, with friends inviting friends, and more would show up each week. Soon it reached the point where it was hard to find space and plays to accomodate so many, and the membership was arbitrarily cut off to be whoever was participating at that time.

(5) After about a year, they began writing pieces themselves and bringing them in to read to the group, and found they were getting to know each other better this way.

(6) They started collecting dues and with the money they rented a space once a week to have a regular meeting place. It started to feel like there was more of a commitment to the group.

(7) Then they started to do improvisations and scenes for each other, both individually and in smaller subgroups. There were always several points of view among them about what they were doing.

(*8) On one occasion the company split into three groups and each created an improvisational piece to perform for the rest of the group. They had a special evening to present the pieces to each other, which all enjoyed.

(*9) All this time the group had no name, calling itself "the group." For many months the group spent most of each meeting fighting about what the name should be, with members submitting names and voting and much debate. Finally they became so tired of all the time and temper spent on the issue that they agreed to just go with Sacred & Profane Players, even though many members didn't like the name at the time.

(*10) The first time the public was invited to watch the group was for a reading of a play written by a company member. The public reaction was favorable.

(11) Some of the members decided to do a fully produced performance for the public. They chose two one-acts that company members had written, and one additional one-act, and they put their money together to rent a small theater. The performance was well-received and the participants enjoyed it, so they thought they would like to do more performing.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

(12) One of the members, GT, had an uncle who owned a commercial art factory that he was closing. GT spoke to him about letting the company renovate the space for a theater, and the uncle agreed to let the group have the space rent-free for a number of months. Once established, the group would have to rent the space.

(13) Everyone worked very hard together to convert the factory to a theater space.

(14) The first play in the new space was written by a company member, and poorly produced. The company was not yet prepared to be presenting a full length production, and they chalked it up to learning experience.

(15) The following production was also disappointing, but again, those who worked on it felt that they learned from it, and that it was somewhat more successful than their first attempt.

(16) Some members decided to put together a non-traditional evening that would include music. They invited several writers to contribute short pieces on the theme of homelessness, and strung together an informal evening that they called an "issues project." The performance was rough but engagingly energetic, and well-received.

(*17) GT had been acting as co-artistic director with another member, but he felt a lack of support from many members who were not as interested as he was in producing plays. One particular member, BK, seemed to be deliberately promoting dissatisfaction with GT. GT found it difficult to work with this sense of being undermined, and so he called for a vote for artistic director. GT lost the election. His co-artistic director and BK, representing the anti-producing faction, were voted in.

(*18) Upon learning this, GT's uncle was going to take the space away from the group. GT formed a new production organization and arranged to share the space with Sacred & Profane Players so it would not be taken away.

(*19) With the new artistic directors in charge, the company produced "Avenue Boys," written by a company member. Although favorably received, the production was very difficult for the company. Due to the interior strains in the company, there was virtually

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

no technical support. And BK himself, who was acting in the play, proved to be so difficult he was asked to leave the production in an emotional scene.

(*20) BK resigned and left the city, with the company in some disarray.

(*21) GT resumed leadership with two other co-artistic directors. There was no vote this time. GT and the others simply assumed the artistic directorship, and members could resign if they were uncomfortable with that arrangement.

(*22) The company produced "Machinal," which was so successful that Joseph Papp picked it up to produce at the Public Theater.

(*23) The group produced "Chelsea Walls," which was written by a company member expressly for the group. It was a play with a very large cast, including many non-company members, and combined solid production with the energetic, short scene feel of the group's "issues projects." It was the first time the company invited critics, and it was quite successful.

(*24) The group produced its third and most professional issues project, "Naked Truth," about censorship.

(*25) Recently the group produced a large environmental event, a benefit that raised $30,000 for the company. They recreated a speakeasy at a nightclub, with 60 actors in period costume.

(*26) The question of membership has become a big issue, because so many people now want to be a part of the company. The group recently developed a stringent membership policy that admits up to two new members a year through a complicated eligibility and voting procedure. The group will continue to work at times with theater professionals who are not members.

(27) The group has developed a sense of mutual respect, commitment, and knowledge of each other. They consider their range of points of view to be a source of strength. They find creating together to be exciting and fun.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Observations related to story beginnings and endings. Before turning to the thematic analysis, there are some observations to make about the structures of the stories. It is interesting to note that in both groups, there seems to be group consensus (a preponderance of core vs. supplemental events) about the events that are important to tell from the group's early history. In both groups there is much less agreement found in the events chosen to comprise the more recent history. It may be easier to organize events of the distant past because one knows where they have led. Those events that resonate with paths-not-taken may drop out of the story. Perhaps it is more difficult to make this distinction among more recent events. This finding also suggests that a group naturally turns to its origins to locate the roots of its identity.

The storytellers' attention to the beginning of the stories has an organizing purpose as well. Fowler (1982) notes that the opening words and topics of a narrative are particularly influential signals of the kind of work that will follow. From this perspective, it is interesting to note the difference between the beginnings of the two synthesized narratives. The Sacred story is driven by intention and therefore seems more intrinsic to its members. The Eastern story, in contrast, is driven by plight or circumstance, and seems more extrinsic to its members.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The Sacred group's story begins, not with an event per se, but with an epistemic state. Six of the eight Sacred members (all of the six original members among the eight subjects) begin their story by telling how they were feeling at that early point in their career, and how they decided to form a group to address that feeling. The group was explicitly formed to meet certain existential-psychological needs. The beginning seems to signal that the story will, in some sense, be about the group's value and impact for the individual member. The seeds of this group were planted in each individual member; the group is a creative product that each member can claim. The story ends, for seven of eight subjects, with a description of the present epistemic state of the group, and the subject's personal relationship to the group. Formally, the narrative comes full circle and is a remarkably "whole" piece.

In contrast, seven of eight Eastern members begin their story with an extrinsic event, the encounter with Phillip Rose. Interestingly, five of the seven members who include this event were not even present when it took place (although all of the Sacred members who discussed their origins were present at the time). This beginning seems to signal that the story will report a sequence of events that happened to the group and are outside the control of the individuals who report them. The members

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

do not actually form their company until the ninth event, and this, too, is something that happened to them rather than something they initiated. This is a group of people who happened to be at the same place at the same time. Their personal relationship to the group itself, past or present, does not seem to be an important part of the story. There is a surprising lack of consensus among Eastern members about the ending events of the story. Again, we suspect that the ending events are chaotic and unintegrated because the story, and the culture it reflects, is not flexible enough to permit smooth reconstitution.

In addition, it is important that six of eight Sacred members name some of the people who participated in the beginning of their stories. The Eastern members name no other members, only Phillip Rose. As a feature of the beginning of the narratives, this difference signals the relative importance of individuals in the stories that follow. The Sacred group's story depicts a much more richly populated world, consistent with a culture that provides room for play and differentiated participation.

I will turn now to an analysis of the themes and storylines contained in the two synthesized narratives, focusing first on the core event narratives.

Eastern group - Themes and storylines. The first event of Eastern's story introduces a number of themes.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Perhaps most prominent in the first event is a powerful figure, a famous, magnetic, idealistic man with exacting standards. This man reveals a Truth to these young actors: theater can be a tool of moral value. Regardless of why these individuals were initially drawn to theater, PR has now imbued the profession with an attractive virtue. He has transformed it into a calling. At the same time, by invoking morality and social good, he has defined all non-instrumental theater, and "selfish" motives for doing theater, as of lesser value. This introduces the notion that there are right and wrong kinds of theater, and that the right kind can be redeeming. Linked to this morality is a theme of commitment to social values, and negated by a moral, communitarian vision is the idea of self-involvement and the pursuit of individual goals and self-expression unless they are yoked to the advancement of social values. The theme of functional art is also established -- art is right, or good, if it can be put to the instrumental purpose of educating and improving society. This theme is not incompatible with art for pleasure, beauty or entertainment, but it does compete with these ideas.

The core events go on to amplify these themes and introduce others that are compatible. We see the idea of practicality and utility emphasized again, quite directly, in the name of PR's philosophy: Practical Aesthetics.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Instrumentality is reaffirmed when the students master this technique. Its usefulness effectively subordinates talent, charisma, and other intangible personal traits to the values of hard work, determination and self-control. Early on the idea of hierarchy also enters; PR is seen to have the authority to make decisions, name conditions, and reveal his intentions as he sees fit. Students can only follow, demonstrate their ready commitment to his choices. PR, on very little notice, asks the group to follow him to Chicago. Those who do so show their willingness to renounce material and personal attachments, creating tension between the themes of the noumenal or spiritual versus the physical world.

Acquisition of a skill by a beginner who is subordinate to a master of the craft suggests the storyline of apprenticeship. Apprenticeship in turn suggests long years of deprivation and self-denial, almost servitude in the single-minded dedication to learning the craft. The storyline evokes a lost work ethic, by implication contrasting bygone respect for quality and discipline with the expedient and self-serving motives of the present day. The recurrent travel in the core events, combined with the renunciation of worldly attachments, adds to the story of apprenticeship some of the properties of a quest. The quest storyline enhances the preciousness of the knowledge that is to be acquired. .It evokes the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Holy Grail, the long and arduous journey in search of spiritual regeneration. Following this implied storyline to its conclusion, we reach an endpoint where the apprentice or searcher, once he has found the truth, begins a new life that demonstrates the rightness of the calling and that forsakes all that may tempt him from the path (Suleiman, 1983). This storyline, then, excludes the continuing revision of ends that is a hallmark of development.

Consistent with the storyline's blueprint, the group is transformed in one stroke into a theater company once it completes its apprenticeship. This transformation is like a rebirth, the group is re-created by PR in his own image. He fathers the group, he promises his protection, and he even names it. Like the names most parents choose for their children, the name PR gives the company was selected before he knew the members themselves. It in no way reflects their personal attributes, representing instead his own ideas and aspirations. The name itself is remarkably free of implication, paradoxically leaving the group free to be almost anything, yet denying them the opportunity of defining themselves. Nevertheless, the group has completed its quest. Morally and spiritually enhanced, knowing all they need to know, they can embark on a new life.

Following this transformation, the core events

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

essentially chronicle the group's movement from place to place and its rather workmanlike dedication to doing theater at whatever level possible. It is uneventful until PR reappears and, like a fairy godmother, fosters the group's sudden success and celebrity. The themes of fame and celebrity, which have been overshadowed by a commitment to the moral utility of theater, now reemerge. We recall that PR is not just any teacher, but a famous one. The "Boy's Life" event is almost like a Cinderella story. Certainly it is like the actor's version of that story, in which a poor, unknown, but talented young person is discovered by chance, and rewarded virtually overnight with fame and fortune. The possibility of reward and recognition -- the hope that dutiful perseverance will someday pay off in love and riches: this storyline, by valuing beauty and talent and glorifying material achievement, presents a vigorous challenge to the dominant themes of the core events.

The final core event also introduces some new and competitive themes. The group now has its own theater, a home. This development puts an end to the theme of constant travel and movement. And it also suggests a maturity, an ability to be master of one's own home that competes with the prior pattern of submission to paternal authority. With mature stability comes the idea of knowing one's self, rather than the finding or escaping

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

one's self that is associated with the journey. The idea of home brings with it, too, a notion of family and mutual concern that has been remarkably absent -- even given the group's emphasis on unity of opinion and purpose. Still, getting a theater and thereby accomplishing a long-sought goal can be linked with earlier events as an exemplar. It demonstrates the rightness of the path the group has followed.

There is one more storyline that is suggested by the core events: the story of the famous parent. Like a myth or a folktale, this is a story driven less by motive than by plight. There is an implacability to its implications. They include a child doomed to live in his parent's shadow, and a parent whose private deeds and misdeeds are overshadowed by a public persona. The child finds his parent inconsistent, for although he can be indulgent he is often inaccessible or absent. It seems the whole world competes for his attentions. And though the child experiences the envy of others, rarely does he feel recognized or wanted for his own individual qualities. Instead he seems to be the target of scrutiny, criticism, with his failures and his successes both ultimately attributable to his parent. In recent times this story often culminates with revenge, a symbolic murder by which the grown child sets the record straight and tries to convince the world that he does have an identity of his

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

own, if not a separate destiny. Like the apprentice story, this story, too, entails obstacles to development.

Consideration of supplemental events. The reader is invited to turn to Appendix 2, where a full thematic analysis of the supplemental events, and how they modify or add to the interplay of themes and storylines found in the core events, is provided. In the interest of brevity, I will confine remarks here to the overall contrast between supplemental and core events.

Given the magnitude of the crisis represented by the group's current reassessment of its founding principles (an upheaval that was taking place at the time these narratives were recorded), it is in some ways surprising that only three members mentioned it in the context of their story of the group. But it cannot be easy to integrate with the rather rigid story of their lives as they have been lived up to this point. Indeed, the radical degree of rupture taking place suggests the group is suddenly struggling to refigure a more accommodating version of its past. The need to find threads of continuity is urgent, and the differences between core and supplemental events suggest where the group is finding them. The core events emphasize PR's seminal role in the creation of the group, the vision he provided, the justification he offered for a life in the theater and the tools he gave the group to help it achieve that life. It

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

is clear that PR's inspiration and leadership will continue to play an important part in their story, and that the group firmly links its identity to PR's action. The core events also include the more successful, encouraging points in the group's history, and culminate in the establishment of their own New York theater.

The supplemental events seem to represent the extremes of the thematic poles outlined in the core events. They heighten the conflicts and exemplify the dangers of both poles. The supplemental events largely amplify the theme of submission to authority and are against individuality and self-expression. They contribute the nuances of cultishness and hermeticism to the group's adherence to PR's teachings. They tell of the hard times for the group, and of the failures that show a pattern of conflict with success. The supplemental events also include those that show evidence of the group's competence and increasing ability to take care of itself.

If we read the supplemental events as clues to conflicts among the dominant themes of the group culture, the supplemental events suggest that members are beginning to find ways to challenge their culture's constraints on the expression of individuality and competitive impulses, its devaluing of inherent talent and creativity, and its withholding of recognition for personal accomplishment. The supplemental events further suggest that themes

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

pertaining to mature responsibility and independence, and to the need to depend on a protective authority, are in flux. It appears that competing themes, long submerged, have finally triggered significant development as members reevaluate and reconstruct their past experiences in the context of the Age 30 Transition. Some of these themes are in ascendance and some in descendance as the group struggles to redefine itself in a way that will support a trajectory consistent with members' evolving concerns.

Sacred group - Themes and storylines. The first event of the Sacred story, as in the Eastern story, introduces several themes. The idea of self-determination and acting on one's own initiative stands out, and seems to entail a certain resistance to following or relying upon the direction of others. This idea also is endorsed for its own sake, not as a means to an end. There is a theme of effortlessness, of pursuing what is wanted because it is pleasurable to do so, not because it will lead to any particular goal. Friendship is prominent, and the pleasure of friends' company and participation is opposed to the everyday work world where one's colleagues are not one's friends. The kind of work one would want to do is contrasted with everyday work. Everyday work is thus cast as the kind of work someone else wants -- or in the case of theater and other commercial ventures, what

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the public wants. One's own desires are thus valued and contrasted with what society offers and demands. There is also a sense of confidence and early success; the beginning of a storyline about being on the way up is suggested.

The theme of friendship continues to be elaborated, linked with fun and informality and spontaneity in the second event. There continues to be emphasis on freedom of action and opposition to the ideas of planning or goal orientation. Combined with the setting of the local bar, this opposition is taking shape as resistance to authority or discipline. The core events gradually gather a forward momentum, as being surrounded by friends provides a context where group members can begin to try things, reveal themselves, explore their own creativity. There is a safety in the group that only gradually develops even there; by contrast the world outside the group inhibits freedom and creativity. These explorative steps cohere into themes of growth and learning, both of which take place at the outer edges of what the group has already mastered. They thus embody a tension between what is old, known, expectable and comfortable, and what is new, risky and innovative. The self confidence continues as well, and is embellished with good fortune when the group receives the space from a member's uncle. Throughout the core story, the group displays a certain precocity, an

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

assuredness that it will be indulged by others and a pleasure in indulging itself.

By founding itself and rejecting any authoritarian models of what a group might be, resisting structure and definition, the core events suggest the storyline of the orphan, or perhaps more closely, the runaway. The runaway's story contains the elements of rebellion against the given, the establishing of a more desirable, independent and less restricted life that are so prominent here. It's a storyline that entails risks, but these are worth taking in the interests of preserving the individual self. The Sacred members, many of whom have already found some commercial success, create their group as an explicit alternative to the commercialism of professional theater. Thus free of authority or constraint, inspired by each other, lacking a civic goal, the group looks for a good time.

Alongside the runaway storyline runs a somewhat contradictory story, an orderly story characterized by the familiar, step-like progression of development. It's the story of a group that begins with a mutual desire, pools its resources and embarks on a process of growth and discovery -- of self, each other, of creative possibility. Gradually, through trial and error, the group increases its commitment, its responsibility, its skill, and gradually it begins to interface with the world outside

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

itself. The story ends on a note of affirmative, mellow maturity. We might be surprised that the theme of alterity established in the runaway's story has been overshadowed by the comfortable tale of predictable advancement. Left to their own devices, the runaways have not become outlaws at all. Instead they have completed the process of socialization -- seemingly incorporating the very values they initially joined forces to reject. But in fact this is just how the story of runaways often ends: if he is not to be an outlaw, the runaway must somehow achieve maturity and reintegration into the human community on his own.

To a rather remarkable degree, the themes and storylines of the Sacred group's core story embody developmental movement. The group has revised its goals many times, and shows enough elasticity to integrate these changes and transform itself in a way that allows room for further cycles of development. It has been able to recognize and confront the competition between its themes, for example that between independence and creating a product for public consumption; it emphasizes the individuality of members and thereby preserves a dialectic; and, it has successfully created a Winnicottian potential space that its members use for play. This group culture seems to be an ideal setting for the process of development.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Consideration of supplemental events. Again, a full treatment of the supplemental events is provided in Appendix 3. A summary of their interplay with core events is presented here.

The core ending, told by seven of eight subjects, provides a good clue as to how the core story should be taken. The group's history, as they now would tell it, is a story of friendship and fun, and portrays professional accomplishment as an effortless outcome, indeed only to be expected from this talented group who were already on the way up when they joined forces. The ending explicitly values the variety of points of view in the group; they are now a source of strength, and the core story denies that they have ever been divisive. The full story, with supplemental events included, demands acknowledgment that the dynamics of the group have shifted. It is no longer a place to simply explore, be with friends, and see what happens. Just like the productions of the outside professional theater, those that the group now undertakes may not represent what each member "wants to do." (This may explain why four of the recent productions end up on the supplemental list.) The core story presents this shift as a natural, gradual and consensual process. The full story shows that it included emotional violence, and that it surely entailed, on some level, a deep sense of loss. Loss, of course, always accompanies development,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

and to dwell on that aspect makes it difficult to move forward.

For it is plain that the group has undergone significant revision. It is meaningfully different than it once was, and the supplemental events detail the process of development that took place. Perhaps because the change has been integrated, the revised core story does not need to include details of the change process itself. However, that it continues to be told as a supplemental event suggests that, for some members, the acquiescence to authority and tradition represented by the increasing emphasis on production is constraining. These members would prefer greater independence, do not want to be bound by the desire for public affirmation, and resent the restrictions on spontaneity that higher production standards impose. The resolution of these issues is part of the reevaluation of the life structure the members are engaged in as adults in the Age 30 Transition.

Narratives as analogues of change. There are obviously many contrasts between the two groups' stories, and these differences will be explored throughout the remainder of this study. One of particular interest in the present analysis is the way in which formal features of the two narratives themselves show development, or its absence. The Sacred story, grounded in the initial desire of difference, encompassed evolving forms of relationship

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

between the group members, and produced new forms of theatrical expression for the group. These new productions, in the end, were integrated with pre-existing forms in the theatrical community. In that integration, genuine transformation, "affirm[ing] at once resemblance and difference" (Brooks, 1985, p. 91), was achieved.

The Eastern story, on the other hand, is grounded in the desire of identification --the group worked to reproduce the model provided by PR. Although there was an initial change or transformation of the members when they mastered PR's teachings, it was a transformation that served to collapse the difference between members that was present before their conversion. It was, paradoxically, a change that resulted in sameness. After this transformation the story is characterized by repetition of a very literal sort. We are told of the group performing the same plays more than once. We are told that failure follows fortune in a repeating pattern. The group adopts PR's teaching without modification and reproduces it literally by replacing him as leader of the PA workshop and passing on the teaching to others. There is a great deal of geographical movement in the story, as if to counteract this stasis. Yet the travel, too, is repetitive; New York, Chicago and Vermont are revisited again and again. Therefore, although a lot happens in the story, its progress or development is effectively negated

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

by a lack of difference between the events. Barthes has said that the purpose of narrative significance is to "overcome repetition and found the model of a becoming" (1966, p. 26). In this light, the group's recent move into a new home figures not only as highly significant, but also as the beginning of genuine development.

III. Figures of Speech

Introduction. Thus far, the analysis has been based on content analysis of an abstraction, the synthesized narrative derived from the individual narratives. Now I will turn to text analysis, focusing on the language of the individual versions themselves, beginning with an examination of the figurative language used by the two groups. Through their use of figuration, the subjects offer us a glimpse into other layers of meaning and experience. By evoking image, affect and alternate storylines, figurative language imports a set of connotations from separate domains into the domain of discourse, while preserving the distinctions between the two domains (Lakoff, 1987; see also Arlow, 1979; Edelson, 1992; Schafer, 1983 and 1992; and, Siegelman, 1990). It therefore allows the expression of ambiguity, fantasy and conflict without requiring explicit commitment to, or consciousness of, the domain of figuration. "Within metaphor and metonymy the primary and secondary processes

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

find a kind of equilibrium, one which permits profound affinities and adjacencies to be discovered without differences being lost (Mellard, 1987, p.39)."

There are far too many usages of figurative language in these 16 narratives to permit an individual analysis of each trope within the scope of the present paper. Because figuration represents a kind of transitional space, a place where current occupations reverberate with possibility and constraint, it would be an interesting study to follow the use of figuration in context, to analyze the relationship between tropes and the sets of issues that generate them. However, this will not be tackled here.

Instead, I have looked at the sum of cases in each group to see whether across subjects, within groups, the usages derive from common domains. This is similar to work by Turner (1974) in which he traces individual metaphors expressed within a culture back to the "foundation" or root metaphors that give rise to them. Srivastva and Barrett (1988) followed the evolution of a developing group's figurative language across time, and found such root metaphors to frequently be at the foundation of a group's "common construal of disparate experiences" (p. 37). They conclude that:

> 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

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> itself and which underlie [its] logic, [its] perceptions, [its] judgments, and [its] selection and sorting of data. (p. 62)

Findings. This analysis was undertaken by first pulling all examples of figurative language from each "story of the company" told in response to Question 1. The Sacred members' language was slightly richer in figuration, with tropes occurring at an average rate of .11 per line of text. In the Eastern narratives the average rate was .09 per line (R = 60, n.s.). The total number of usages was 205 in the Sacred stories, and 129 in the Eastern stories. The subjects' tropes fall into a number of categories, several of which amplify the themes suggested by the analysis of the synthesized narratives.

Sacred group - Trope domains

Tropes used by the Sacred & Profane Players could be traced to seven common domains, which I have labelled: Growth, Sports, Political Action, War, Injury, Reparation and Limitlessness.

Growth. There is a set of usages drawn from the domain of childhood and home life that underscore the group's sense of itself as embarked on a process of growth, one that entails a certain forgiveness or indulgence of less mature capabilities, and an expectation of continuing advancement. This set includes the following examples: a relationship is "big brother-little brother kind of stuff"; of one's role in the group, "it's

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

often looked on as a den mother"; early productions are more than once described as "we were cutting our teeth"; "I want a better mother in the group"; behavior is explained as "that was being hungry"; others were "crying to get in"; good things are "icing on the cake"; comparing oneself to others, "I was a babe"; several references to the group as "a family" and other members as "like a brother"; the space is often described "like a home"; of the male members, "the boys started growing up"; members act "like a baby"; the group can be "juvenile"; backstage is "like a high school musical"; the difficulties of accepting new members is compared to "having a baby and knowing nothing about child rearing"; and the origins of the group are referred to as "the original conception." A related grouping suggests a trajectory of development through usages such as "flowering toward awareness," "make the next step," "on the road," "this opening up of being more and more of yourself," and "on the road to success."

Sports. Another set of tropes are drawn from the domain of sports and evoke the ideas of play and non-goal oriented activity, as well as competition and the outcomes of winning or losing. These include the following phrases: "that was the ballpark we were in"; "we were behind the eightball"; "people took the reins"; "up to par"; "he picked up the ball"; "the ball started rolling"; "we cut bait with them"; "team spirit"; "home base"; "I

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

ran with it"; and, "we rolled with the punches."

Political action. A similar feeling of competitiveness and opposing sides, with the addition of themes of authority and power, are evoked with figurative language drawn from the domain of politics. Members variously describe the group as "like Parliament," "a democracy," and "a confederacy." Discussions are described as "forums," and "heated debate." The group can be "anarchic," at times divided into "camps." Actions are "power plays." Ideas "unfurl" like a flag. Decisions coalesce into "a whole movement," or the group might "buy into a vision." One member says he felt like an "incumbent senator," another like a "scab crossing the union line," another is "a dictator." The politics of empowerment is evoked by several usages around the struggle to be heard, for example: "speechless"; "voice of doubt"; "create a voice"; "women's voices"; "critical voices."

War. These trends -- competition, power, and authority -- are intensified in another set of tropes drawn from the domain of war. Here one becomes aware of the danger involved in the members' efforts to retain their individual and sovereign voices as one among many in this ambitious and creative group. There is aggression entailed in phrases such as: "slaughtered"; "a gun to my head"; "stick to it with machine guns"; "took each other

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

on"; "violence hovering"; "at the helm"; "like taking a fortress"; "direct attack"; "big guns"; "so much warfare"; "stand on the firing line"; "tailspin"; "abandon ship"; "destroy"; "been through the fire"; "shooting from the bushes"; "ruins"; and, "like Hitler."

Injury. And a related set of tropes brings injury and injurious behavior to a more personal level, one that expresses more vulnerability than the war imagery. It points to the defensiveness behind the more pyrotechnic language, and perhaps to guilt related to the group's aggression. This set includes "fragile"; "discarded"; "blinded"; "slashing"; "heart attacks"; "back-breaking"; "fall apart"; "cracked a whip to his back"; "broken-hearted"; "knocked ourselves out"; "thrown out the window"; and "the fragility of human experience."

Reparation. Another set of figures bespeaks reparation, containment, wholeness. It is interesting to consider this set alongside the prominent violence in other sets. The juxtaposition suggests a cycle of destruction and reparation, and in the context of development, recalls Winnicott's assertion that constructive efforts are false and meaningless unless one has contact with one's destructiveness. Both trends are necessary to the developing sense of self (Winnicott, 1965). The Sacred group's world is one of competition and interpersonal violence; at the same time, it is a

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

facilitating environment. This set includes: "we've become this entity"; "harness our energy"; "vessel for expression"; "rise together and be unified"; "loosely held together"; "hold myself together"; "solidify"; "strung together"; "tight knit"; "close knit"; "a glue I could give"; "Scotch tape attitude"; the group is described as "collage-like," "a composition," "some kind of living organism," a thing that "exists almost by itself."

Limitlessness. The set above also suggests a concern with boundaries, and in this respect it is related to another set, the last to be reviewed here, that evokes a sense of unbounded space. This grouping includes: "neither here nor there"; "went on forever"; "pulled out from under"; "go as far as you can go"; "in over our heads"; "middle of nowhere"; "held above my head"; "floating around"; "spread all over the place"; "material coming towards us"; and, "nudge one way or another."

Eastern group - Trope domains

The figurative language used by members of the Eastern Theater Company has a very different feeling than that used by the Sacred group. Rather than evoking various domains of human interaction (such as sports, politics, warfare and home life), the majority of Eastern's figures of speech seem to conjure more diffuse and elemental forces. They are, for me, more difficult to assign to familiar categories of experience. This may

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

reflect the general lack of concreteness in most of these tropes. There is a suggestion of things being outside of human control, an overall absence of human agency. The domains are labelled: Mindlessness, Death and Dying, Heaven and Hell, Disintegration, Sinking, Degradation and Chain Gang.

Mindlessness. This is first apparent in a set of figures expressing the lack of control over one's own consciousness. States of mind and body seem to come and go without the participation of the members' intentionality. Several situations are described as "insane," and of the group, members say "we were insane," and "we got it into our heads." The group is said to have been "rehearsing madly." Acting can "drive young actors crazy." Many events are described as being or becoming "nightmares." The members "were magnetized" by PR, and "very caught up" in his "eye-opening" teachings. It is also said that PR "woke us up," and "opened a lot of doors in my mind." Audiences "went ape." The group on more than one occasion "got a little burnt out," or found things to be "too much of a drain on us," or that "energy was dissipating from the group."

Death and dying. Death is evoked by a set of tropes, but unlike the interpersonal violence that seems dangerous to the Sacred group, the death in the Eastern company's language is not expressly linked to aggression. It seems

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

more like a self-punishment or the fate of the unworthy. Examples include a reference to another technique as "now sort of dead or dying," a period of performance as "four weeks of death," fears that "we'll be dead," or "we'll get killed," the feeling that "we need new blood," and wondering whether the company can "survive." Shows have "died an ignominious death in rehearsals," and the group has been told "you're killing yourselves." A new theater is "what we'd been killing ourselves for." And a disappointment is labelled "the final nail in the coffin." One member says "I think it's dying. I think [the company] will die if we don't keep striving ahead." There are similar references to "suffering" and "sacrifice."

Heaven and hell. The aura of retribution in these evocations of death is echoed in a small set of religious tropes. These phrases include: "crisis of faith" to describe the group's state during two periods of difficulty; "mass exodus" describing the group's geographical movements; "the summer of hell" to describe a busy summer; "cultural icons" which were "shot down" by PR (connoting false gods destroyed by the true). The esoteric is evoked by phrases such as "the technique which is the answer," "the language we speak," "embrace this technique," and one member's assertion that the group behaves "like they have this wonderful thing and we can't let anybody else touch it." Something of the ecstasy of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

participation is expressed in the phrase "it was hellish and wonderful."

Disintegration. There are references to disaster, both expecting "disaster" and situations that "became a disaster." People have "fallings out" and groups "fall apart," experience "breaking up" and "breaking points," and times when things are "just turmoil." Even descriptions of somewhat more directed action suggest somehow piggybacking on the forces of nature -- the group's desire to "take the world by storm," for example, or the phrase "we threw all our energy and everything we knew into getting things done."

Sinking. There is a feeling in the sum of these figures of an urgency to keep moving, keep working or be swallowed by anonymous forces, be they inertia-like or catastrophic. One member says, "we felt like this pending wave of doom is coming," and several images contribute to the lost-at-sea destiny that seems to be a palpable if ill-defined danger. These include references to "sharks," to being "in a mire," the things that "bog us down," plans going "down the tubes," and finding themselves "in the same boat again." A description of performing for an indifferent audience is "like swimming lap after lap with clothes on." Another member uses a phrase that casts the group's technique as the life preserver amidst the dangerous murk, describing how "incredible" it was to "get

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

out of the nebulous realm of esoteric study into something that was craft, that was technique, that was something solid you could hold onto." This trope may, in fact, reverse the unconscious experience of the members of this group. For it is clear that many of these metaphors point to concerns about the loss of self -- through merger or absorption in this set, by death or fractured identity in others. These fears may be the underside of the group's joint adherence to one particular ideology. Or, alternatively, they may express the group's panic as it anticipates change and a new phase of doing without the prescriptions and control provided by its principles.

Degradation. Another set of tropes evokes imagery of small, mean circumstances and the disempowered beings who inhabit them. These heighten the contrast between the paths of heroic virtue or the lost and demeaned existence that is, for this group, its alternative. The set includes: "the worst thing about being an actor is you're at everyone else's mercy"; descriptions of places as "hovels" and "tiny little holes"; various descriptions of actions such as "we scurried around," "we begged, borrowed and stole," "we scraped together what we could," "we hustled plays all over town," "we did these little garage things," and "we were crawling around like we were pigs."

Chain gang. There is another grouping of figures drawn from the domain of labor that emphasizes the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

important, even redeeming value of work. These include: "we were people who were willing to work from A to B to get to C"; several references to the group as a whole and individual members "working our asses off"; being "real hardcore about work"; "you always knew that everyone around you was not full of shit, that they really were working hard"; working "24 hours a day, seven days a week trying to get the show up"; a valued member "always had his hands in stuff"; the technique is "a clear set of tools to work with," and theater itself is "a tool to change things." One says, "the effort you put into addressing a problem is the sum of your life."

From this perspective, work seems to be an end in itself, decoupled from the particular task toward which it is directed. This impression is reinforced by the small set of tropes used to describe successful experiences, which portray the achievements as haphazard events unrelated to the work that led to them. For example: "it was like a dream come true"; "we were on top of the world for a moment"; "we were lucky enough to be pushed up to a higher level"; the company "threw up a benefit"; careers "take off" as if on their own; and, reviews "put us on the map."

The figurative language reviewed here accounts for 68% of the Sacred group's usages, and 71% of the Eastern group's usages. The remaining usages are more

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

idiosyncratic, not echoed in the stories told by more than one member. Although they could certainly help delineate a view of what it is like for a particular member to be a part of these groups, they are not relevant to the present focus on the shared or cultural aspects of group membership.

"Metaphors are filters that suppress some details, emphasize others" (Srivastva & Barrett, 1988, p. 35). By viewing the world through metaphors drawn from common domains of experience, group members together construct a consistent reality. The figurative language of the Sacred group reflects a stance of engagement. It depicts a world that accomodates changes, casting them as natural and developmental human processes. It is a world of related human inhabitants that can play, manipulate, fight and hurt each other, but also repair injury and move forward. It seems to be a world in which the individual has a sense of control. The Alantic group members use figurative language that reflects a stance of estrangement. It depicts an overwhelming and unpredictable world. It is a place in which human inhabitants have little interaction except to labor side by side in pursuit of a common goal. But their efforts have little relationship to consequences in a world of uncontrollable and frequently hostile forces.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

IV. Disnarration

Introduction. Another way that narrators can evoke alternate realms of experience while still meeting the requirements of non-fiction is by including reference to what didn't happen. This technique permits the expression of associations triggered by the narrated material, and in this sense contributes to the self-definition of the narrator, preserving his subjectivity even as he works to present an objective account. By ruling out events, the narrator paradoxically includes them. As psychoanalytic listeners, we are accustomed to finding informative value in negative statements. This posture is also authorized in literary interpretation: "Negative statements always clearly imply the possibility of the statement they negate" (Coste, 1989, p. 227). Prince refers to this category of "all the events that do not happen but nonetheless appear in the narrative text" as the "disnarrated" (1987, p. 4). By way of the maxim of relevance (Grice, 1975), almost anything can be introduced if linked, even negatively, with the story. Prince (1987) gives these examples:

> ...expressions of possibility or impossibility, deontic expressions of prohibition, epistemic expressions of ignorance, ontological expressions of nonexistence, imagined worlds, desired worlds, or intended worlds, (unfulfilled) expectations, (unwarranted) beliefs, (failed) attempts, (crushed) hopes, suppositions and false calculations, errors and lies, and so forth. (p.4)

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Negative statements are a variety of presuppositional trigger, which Bruner (1986) includes as one of the primary forms of discourse by which a narrator can enlist the reader's imagination. They deal with implicit meanings and act as triggers to interpretation. By using disnarration, the narrator can create some space for himself within the narrative, inserting the workings of his own mind alongside that which happened. Its effect, too, is to render the reported events as somehow less inevitable, as imbued with possibility and potential. It factors choice into destiny.

However, there is another side to disnarration. As Coste (1989) has pointed out, it can be a way for the narrator to assert his authority, not only by controlling what is said but by delimiting the scope of associations in his reader's mind as well. In Coste's words, "it not only opens vistas in the walls of that-which-is and that-which-can-be, it also closes any doors to the paths and gardens of 'otherwise' that the reader might have tried to cross unguided" (1989, p. 104). Coste has discussed this closing-down effect of disnarration with fictional narratives in mind. It has, I think, an additional function in the autobiographical narratives analyzed here. The disnarrated not only guides the listener's associations, it does so for the speaker as well. It is as though the speaker limits his own musings, his own

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

wanderings down the paths of what might-have-been. He effectively restricts the range and power of his own interpretive capacities.

Faced with two very different effects of disnarration, both opening-up and closing-down, it is important to turn to the stories themselves to see how it functioned for these subjects.

Findings

Surprisingly, subjects in these two groups import material through disnarration even more frequently than they do so via figuration. Disnarration takes place at an average rate of .16 per line in the Sacred stories, and an average rate of .13 in the Eastern stories ($R = 57$, n.s.). These rates correspond to a total number of 263 instances in the Sacred stories, and 214 in the Eastern stories.

Analysis identified several types of disnarration, and the instances were coded as to type. The types were further grouped as to whether they functioned to open-up or close-down possibility, as discussed above. All instances of disnarration were pulled from the stories told in response to Question 1. (Examples of each type, below, will be identified as S&P if from a Sacred & Profane Players story, or ETC if from an Eastern Theater Company story.)

Opening-up disnarration. The first four types, below, seem to function to preserve openness and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

possibility, and to create space for the narrator's own internal world to be narrated alongside the "objective" events.

1. Desires. The first opening-up type is labelled "desires," and includes all instances where subjects say what they or anybody else wanted. For example, "I wanted it to be more about actors doing what they do best (S&P)," and "I wanted to make this company a producing organization (S&P)"; and, "Hopefully we'll be at the point where we'll have the money to buy the options (ETC)," and "We don't want to do just those types of plays (ETC)." (These examples also illustrate another distinguishing feature of each group's narratives: the tendency for Sacred members to speak as individuals by using the pronoun "I", and the tendency for Eastern members to speak for the group as a whole by using the pronoun "we.")

2. Expectation. The next type is statements of expectation, both positive and negative accounts of the way the speaker or group thought things would go. Examples include, "I thought we'll rise together and be unified (S&P)," and "I was expecting them to be as responsible as me (S&P)"; and "Our first reaction was we'll be dead financially (ETC)," and "I thought we could really convert from there to being kind of a hot young rep company (ETC)."

3. Alternate worlds. A third type includes

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

instances that sketch an alternate world of possibility. These are similar to desires and expectations, but somewhat differently describe things that might have happened or might yet happen if circumstances were altered. For example, the statement "It's been about encountering things that all the training in the world couldn't prepare you for (ETC)" implies that "all the training in the world" could prepare you for things in some alternate world of circumstances. Other examples are "In Chicago we could have found a space and had our own home immediately (ETC)"; and, "It would have been easier for the whole company in the long run (S&P)," and "People had never learned how to coexist with people (S&P)."

4. Conditionals. The fourth "open" type describes alternate worlds of possibility through conditional statements with an if-then type of structure. Examples are "If I was to go on I would just be setting myself up as an institution rather than an instructor (ETC)," and "If we had a few less principles, we could make more money on it (ETC)"; and, "I knew if we put pressure on us to try to be that, it wouldn't work (S&P)," and "we wouldn't all hang out with each other if we weren't all Sacred & Profane Players (S&P)."

Closing-down disnarration. In contrast to the types above, the following types exemplify the closing-down function of disnarration. Although the instances in this

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

second group are still informative in that they point to the disavowed, their function seems rather to restrict the narrator's and the listener's range of possibilities, to narrow definitions, to limit speculation and interpretation. The categories in this set have all been labelled "foreclosures." Like the opening-up types, these raise possibility, but unlike the open group they negate the possibility even as they raise it. Examples of the five types of foreclosures follow.

1. Foreclosed action: "I wasn't going to ask anybody to take this responsibility (S&P)," "I never pursued it professionally (S&P)," "He won't ever teach there again (ETC)," and "We never talk about talent (ETC)."

2. Foreclosed cognition: "I couldn't imagine they actually liked me (S&P)," and "We didn't know what we thought we were doing (ETC)."

3. Foreclosed meaning: "Your success or failure is not the point (ETC)," and "It was not about actors looking to get work (S&P)."

4. Foreclosed affect: "It wasn't utterly discouraging (S&P)," and "No one was very happy out there (ETC)."

5. Foreclosed identity: "We don't want to be the type of company where they bring in [someone famous] so that every seat is sold (ETC)," and "It's not a single unified force here (S&P)."

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Comparison of groups. The distribution of the two companies' instances of disnarration among opening-up and closing-down categories was compared, and found to be significantly different (Chi square = 26.9, $p < .001$). In the Sacred group, instances were 48.3% open and 51.7% foreclosed. In the Eastern group, instances were 26.2% open and 73.8% foreclosed.

Category of disnarration	Sacred	Eastern
# of Opening-up uses	127	56
# of Closing-down uses	136	158

The two groups' uses of this device are consistent with the trends in their organization of experience that we have seen thus far. Compared to the other group, the Sacred members more often use disnarration to create space for themselves within their stories, to preserve personal perspective, choice, and possibility. The Eastern members' use of the device more often reflects a process that edits possibility, effectively limiting the avenues of interpretation available to themselves and to their dialogic partner.

V. Vocabulary

Introduction. Vocabulary is an important contributor to narrative style, which is a genre-linked feature of narrative (Fowler, 1982). We realize when reading two

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

narratives with distinctly different vocabularies that they are fundamentally different kinds, and that they will differ along many other generic dimensions as well. A specialized vocabulary is also a relevant and distinguishing feature of culture. It is easy to imagine how different would be the lists of frequently used words drawn from samples of the speech of teenagers and middle aged people, for example, or farmers and city-dwellers, or stockbrokers and fishermen. These differences in vocabulary reflect differences in how members of a particular culture understand their experiences and plan their behaviors. The two groups studied here do not differ so obviously as the examples given above -- they are, after all, both theater companies in New York City. Even so, we expect to find cultural differences expressed in language. As Becker and Geer (1970) have observed:

> Any social group, to the extent that it is a distinctive unit, will have to some degree a culture differing from that of other groups, a somewhat different set of common understandings around which action is organized, and these differences will find expression in a language whose nuances are particular to that group. Members of churches speak differently from members of tavern groups; more importantly, members of any particular church or tavern group have cultures, and languages in which they are expressed, which differ somewhat from those of other groups of the same general type. (p. 134)

It was not possible, within the scope of this paper, to examine how the two groups use the same words in distinctly different ways. However, it was possible to

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

isolate the words that each group uses significantly more often than the other group. These words can be taken as important members of the group's vocabulary, and therefore as useful markers of differences between the two group cultures. Indeed, we might even say they reveal the hegemony of the group frame of reference over the individuals' minds.

The method used to generate the significant words lists is detailed in Appendix 1. All of the words addressed here are significant at the .05 level, or better.

Findings. The frequently used words in both groups fall into categories, and each category will be analyzed and discussed separately. It will be seen that the significant word lists support and harden the distinctions between groups that have begun to take shape in the thematic, trope, and disnarration analyses.

To begin, it is interesting to note that the Eastern group has 61% more significant words than the Sacred group. The Eastern group has 119 such words, and the Sacred group has 74. (Two-word constructions, e.g. "Boy's Life" or full names, are counted as only one word.) This difference does not represent a larger vocabulary, for the size of each group's lexicon is about the same (the Sacred group used a total of 4330 different words, the Eastern group used a total of 4177). Eastern members say that

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

they "speak the same language," and this finding appears to confirm that claim. The emphasis on homogeneity of thought that was found to be a theme in the Eastern group apparently affects its vocabulary -- the Eastern group has a larger pool of words that members frequently draw upon to represent their experience than does the Sacred group. It appears that to a greater extent than in the Sacred group, Eastern members express their thoughts in similar ways.

The categories of significant words, and the percentages of each groups' words that comprise the categories, are as follows.

	Sacred	Eastern
People	21.6	20.2
Productions	16.2	8.4
Places	8.1	12.6
Times	2.7	12.6
Actions	17.6	21.8
Reasons	4.1	10.1
Descriptions	25.7	12.6

(Note: the percentages do not equal 100.0 because four words -- "the," "there," "there's" and "wasn't" -- were used too variously to categorize and were therefore not included in the analysis.)

People. There is a notable difference between the two groups' references to people. Although the percent of significant words that refer to persons is about the same in the two groups, the portion of these that are proper names reveals an important distinction. Seven of the Sacred group's significant words (9.5%) are names of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

people -- all of them company members. The Eastern group has 11 significant names (9.2%), but only three (2.5%) are the names of company members. Eight belong to the group's mentors, Phillip Rose and other teachers, or to playwrights whose work the group has performed. None of the Sacred group's significant names belong to mentors or writers from outside the company.

These differences point to the tendency among Sacred members to talk about each other, reflecting their thematic emphasis on diversity and individuality. The group shares the conviction that there are various points of view to represent among their membership, and important things that happen in their group have to do with the actions of the individuals in the company.

The small number of members' names on the Eastern word list reflects, in part, their assumption that they all share the same point of view that is based on the principles of Practical Aesthetics. There seems to be no need to account for possibly differing experiences among individual members. The Eastern company's story is one that has unfolded in response to the help and guidance of mentors. Their names figure prominently because their actions have been more defining of the group's story than the actions of individual members.

In addition, the Eastern company principles prescribe a hierarchy that ranks the play and its societal value

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

higher than the actor and his personal motivations. The Sacred group, in direct contrast, was founded on the priority of personal motivations. This may explain why the names of playwrights appear among the Eastern significant words, and not on the Sacred list.

The remaining words representing persons on each group's list are consistent with the different organizations of experience reflected in the names on the lists. Compare:

Sacred	Eastern
(Sacred & Profane)	(Eastern)
group	both
my	company
people	managing director
she's	ensemble
them	ourselves
they've	playwright
uncle	staff
writers	students
	teacher
	teachers
	your
	you're

The Sacred group's use of "my," "them," "they've" and "people" again reflects the members' emphasis on the distinction between themselves as individuals and the otherness of others. A very different conception is reflected in the Eastern group's use of "ourselves," "both," "your" and "you're." In the case of "ourselves" the assumption of homogeneity is obvious. An examination of the other three words in context shows that "both" is

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

used when speaking of two people sharing a quality, desire, opinion, etc; "your" and "you're" are both used as the word "one" would be used, in a somewhat didactic sense to describe the typical or canonical way that things go for most people, including the speaker.

"Playwright" was discussed above, and the Sacred group's counterpart word, "writers," has a more casual ring, reflecting their equal relationship with many writers of less recognized accomplishment than those referred to by the Eastern group. "Writers" also is used to discuss the early phase of the group's history during which they each wrote pieces to share with each other. The Sacred members' use of "group" for the collective suggests a more informal orientation than the Eastern members' use of "ensemble" and "company." The two latter words reflect a stronger definition of the group, and perhaps a stronger sense of purpose.

It is not surprising to find "students," "teacher" and "teachers" on the Eastern group's list. The proportion of the synthesized narratives allocated to this founding phase of the group's history, and the prominence of the apprenticeship storyline and related themes, have all pointed to the importance of the lessons learned as students of the teacher Phillip Rose, and the importance of their current roles as teachers themselves to a new group of students learning the Practical Aesthetics

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

technique.

"Uncle" in the Sacred group and "managing director" and "staff" in the Eastern group refer to important figures in the groups' respective stories: the uncle gave the Space to the Sacred group; and, the managing director mismanaged funds for the Eastern group, while the staff, once hired, restored financial responsibility to the company and took much of the burden of administration off company members.

Productions. Frequently used words that refer to productions or theater-related activities are also very different in each group. The words are:

Sacred	Eastern
censorship	adaptation
environmental	answer
event(s)	Boy's Life
issues	Cherry Orchard
material	classes
names	plays
project(s)	program
reading(s)	Reckless
speakeasy	school
	Three Sisters

These lists illustrate how specialized vocabularies and distinctive activities develop in tandem. The words here reflect the different kinds of defining activities in which the two groups engage. For the Eastern group, the words "school," "classes," and "program" all relate to the Practical Aesthetics Workshop that the company teaches and in which the company members originally learned their

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

technique. It is an important component of their identity, expressing their own particular beginnings and providing daily reaffirmation of those beginnings in the present. Similarly, the Sacred group has developed a unique theatrical form, the "issues project," that is expressive of their identity as it evolved out of their own beginnings in alterity. (The words "censorship" and "environmental" refer to two specific issues projects.) An important contrast between these two expressions of identity is that the issues projects evolved out of the Sacred group's creative process, while the workshop and its teachings was inherited, in its completed form, from the Eastern group's mentor. Two of the words on these lists are emblematic of this distinction between the groups: "names," which refers to the Sacred group's long internal struggle to agree on a name to express its singular identity; and, "answer," which refers to the key that would admit the diligent student to Phillip Rose's summer workshop.

The Sacred members use the words "event" and "events" to refer to their benefits, plays and other performances. (For a recent benefit, the company recreated a "speakeasy.") The word expresses scale, singularity, a sense of happening and a certain optimistic lack of control. They use "material" to refer to plays or other texts with which they work, and the use of the word says

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

something distinctive. It suggests that the Sacred members approach plays as raw material, something to be explored and shaped, something that retains its own identity even as it accepts the stamp of creative others. The Eastern members take the opposite perspective, which is reflected in their use of the word "plays." For them, the goal is to "produce the play that the playwright intended." It is an approach that accords ultimate respect to the playwright, and forswears creative interpretation. For the Sacred company, material is a vehicle for the group's expressive action; for the Eastern company, the actor is a vehicle for the play's pristine message.

"Readings" shows up on the Sacred list as an activity the group has engaged in throughout its history. The Eastern company names three plays it has produced, the climactic "Boy's Life" among them. "Adaptation" refers to Phillip Rose's adaptation of "Three Sisters" which the group is performing. They also frequently refer to "Cherry Orchard," which is the play that took Phillip Rose to Chicago when he asked them all to join him as apprentices at the Goodman Theater.

Places. Frequently mentioned places include geographical locations, local sites and prepositions of movement. This category of words is closely tied to the groups' respective histories, and is perhaps the least

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

informative about their cultures. The words are:

Sacred	Eastern
anywhere	back
bar	Beckett
cafe	Burlington
space	Chicago
street	Circle
17th	Goodman
	Lincoln Center
	Montpelier
	NYU
	Off-Broadway
	Philadelphia
	Strasberg
	to
	Vermont
	New York

The Eastern group has many more words of this type, and indeed their story has included a lot of relocation between "New York," "Chicago," and "Vermont." "Burlington" and "Montpelier" are both cities that have sponsored the group in Vermont. Recently the company performed in "Philadelphia." The words "back" and "to" are both used frequently by Eastern members as they report their chronology of location. The "Beckett" is the theater where the group almost produced "Boy's Life." The remaining locations on the Eastern list refer to theaters in which they have worked ("Goodman" and "Lincoln Center," which is "Off-Broadway"), or to studios the members studied with at "NYU" before joining Phillip Rose's workshop ("Circle" and "Strasberg").

The Sacred group has always been located in New York,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

and members use words that reflect their local orientation. Their only movement has been from "street" to street, and they settled in the "space" on "17th" street. "Bar" and "cafe" are used to refer to the group's initial meetings. "Anywhere" is an informative word; the members use it as a negative contrast, for example, "Personally, I wouldn't want to have a theater company anywhere else in the country." Like the group's use of "people," "them" and "they've," the usage reflects a comparative, competitive stance that maintains its self-satisfaction through ongoing monitoring and measuring of alternatives.

Times. Many of the Eastern group's significant words are used to locate the narrative in time. This is consistent with the geographical movement that plays such a large part in their story, but combined with the large number of location words, a particular style of narrative organization is also evidenced. The time-related words are:

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Sacred	Eastern
beginning	anymore
initial	April
	December
	Fall
	January
	rehearsal
	season
	semester
	summer
	week
	year
	'83
	'60's
	'85
	'86

For the most part, the time words on the Eastern group's list pinpoint specific periods in their history. The exceptions are "anymore" and "rehearsal." Although "rehearsal" doesn't refer to a specific time, it is used to mark various time periods when the group was "in rehearsal" for a certain play. "Anymore" is a different sort of word, used by the members to mark the radical disjunction between the present and the group's entire prior history. (For example, "We're at the point where it's not okay to do shit work for nothing anymore.") As discussed in the synthesized narratives section, the company is now undergoing a painful reevaluation of many of their founding principles. The word "anymore" points to several dissatisfactions and desire for change.

The large number of place and time markers reveals the significant extent to which the Eastern story is organized around an orderly, chronological listing of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

events. While this structure ensures a thorough accounting of the seasons of production -- what was produced and where -- it lacks something as a narrative form. White (1981) distinguishes between "annales," "chroniques" and "histoires": the first is merely a list of events and the dates on which they occurred; the second provides context for sets of events, but lacks the overarching meaning that is provided by the histoire, a form that embeds events within a particular human setting of moral order. The Eastern group's stories are analagous to White's chroniques. The form gives priority to carefully reporting the sequence of the group's history. It is less suitable for handling the contingencies and conflicts of human motivation and progress, or the vicissitudes that characterize a group's evolution.

The Sacred members frequently use the words "beginning" and "initial" as they examine the evolution of the group across time. The goals, activities and members' feelings about the group have all undergone changes since the group originated. These two words reflect a fluid sort of narrative organization that moves about in time to find points of contrast and comparison. The two words are not used, like the Eastern company's "anymore," to identify a split between past and present.

Actions. Words denoting actions are a large proportion of both groups' significant words, and account

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

for the largest category of the Eastern group's words.

Sacred	Eastern
allow	changing
directing	designed
donated	doing
face	done
forget	figure
meet	finish
quit	formed
read	go
stay	going
suppose	graduating
talk	helps
vote	joined
watching	lease
	look
	make
	means
	open
	raised
	signed
	spent
	studying
	taught
	teach(ing)
	waiting
	will

A very important difference between these words referring to specific actions is that the Sacred group's words are interactive, while the Eastern group's words (except the familiar "taught" and "teach(ing)") are actions requiring just one agent or more than one acting in parallel. Indeed, the only words on the Eastern group's list that implicate more than one agent are words that suggest a unification, a growing solidarity between individuals. These include "taught" and "teach(ing)," as well as "helps," "joined," and "formed." "Formed" refers

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

to the company's formation, and seems to be the expectable term until one realizes that the other company never once refers to its formation with that word. The word's implications -- organization, discipline, coherence, correctness, principle and structure -- are meaningful constituents of the Eastern company's formation.

In contrast, almost all of the Sacred group's words involve interaction between agents. In addition to those already named are "allow," "read" (which is used here to refer to reading plays together and the reading of the members' own writings to each other), "talk" and "watching." Even "quit" and "stay," actions that an individual undertakes, are undertaken in reference to the larger group of others. These two words might be considered basic actions for a member of any group; that they arise distinctively here reflects the tension in the Sacred group's story between individual autonomy and belongingness, and suggests something of the volatility and choice involved in being part of a group with their individualistic ethic.

Another very interesting distinction is between the mental actions on each group's list. The Sacred group's mental actions ("face," "forget," and "suppose") are similar in that they imply an ambiguity, uncertainty, a reluctance to name or acknowledge that which is known or believed or perceived. In some ways these words preserve

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

openness and alert us to the ongoing presence of otherness -- other perspectives, other stories. In this respect they reflect the findings with regard to the two groups' uses of disnarration. The Eastern group's comparable words are "means" and "figure." These words portray a mental effort that is nearly opposite to the Sacred group's preservation of ambiguity -- Eastern members frequently iterate what things "mean" and they frequently talk of "figuring out." Theirs is an active, authoritative approach to experience.

This same approach is reflected in Eastern members' frequent use of the auxiliary verbs "will" and "going" (as in "going to"). Both express a positive, agentive orientation that accepts personal responsibility and connotes the imposition of will upon the flow of experience. The verb "make" expresses a similar outlook. "Doing" and "done" convey activity and accomplishment, and may reflect this agentive orientation as well.

Two important words that point to the retrospection of the Age 30 Transition are the Eastern group's words "changing" and "look." Both are closely tied to the group's dilemma about its direction at the time of the interview, and again underscore the radical change taking place all at once in the group, as opposed to the gradual change that characterizes the Sacred group's history. "Changing" is used repeatedly in phrases such as, "some of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

those ideals are changing," and "now the goals are changing." And "look" appears in phrases such as "it's funny when I look back now," and "I'm trying to look back down into my soul" that illustrate the active processes of reassessment that are taking place among the members.

The remaining, more concrete action words are closely tied to the plots of the two groups' stories. These words are "directing," "donated," "meet" and "vote" on the Sacred group's list. On the Eastern list, these include "designed," "finish" (which is used when telling about finishing college requirements), "graduating," "lease," "open" (used to refer to the opening of plays, the new theater, or the casting policy), "raised" (money), "signed" (contracts and leases), "studying," "taught," "teach(ing)," and "waiting" (tables). The words "go" and "spent" on Eastern's list reflect the chronological accounting of relocations and the time spent various places.

Reasons. The next category of words is comprised of key nouns that describe the issues of importance to each group -- we could say they function as the "why" of the narrative organizations. These are words that are invoked to justify or explain actions, or to encapsulate concerns. They frequently serve as the topics of digressive discourse within the narratives.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Sacred	Eastern
power	career
voice	history
whatever	ideal
	job
	life
	method
	money
	nothing's
	opportunity
	principles
	technique
	work

The contrast between these lists is dramatic. The Eastern company's list is weighty and value-laden and conveys the seriousness with which the members view their participation in the group. At the same time, the flavor of their words is drab and conventional. Although the group clearly has an ideological orientation, and it is comprised of people who have, or who think about, meaning and purpose in their lives, these are not words that one would expect to find motivating a group of theater artists. Certain combinations of these words suggest an instrumental, ambitious outlook ("money," "opportunity," "technique," and "career," for example). Others suggest a grounding in ethics and tradition ("history," "ideal," "principles," and "work"). These juxtapositions reveal the complexity of the existential dynamics of this group, and indicate something of the struggle taking place within the group's members. "Nothing's" requires explanation: the word is used to convey a sort of philosophical stance

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

that justifies actions. For example, "Nothing's going to come easy to you in this world."

The struggle in the Sacred group has been between rather than within members, and the words "power" and "voice" illustrate the nature of the group's concerns. There is much discussion of power -- how it is obtained, who has it, what one can do with it, and so on. The group monitors power closely. A related concern is with "voice," because the powerful have a voice while the unempowered do not. The group uses "voice" in Bakhtin's sense (1929), in that it constitutes one's "point of view on the world." Indeed, Bakhtin argued that "multi-voicedness" is an essential aspect of a creative and flourishing culture. To have a voice was a primary motivation for the formation of the Sacred group, and while joining one's voice with others enhances its power, it can dilute the individual voice. The group's concern with power and voice is not a legislative one, however, for there does not seem to be a distinctive point of view that the Sacred group would put forth. Rather, there is the respect for the individual and the desire to provide a vehicle for a variety of individual points of view. This plurality, or resistance to definition, is reflected in the frequently used word, "whatever." "Whatever" serves as a slot-filler wherever another group might insert its ideology, for example in the phrases, "for whatever

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

reason," and "theater on whatever level."

Descriptions. This final category of words illustrates the manner in which things take place within the worlds of the two groups, and how the two worlds themselves are described.

Sacred	Eastern
beautiful	big
creative	common
established	extent
even	financially
extremely	legal
filled	new
fit	out
fun	primary
just	rather
known	same
like	six
looked	sudden
natural	supposed
never	twenty
original	twenty-seven
other	
quite	
talented	
too	

Again, there is a strong contrast between the worlds depicted by the two lists of words. This is the largest category of Sacred group significant words -- an indication, perhaps, of a greater concern with the style and aesthetics of experience. The adjectives that the Sacred group uses frequently suggest an attunement to beauty, appreciation of the spontaneous gesture, the ineffability of the creative process: "beautiful," "creative," "fit" (used to express how things seem well-

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

suited to each other), "natural," "original," "talented." The word "looked" is also used descriptively, denoting attention to appearance. There is also attention to image and status reflected in the words "established" and "known" (used as in "well known"). An emotional priority for the group is "fun." And the adverb "just" is often used to indicate ease and simplicity, as in "bring a sensibility that would just naturally come from us being modern people." Life in this group, as suggested by these frequently used words, is playful, pleasing, competitive and intense. Several adverbs here are intensifiers: "even," "extremely," "quite," and "too." All add a dimension of vividness and feeling to experience.

The Eastern group's world seems somewhat dreary in contrast, but consistent with their "Practical Aesthetics." "Financially" and "legal" are important considerations, and ones that show more regard for the group's viability in relation to the community outside itself than seems apparent in the Sacred group. The words suggest a need to work at survival, as compared to the rather blithe security reflected in the Sacred group's words. "Primary," like "big" and "new," is hierarchizing, used to rank or differentiate. The adjectives are descriptive, but somehow empty of aesthetic value. "Big" and "new" are also used to describe the unexpected, things that happen all of a "sudden" -- another word on the list.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Indeed, several of the words on the Eastern company's list suggest the group's efforts to clarify or pin down reality, which can promote a stance in which the unaccounted-for seems to come out of the blue. "Extent" suggests precision of this kind, a reining in of one's statements as opposed to the intensifying adverbs used by the Sacred group. In the same vein are "rather" (used in the sense of distinguishing and judging two alternatives, as in "we would rather") and "supposed" (used in the deontic sense of what was required or expected).

Similarly, "same" and "common" reflect the Eastern group's tendency to identify (and perhaps, thereby, to control) the shared properties of unidentical entities. It is interesting that these two words, used to draw comparisons, effectively eliminate differences between the compared entities. In contrast, the word the Sacred group uses to draw comparisons, "like," works figuratively, as a metaphor does, to create a third object that enhances understanding of the two compared entities while preserving their differences. The use of "common" again confirms the group's emphasis on its members' unity. The members say they have a "common": aesthetic, goal, ideal, purpose, technique, language, sense of life, vision, and set of principles, to name a few. This contrasts markedly with the Sacred group's emphasis on differences, reflected here in their frequently used word, "other."

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Like the two groups' uses of figurative language, their distinctive vocabularies give shape to worlds of very different kinds. The Sacred group's vocabulary reflects a frame of meaning that focuses on peers as opposed to authorities, on the differences between individuals and the forms of interaction between them. The Eastern group's vocabulary shows geater orientation to authorities than to peers, and to collective rather than interactive forms of human activity. The Sacred members' vocabulary emphasizes the aesthetics of its experience while the Eastern members' vocabulary emphasizes its chronology. And while the Sacred group's vocabulary expresses possibility and ambiguity, the Eastern group's vocabulary attempts to configure reality in a way that eliminates ambiguity and limits possibility.

VI. Use of Dialectic

Introduction. It was noted in the introduction that several theorists locate the impetus for development, or define a setting that supports it, with reference to the space or difference between two entities, be they people, ideas or forms of living. The perception of a contradiction within one's own thinking, or between one's own interpretations and those of others, the presence of an other to accept, reflect and modify one's creative efforts -- these are posited to induce development more

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

effectively than embeddedness in an undifferentiated context that doesn't challenge one's assumptions or abilities. One final feature of the content of the stories told in response to Question 1 is relevant to this issue.

Members of both groups spontaneously made reference to the ways in which they and the other members of their group were alike, thinking and acting in tandem, and to the ways in which they personally differed from the rest of the group. This device is interesting on a narrative level, for through it the narrator accomplishes the construction of a self portrait even as he more richly establishes the portrait of the group. On the larger level of the group setting thus depicted, and its evaluation as a context for development, theory suggests that the group described as more homogenous will be less stimulating to growth than the group in which differences comprise a relatively more important element of its description.

All spontaneous references to similarities and differences with the group were counted. Examples of such statements of similarity are: "All of us suddenly saw that there was this technique of acting that worked" (ETC); "Everyone decided they were too homesick" (ETC); "We all wanted to take advantage of the energy" (S&P); and, "We would always go down there as a group of friends to just

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

drink beers and play and talk" (S&P). Examples of statements expressing a difference from the group are: "A lot of people feel strongly that we shouldn't, but I feel strongly that we should" (ETC); "I thought it was a piece of shit and said we shouldn't do it, and the company wanted to do it" (ETC); "I was like, this is not my kind of theater" (S&P); and, "I was very much against this, because I wanted it to be more about actors doing what they do best" (S&P).

Comparison of groups. The Sacred group members used differentiating statements much more often than Eastern members. Importantly, this does not simply reflect a divided or noncohesive group, for the Sacred group members also make statements of similarity as often as do Eastern group members. (Chi square = 5.85, $p < .02$.)

	Sacred	Eastern
# Similarity statements	34	29
# Difference statements	38	12

This finding contributes to the view that the Sacred group, by maintaining diversity, comprises a culture that enhances the development of its members to a greater degree than the Eastern group.

I maintain that the results of these analyses of the two groups' narratives portray two distinct and consistent

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

worldviews, and demonstrate the degree to which an individual's range and form of construal and interpretation is mediated by culture. It now remains to examine the nature of group process and indicators of adult development within the two cultures to see how these conform to the expectations generated by the analyses of the members' narratives.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Group Process Reading

This chapter will consider features of group process that together contribute to the character of collective life in the two companies. The focus will be on the groups' conceptions of their primary tasks; the nature of the groups' boundary transactions; and, group defenses as illuminated by Bion's basic assumption theory (1961). I will then examine an aspect of theater company life that both groups say has been troublesome -- the differing levels of ability among members of the companies. The different ways that members of the two groups experience and manage this problem will be described in light of each group's processes. This problem was chosen from among several possible alternatives because it pertains to the groups' capacities to provide a context that supports the growth and artistic development of their members.

I. "Kind of Company"

I will begin with the subjects' own conceptions of their groups as expressed in their responses to Question 11, "What kind of company is this?" Below are excerpts from each subject's answer -- the portion that received emphasis as being the "main thing" or "most important." The statements will be discussed in the sections that

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

follow.

Sacred & Profane Players.

"It's an acting company....We pick better projects than the other companies."

"This willingness to face itself...face what's happening in the company...you build into it a respect for people's other needs."

"We're better. I think we're better actors...we've been able to harness a thing that other people haven't been able to harness."

"We're somehow or other doing what it takes to stick around....Our desire to succeed. Our desire to be heard. Maybe even at the loss of our own voice."

"We have no common ideology, no common vision. It's kind of like a gang -- when the whole company's together, doing what we do, there's a real feeling of invulnerability."

"We started because we wanted to do our own thing, and that lent it its special voice."

"It's the finest quality of work in New York, on its level....We supply the kind of work that people just respond to very emotionally. Very emotional."

"I don't know. They're just people. I can't speak for them. And what it might be to me, it might not be to somebody else."

Eastern Company.

"It's an ensemble. The same people do play after play after play....And we have a training component that's incredibly specific to what the company is."

"A company of actors dedicated to playwrights, dedicated to doing the play. Not dedicated to just acting....A real ethically bound company that's really concerned with the ethics of the work and doing a play for the purpose of putting something truthful on the stage."

"We're together because of a common aesthetic of the theater....It's like a tribe....We have our own

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

language that we speak."

"It's a company that has a technique, has a philosophy, has all that stuff. We're a very unified group of people."

"We're an acting company, an ensemble, and we're dedicated to bringing the truth of the human soul to the stage."

"An ensemble-based company."

"The emphasis is on the ensemble, and the ensemble telling the story of the best play the company can find. The emphasis has been on this group of people becoming good actors, and people wanting to see this group of people. So we've been very closed."

"It's based on a common technique of acting, and a common vision of how we want our life to be."

II. Primary Task

The way that a group conceives of its primary task effects its relationship to its environment and the relations of members of the group to each other and to the whole (Miller & Rice, 1969). The members' statements about "kind of company" allow us to focus for a moment on the differences between the two companies' conceptions of their primary tasks. Although both are theater companies, whose task most simply defined is to select, produce and perform plays, it is clear that the groups conceive of this task rather differently.

Members of the Sacred group seem to view their task as giving expression to the creative impulses of the group members in a way that displays what the group sees as its collection of unique perspectives and high quality of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

talent. Thus each member can see himself and whatever he has to offer as an integral part of the whole. This construal of the primary task supports relationships with other members that contain competition, collaboration, and exploration. Importantly, viewing its primary task in this way allows the nature of the group's activities to evolve as its members evolve; it allows for the ongoing revision of goals and priorities.

The Eastern company sees its task as identifying truth and value, and acting in unison to deliver it efficiently to an audience. Each member can see his own labor as important to helping the group accomplish its task, but contributions that stem from the member's personal identity -- his style, presence, creative ideas -- are not central to task accomplishment. Relations between members who view their task in this way are aimed at agreement, cooperation and mutual responsibility and reliability. There is little room for change in this primary task; the group has already defined truth and value, so efforts can only be toward accomplishing its delivery successfully, over and over in the vehicle of different plays.

These two views of the task entail different sets of satisfactions and deprivations for the members. For Sacred members, the task authorizes artistic exploration and development on an individual and group level. Members

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

are free to try and, importantly, to play, simply to see what might work, for there is no preconception about what will work. The member can be satisfied in his own growth and in the contributions he makes to the group products. Members will feel deprived insofar as their contributions are unappreciated and underutilized. Struggles will take place over maintaining a balance between group and individual perspectives, but such a balance is a feature of a mature, well-functioning group and to the extent that a group is oriented toward enhancing such a balance, it will be likely to work well.

For Eastern members, the task offers the satisfaction of participating in a moral, socially constructive enterprise and of possessing knowledge and certainty. It deprives members of the chance to develop their individual artistic, creative and intellectual abilities and of the chance to learn; because members already know, opportunity for growth is restricted to perfecting what is known.

To illustrate this difference, compare subjects' responses to Question 9 ("What is the story of the most satisfying experience that you and the company faced?"). Most Sacred group members point to a personal triumph, such as directing for the first time or successfully working on material that felt particularly meaningful. In contrast, most Eastern group members name a group triumph, such as a moment where all felt validated by a public

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

response, or experienced the magic of working well together onstage. (Chi square, corrected for continuity = 4.04, $p < .05$.)

Most satisfying experience	Sacred	Eastern
Personal triumph	6	1
Group triumph	2	7

It is also interesting that the one Eastern member who tells about a personal triumph qualifies his answer by saying, "I don't mean to necessarily toot my own horn at all here. I hope this doesn't come across that way." It appears that Sacred members are able to experience satisfaction in personal achievement, while the Eastern members are denied this satisfaction.

Subjects' responses to Question 8 ("Tell me about the most difficult situation that you and the company have faced") show a similar pattern. Most Sacred group members talk about difficult interpersonal experiences in which members' feelings have been hurt or violated. In contrast, most Eastern group members tell about times of uncertainty, either personal or collective, during which it was difficult to find direction in the group's principles, or to be certain that one was upholding them. At these times members doubted the viability of their collective enterprise. (Chi square, corrected for continuity = 4.04, $p < .05$.)

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Most difficult experience	Sacred	Eastern
Painful interpersonal issue	7	2
Lapses contributing to doubt	1	6

The different views of task also have implications for the relationships of the groups with their environment, which will be discussed in terms of the nature of their transactions across the boundary between the groups and the larger theater community.

III. Boundary Management

Both groups are small bounded subgroups within the larger New York theater community, and have potentially the same kinds of processes of exchange to make with their environments. The larger group of outside theater professionals and their products (written material, production skills such as designing, and their acting skills) are resources for the two companies. People and products from the professional world might be brought in for the companies' use, and members from the companies might go out into the larger professional circle to enrich themselves financially and experientially. Theater professionals added to an even larger, less bounded group of individuals comprise the market for the companies' products -- both as potential audience members and also as financial contributors. The interaction at this boundary is across it, so to speak, rather than by entering or

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

leaving the bounded companies.

The boundary with its resource area has always been looser in the Sacred group than in the Eastern group. In part, this reflects their long resistance to authority structures; boundary transactions are controlled by a group's leadership (Miller & Rice, 1961). Although the group is very aware of who is a member and who is not, and has recently formalized strict procedures to limit the growth of the company, it has always invited outside actors to take part in its productions and plans to continue to do so. In addition, the Sacred members themselves frequently act in outside venues. Miller and Rice (1961) note that such intergroup relationships are risky to a group because they involve making new temporary boundaries, which "contains the possibility that the new boundaries will prove stronger than the old -- that the new boundaries will enjoy greater sentience than the old" (p. 61). The Sacred group displays flexibility and a certain security in its willingness to take this risk.

The Eastern group has always had a policy that its plays must be cast with company members except where this is not possible due to "race or age." (Recall, from the synthesized narrative, that the group declined an offer to be produced by Lincoln Center because it required them to replace some company members with outside actors.) In addition, the company culture has not made it easy for

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

members to work outside the group. For a time, that difficulty was built into policy; members had to receive the group's permission if they wanted to be away for three weeks. But it was also a product of the group's worldview. As one member put it: "The company was what I was totally dedicated to. And I used to feel that I was compromising that dream somehow if I did work outside the company. I usually only did it out of physical necessity."

This difference between the groups extends to their attitude toward the plays they import as well. The Sacred group often invites playwrights to create new works on particular themes, at times have collaborated as a group to create unscripted performances, and will produce new and frequently unpolished material. The Eastern group has formal criteria that define the structure of a play that will "be received by the audience on an unconscious level," and strong values guiding the selection of plays that will "really enlighten and educate people about what's going on." Thus the group confronts a dearth of appropriate material: "We have very high standards -- theaters all over the city are doing plays that we wouldn't do because we don't think they're good enough. Consequently we have trouble finding plays." When the group does work on a play, its approach to the material effectively continues to maintain a boundary between the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

group and the playwright. The company believes in "telling the story of the play according to the playwright's intention without fucking around with it." The play is thus made sacrosanct, and the members, as conduits for the playwright's message, are prohibited from engaging in creative or playful interaction with the material.

Although the Eastern group's rigid boundaries are there to defend the group's sense of its unique methods and motivations, "survival depends upon the conduct of transactions with the environment and the risk of destruction" (Miller & Rice, 1961, p. 61). Now that the company has its own theater, and its survival is more tangibly linked to being competitive enough to finance it, the group has begun to painfully reconsider these policies around its boundary.

IV. Basic Assumption Cultures

Reconsider, for a moment, the group members' statements about the "kind of company" to which they belong. The degree of homogeneity in the Eastern group is striking, and contrasts markedly with the diversity of expression in the Sacred group. The Sacred group answers portray a confident group, aware of the tension between group and individual, and oriented toward creating high-quality theater that showcases their talent. The Eastern

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

group answers portray a group that defers to an ideal, and although in doing so they gain certainty and unity, they lose individuality. This set of responses confirms, if there was any doubt, that the Eastern group displays all the earmarks of a "dependency culture" -- is in the grip, that is, of what Bion has labelled "basic assumption dependency" (1961). The Sacred group's basic assumption tendency is less clearcut and less crystallized, but I will argue that when their work group shifts to a basic assumption culture, it is frequently that of a "pairing culture."

Bion's basic assumption theory (1961) posits three modes of group behavior which derive from the need for emotional security. The "assumptions" (fight/flight, dependency and pairing) comprise three configurations of object relations, anxieties, defenses and affects that shape the emotional climate in which groups meet. The basic assumptions are contrasted with the "work group," which is the label Bion applies to the mental activity of the group that rationally applies itself to the task it has met to accomplish. Bion notes that the basic assumptions can be put to "sophisticated" use that promotes the group's accomplishment of its tasks, but when the group is fully under the sway of a basic assumption, its ability to function as a work group is compromised.

It is important to pause here for a moment to note

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

that, despite the focus on group defenses in this section, I am not ascribing any undue pathology to these two groups. Any group will display irrational processes of a particular quality -- in many respects, they are adaptive. Both companies have been together for years, against the odds in this city, and have accomplished a variety of tasks in difficult circumstances. We must acknowledge that they both function as work groups, even though the interference from basic assumptions may at times be considerable.

The basic assumption cultures operate for the most part as dynamic defenses -- they are activated when group security is threatened and oscillate with the rational, task-oriented work group, and with manifestations of other basic assumption cultures. But the defenses provided by the basic assumptions can be structuralized, built into the operations of an organizational system (Jaques, 1955; Menzies, 1975). The Sacred group shows a more dynamic pattern of defense, and the periods when basic assumption behavior appear dominant in the group's behavior indicate a response to anxiety deriving primarily from the particular tasks with which the group is engaged. The more entrenched defensive pattern of the Eastern group, however, can be regarded as a socially structured defense. The dependency culture in the group was codified, early on, presumably to meet the psychological needs of the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

members as, together, they faced the overarching task of Entering Early Adulthood and embarking on careers as actors. (The crucial differences alluded to here in the beginnings of the two groups will be developed further in the Adult Development chapter that follows.)

The Eastern group - Structuralized dependency. The pattern of object relations displayed by a dependency culture includes dependency on the leader, submission to authority, hierarchical relations and leveling of peers. Throughout the analyses of Eastern group data, it has been apparent that this pattern of object relations has characterized the group's experience.

Bion maintains that the leader of an assumption culture need not be an actual person. Through the process of "biblemaking," the group can locate its leadership in its own reified history, or in an ideology. Phillip Rose clearly serves as a leader to the group. And the group displays such a pronounced orientation toward dependency that it also elevates its ideology and its history to a position of authority. The quotes above, from members' definitions of "kind of company," show the degree to which the group's ideology has become its bible. There are also several instances throughout the transcripts of members telling how in times of conflict or confusion (or "crisis of faith" as one member puts it), the group turns to its principles and recommits to them, thereby achieving unity

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

and purpose once again. One member expresses the virtual equivalence of Rose and the ideology by saying, (in reference to the training workshop), "Even though it didn't have Phillip, it still had the technique, which was the same."

Some of the findings in the analysis of frequently used words underlined this focus on the group leader. The pattern of proper names used suggested that the members emphasized their relationships with the leader and other authority figures over their relationships with each other. In addition, several of the names, place and time words revealed the group's distinctive and consistent attention to chronology that suggests the group has also made a bible of its history.

We have seen how the leveling of peers was an entrance requirement for this group, and how it was further enforced through the belief in hard work and technique and the corresponding denial that personal attributes contribute to good acting. Certainly the group's emphasis on its homogeneity, and the expression of it in features of the group's narratives, has been abundantly illustrated. The leveling of group members ensures that all will receive equal nurturing from the leader, and also that no one will present a challenge to the leader's authority. But the denial of differences between the members amounts to acceptance of a powerless,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

castrated condition and curtails the development of leadership within the group. One member complains that the group has never had any real artistic direction, that its artistic directors have always been more like "company presidents" than artistic leaders.

These patterns of relationship point to the predominant anxieties in a dependency culture, fear of abandonment and fear of retaliation. Much of the group's conflict with success, illustrated in the analysis of synthesized narratives, can be seen as responsive to these twin fears -- the group cannot appear to be so successful that it no longer needs its leader, and neither can it risk retaliation by appearing to compete for his position in the hierarchy. Nevertheless, there are bound to be feelings of envy and aggression toward a leader who so monopolizes the power and creativity of the group. These feelings, too, trigger the anxieties of dependency and must be denied or repressed.

Thus we also see in the Eastern company rigid boundaries and the projection of its anger and envy outside the group. It locates the forces of domination and subjugation in the theater business, feels exaggerated helplessness and powerlessness in relation to that business, and views the company as a refuge from the humiliation to be found outside. There are numerous statements in the Eastern transcripts that exemplify this

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

stance (many were quoted in the group of tropes relating to Degradation), for example: "Most actors don't have any control over their lives"; "You don't have to go to other people to have them ratify your life"; and, "This is a haven in what is essentially a very hostile environment of being an actor in New York City." Similarly, the group's responses to Question 12 ("Could you talk about New York as a context for the group? What is it like to work in this environment?") paint a composite picture of an adverserial city, one that prohibits, competes with, and ignores the company.

The predominant affects in a dependency culture are powerlessness, emptiness and depression. And indeed, the contrast between the vocabularies of the two groups vividly illustrated the deadened, lackluster mode of experience in the Eastern group. This affective difference is further confirmed by the responses subjects gave when asked to rate their "life" and their "feelings about their relationship with the company" on a 10 point scale. Eastern members rated their lives, on average, 6.5 compared to the Sacred members' average of 7.9. As for relationships with their companies, Eastern members' ratings averaged 6.2, compared to the Sacred members' average of 7.5.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

	Sacred	Eastern
Average rating of "life"	7.9	6.5
Average rating of "relationship with the group"	7.5	6.2

Bion describes dependency group members as "devotees of the group religion" (1961, p. 74), an apt analogy for the Eastern members. The implication, according to Bion, is that membership in a dependency group will exert widespread influence over the members' mental lives when they are away from the group as well as when they meet. This perception is supported by the Eastern transcripts, for members make it plain that the principles are relevant to their lives apart from as well as with the group. For example, "The technique is Phillip Rose's ideas on life as much as on acting. So it becomes a group with a common vision of how they want their life to be"; and, "It's the type of technique that really serves you in terms of giving you a practical way to go about living your life as an actor and living your life in the company."

The outcome of the dependency culture's broad influence is the inhibition of forces that promote independent thinking and, by extension, individual growth and development. According to Bion, the new idea demands development, and where it is suppressed "thought becomes stabilized on a level that is platitudinous and dogmatic"

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

(1961, p. 144). Thinking, understanding, and development are all intolerable to the basic assumption cultures. But dependency cultures, with their pervasive influence, are the most prohibitive in this regard. And even though many of the dependency culture features of the Eastern company, as discussed above, can be viewed as hindering the growth of the individual, it is perhaps the constraint on cognition that is most prohibitive. The position is stated, poignantly to my ear, by a member: "The whole basis of the Eastern Theater Company and the whole basis of Practical Aesthetics is that, as the stoics tell us, you work to have a few simple principles so they are always easily at your hand....We would always rather refer to our principles than our judgment."

The Sacred group - Dynamic defense with emphasis on BaPairing. Defensive patterns of behavior are less obvious in the Sacred group, and it is therefore more difficult to speculate about the nature of the group's anxieties. I will focus on aspects of behavior in some phases of the group's history that appear somewhat irrational and opposed to development, and thus point to the operation of defensive assumptions.

In its early history, the Sacred group strongly resisted granting authority to any particular member or members. Granting leadership entails, to some extent, the leveling of other members, and this was emphatically not

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

what members wanted from the group. It was the depersonalization, acquiescence to authority and lack of creative control perceived in the outside theater world that members sought to escape by forming their group. In order to provide freedom for all, the group could not coalesce around any particular direction. Maintaining equality was thus rationally motivated, but required the group to contend with a certain degree of chaos and strife between members. Without a leader to serve as a lightning rod for the group's positive and negative emotions, the members were inundated with confusing and frightening affects toward each other. Many members remark upon the intense power struggles amongst group members at that time. For example, "a good chunk of every meeting started to become about screaming at each other about what we should do or shouldn't do"; and, "There was so much attacking of people. The discussions were violent. There was so much warfare. To me it was scary."

To preserve safe relations, there might have been pressure in the group to locate an outside enemy and rally as a fight/flight culture to react to it, or to promote someone or something to leadership and find security in dependency. Instead, the group's cohesiveness was maintained by a shared hope, the buoying conviction that "there was energy within us, and if we could harness it into something, it could at least be fun." This hopeful

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

sense that the group had the potential to create something special points to the operation of a pairing culture.

The optimistic hope of the pairing culture is based in the group's assumption that it is together to produce a "person, idea, or utopia" (Bion, 1961, p. 137) that will save the group from feelings of hatred, destructiveness, and despair. In the Sacred group, the pairing culture may have been mobilized to escape the dangerous feelings aroused by the unspoken rivalry for dominance. The pairing group is driven to keep hope alive, however, by not allowing its aims to be realized. In other words, the group may succeed in submerging its competitiveness by shifting to a pairing culture, but this in turn further suppresses the group's ability to structure authority and organization into its functioning, insofar as these enhance its ability to be productive.

Although the pairing culture is often one that mobilizes a pair to embody the reproductive hopes of the group, in the Sacred group the pairing culture was characterized by the impulse to seek allies and form coalitions while remaining vigilant to the development of potency within other individuals that could lead to hierarchy and consummation. This pattern, although it stops short of the mobilization of a pair, is consistent with the characteristic object relations of the pairing culture. Corresponding to the Oedipal phase of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

development, interpersonal relations are libidinal and anxiety is aroused by the fear of exclusion. Painful and motivating affects include jealousy, envy, and loneliness. In the Sacred group, all wanted a share in the creative force of the group, and jealously ascertained that procreation did not exclude them.

Sophisticated use of a basic assumption can counter the obtrusion of the patterns of emotion linked to the other basic assumptions, and allow a group to focus more rationally upon its tasks. When a pairing culture is used in a sophisticated manner, the group can view relationships as a source of creativity, change, renewal and continuity -- views that entail a differentiation between self and other. It has been apparent that the Sacred members are aware and respectful of the differences between themselves, and many statements express the view that such differences are a source of creativity as well. For example, "People get inspired by the other people"; "Its strength is it's 30 people coming from 30 different places and going 30 other places. And that almost random intersection is what's interesting"; and, "What's interesting is everybody's point of view. What I like is that so-and-so says, 'this is the way I see it,' and I say, 'this is the way I see it.' And that's what makes a company -- you've got the best of all worlds."

We have also seen that those emotions that are

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

effectively suppressed by the group's pairing tendency, configurations associated with dependency and interpersonal danger, were given expression in the group's figurative language that was derived from root metaphors in the domains of childhood, political struggle, warfare and interpersonal violence.

As we know, the intragroup hostility intensified in the Sacred group as one member amassed more power by being instrumental to securing the group's theater space. The same member was also pushing the group toward producing more theater. Both issues entail development -- greater responsibility, organization of authority relations, and interaction with the world outside the group. At this point a challenger emerged to maintain the basic assumption, to make sure, that is, that the new idea and its implications for the future should remain unrealized. He was "a leader apparently evoking the enthusiastic allegiances of the group, but devoid of contact with any reality other than the reality of the basic assumption group demands" (Bion, 1961, p. 136). Once the group elected this challenger to replace the task-oriented alternative, he proceeded to squander the group's resources, ignore its young board of directors, and disrupt functioning on a production to the extent that he was asked to remove himself. Many members state that even before the man was elected, the group had every reason to

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

believe he would prove to be a dysfunctional leader.

Although it is not clear exactly how the group managed to resolve that crisis, its outcome permitted them to evolve in the direction of increasing organization and increasingly skilled production. It became less narcissistic, concerned only with its own pleasure, and more oriented toward presenting theater that would be valued by the public. In accepting the return of the too-authoritative member, and granting him legitimate authority, the group seemed to invest him as the personification of the realities they most resisted. He now represented not only authority, but also embodied the commercial and not-artistic sensibility that they had tried to escape by forming the group. By erecting a symbol of the threat within the group, the members could struggle with it and master it to some degree (Hirschhorn, 1988). By splitting off their commercial, organizational, and approval-seeking motives and confining them to GT, the rest of the group could see itself as a maverick engaged in "pure" creativity, secure that its creation would eventually be channelled productively.

V. Group Process and the Fate of the Inferior Actor

I will now examine a problem of development shared by both groups, observing how the matrix of group processes in each group has shaped the evolution and outcome of the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

problem. Members of both groups say that some members are better actors than others, and that this differential has been a source of strain and difficulty for interpersonal relationships in the groups. Both groups say that, ideally, everyone in the group should get the chance to act. In practice, neither group has achieved this ideal.

The Eastern group. The Eastern group's conception of its task requires all members to subordinate their self-interest to facilitating the best possible production of the best available play. All members work hard to support the ongoing functioning of the company, performing secondary tasks such as fund raising, stage managing, office administration, teaching and managing the school, and many others that enable the group to pursue its primary task. Throughout much of its history, the group was unable to pay members for this support work, although this has gradually changed and the group now pays three staff members, while continuing to rely on a great deal of free labor from other members. Members shared the idea that "if you support the company, the company will support you."

The relatively impermeable boundaries of the company contributed to a situation in which many members did not work as actors elsewhere. They did their support work for the company, worked a job to make a living such as waiting tables, and relied on getting their turn to act with the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

company to be seen and perhaps get an agent or another offer through that exposure. In many cases, their efforts seemed to go unrewarded as the same subset of company members were cast again and again.

It was difficult to challenge or even directly address the situation within the culture of the company. All were dependent upon an ideology, and one of its components was a technique of acting that defined acting as a skill that could be developed by anyone who worked hard enough. All of the members were members, in fact, because they had trained together in this particular skill. According to the doctrine, they should be equally skilled actors. As one member describes it: "Finally what was rewarded was not what is traditionally rewarded in the theater, which are intangibles such as how interesting or sensitive or attractive we are, but what was rewarded was work....It was as simple as that. And so talent became replaced by will." The ideology also demanded the best possible production of the play, and themes of the group subordinated personal ambition to the social good. These somehow justified the casting of a subset of members who could best serve the play, and contradictions with other aspects of the ideology were unexamined -- as would be expected in a dependency culture.

The group has now settled in its own theater and the problem has been thrust into prominence. The financial

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

requirements are much higher, and the group must be competitive. Circumstances have converged (among them, not insignificantly, the group's approaching the Age 30 Transition) to force them to reevaluate their boundaries and consider bringing in new members. They must acknowledge that all members of the company are not equally well-equipped actors. In their culture, this has taken shape as scapegoating these actors. To protect their ideology, the group is blaming the lesser actors for not working hard enough to improve, and blaming them for the need to change policy in order to get good enough actors. Some examples of this attitude are: "There are people in the company who feel like if they work on a computer for 20 hours a week, they deserve a part. And so instead of working on their acting for the last five years, they've been working on a computer"; "It's up to people to use the time that's available in the theater to work on their own and not to ask the company to bring them up...there are people who are just waiting around for their paycheck, artistically"; "I just feel there are some people who don't work at their acting. And I don't know if they're going to get better, because I think it has to do with their approach to life, too"; "You have to take responsibility for yourself and be committed to your profession. And not become a detriment to your company, but more an asset."

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

That this scapegoating has emerged just as the group considers loosening its boundaries also suggests that the group has insecurity about its ability to compete in the theater community. By projecting its vulnerability into a few inferior actors, the rest of the group can feel assured about its ability to thrive as long as it works hard enough to keep its skills up to par. In reality, of course, neither the most talented actor nor the most hard-working is assured of success in the highly competitive and capricious theater business.

The group processes that have fostered this problem in the Eastern company also make it hard to address, because dealing with it means making a wholesale reevaluation of the founding principles of the group. But the group has begun to take this painful step. If they follow through and overcome their stagnation, present members may no longer recognize their company. But it will be a company that has more room to grow and space for individuals to grow within it.

The Sacred group. The Sacred group's view of its primary task allows members to find their own ways of participating in the group, and places responsibility for being good enough directly on the individual member. The task does not define the form of its products. As a result, many types of product are worked on, at times simultaneously, and it is up to members to fit in with a

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

project or create one that will allow them to participate.

Because the more permeable boundaries of the group permit outsiders to come in and work on projects, there has always been open competition among members and mutual acknowledgment that some members often lose the competition. Feelings are often hurt because not being chosen plainly means that a member is not considered to be good enough. A member described the dilemma: "When it came to individually casting one of these people, one would say to themselves, 'Well, if I'm here because I want to create something worthwhile, why am I going to cast someone that I don't feel is going to do anything worthwhile? To be supportive?' But is that what this is about or is this to me a place where I can work on something that I really believe in without the pressures of commercialism. And so inevitably these people wouldn't be cast." Another member says these issues are "at times very ugly and very divisive." Some members who didn't often get cast found ways to contribute by performing secondary support tasks for the group, but this was a way to stay involved, not a way to demonstrate that one deserved a part, or to earn one. The looser boundaries also promoted a view of the company as adjunct or supplemental to members' careers, not as comprising the career. There was more of an attitude toward and among the underutilized members that they would keep trying to

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

get work outside and work with the Sacred group for fun, in whatever way they could.

Less constrained by basic assumptions than the Eastern company, the Sacred group went through more changes and offered different things to its inferior actors over time. Although they had to deal with pain and criticism, they could make a less encumbered choice to keep trying. One such member realized "nurturing yourself and dedicating yourself to the group [required] self-support -- individual commitment to their own satisfaction of their own needs." Another describes the less respected actor's decision: "Those people, to their benefit, have kind of stuck with it and have found a place where they could do what they could do, or realize that they had to try something different."

Although the culture does not sound particularly supportive to the inferior actor, it did provide a place for them to pursue their own development in their own way. Several members describe their surprise and gratification at the progress that has been made by actors considered "hopeless" in the beginning: "People who, I think I can say kindly, started off as really mediocre to bad actors actually became really quite competent. Are getting better and better"; "The acting has gotten much better, just from playing. Everybody's been playing so long together"; "Some of the people who were not particularly

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

skilled actors when they started out have had a chance to really get better and better"; "There's a few people who were on really shaky ground. There was one who I thought, someone's got to tell this person she shouldn't act. It's just not her thing, and it's never going to happen. And this girl's emerging as a real actor and a serious actor and an interesting, unusual, you know, not-- but does her own thing."

By allowing members to do their own thing, and valuing the result, the Sacred group promotes the discovery of self and exemplifies the growth-promoting environment that Hirschhorn labels "developmental culture":

> The anxiety of working must be managed and organized by a...system of symbols and meanings that allows us to take risks, permits us to fail, but gives us second chances. We cannot eliminate risk, for that is the core of work. But we can value learning and we can forgive failures. This is the hallmark of developmental culture. (1988, p. 241).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Adult Development Reading

This chapter will focus more directly on membership in the two groups as it relates to processes of adult development. The origins of the groups will be examined as efforts to construct life structures that served the developmental needs of members as they entered the phase of life Levinson calls Entering Early Adulthood. The suitability and viability of the life structures as contexts for members' development will be evaluated. And finally, I will examine evidence that suggests how members are reevaluating the groups as they make the Age 30 Transition.

I. Group Formation and Entering the Adult World

As discussed in the introduction, the young person faces two contrasting tasks as he reaches the period of development that Levinson calls Entering the Adult World: he must freely explore the options of the adult world, but at the same time, he must build a life structure that offers enough stability for him to test himself within that world. Levinson notes that implicit in the idea of tasks is the notion that they may be accomplished well or poorly. The complexity of a life structure and the diversity of individual versions make it extremely difficult to evaluate the satisfactoriness of a given

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

solution. But Levinson applies the loose criteria of viability in society and suitability for the self. That is, the structure must "work in the world," allow a man to "adapt, to maintain his various roles and to receive sufficient rewards." At the same time, it must "allow him to live out important aspects of his self" (p. 54). How do the two groups, as significant components of their members' life structures, help their members balance the tasks of exploration and formation of stable structure as they Enter Early Adulthood?

Let us establish a context for this question by first considering the ramifications of the choice to become a theater professional. Perhaps to a greater degree than most fields, this one is colored by fantasy. Fame, fortune and freedom have been won by many and surely form one private cornerstone of the dream. There is also the magic of transforming the self and transporting an audience that captures the emotions of a budding theater artist. Eleven of the 16 subjects say they were so compelled by a childhood experience as an audience member or on the stage that they have wanted to be an actor ever since. That this particular dream is often formed so early suggests that it is less informed by pragmatic considerations than by a certain sense of self and a priority attached to self fulfillment.

Once the would-be actor tries to implement his

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

choice, even in the initial phase of acquiring training, he confronts the intense competition and arbitrariness of reward in his field. To persist may require self confidence and not a little bit of grandiosity -- the neophyte must convince himself and others that he has a special quality or talent that will, when recognized, secure him a viable place in his profession. Unlike most professions, there is no established career path that one can follow with any predictability. Some actors are phenomenally successful with no training whatsoever, while others, equally talented, train and toil for years with no recognition. The reverse is also true. Even success brings with it no assurance that it will continue. Furthermore, the training itself exists in such variety that the actor must truly forge an individual technique, piecing together experience and inspiration to find a method that works for himself.

Added to this ambiguity is the unusually public nature of the actor's success or failure. At every level -- training, auditioning, and performing -- the actor exposes himself to the judgment of others. And while all those who work must expose their products to the judgment of some group, the actor exposes more intimate pieces of himself than most. Not only his ability, but his appearance, his voice, his emotional resonance and sensitivity, his talent and creativity -- all are open to

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

criticism, not just from colleagues, but from a world of total strangers as well.

It would seem, then, that to build a life structure around this kind of career is to risk satisfactoriness on one important dimension, viability in the world, in order to pursue a choice that is expected to be satisfactory on the other important dimension, in terms of its suitability to the self. It is a choice that would seem to offer much in the way of exploration -- not only does the actor explore a variety of characters and situations in his work, but the jobs are for the most part transitory, and often must be supplemented with additional work in other fields. However, compared to many career paths, it is a choice with an unusually low certainty of stability or reward. Upon Entering Early Adulthood, the young person who has decided to pursue a career in theater has made a choice that will facilitate the task of exploring himself and the world, but that will make it rather more difficult to achieve stability. His commitment to theater may be firm and stable, but his life structure -- the intersect of the sociocultural, material and personal components of his day to day life -- is likely to remain relatively unsettled.

Having decided to pursue careers in the theater, then, this is the context within which the subjects formed their respective companies. But the two took shape in

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

different ways and were meant to serve different purposes and different needs.

The Sacred group. The members of the Sacred & Profane Players were out of school and already pursuing careers before the group formed. Although young, many of them were making a living -- some a very good living -- as actors. Indeed, their transition into the professional community may have felt rather too abruptly accomplished at this phase of early adulthood. We have seen how important it was to the group at this point to reject authority, which may partly reflect defense against dependency needs activated by this swift transition to independent functioning.

Subjects themselves point to two aspects of their life structures that were unsatisfactory enough to motivate them to form the company. One was that the work, although "viable" for many, was unfulfilling in terms of the self. The projects people found themselves working on were not personally meaningful; being driven primarily by commercial as opposed to artistic concerns, most employment did not offer actors the chance to express or explore themselves. Similarly, members who were not working as successfully as some others also were missing a forum for the expression and exploration of themselves. The second aspect had to do with the transitory nature of the work. Although jobs provided intense relationships

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

with other professionals while they lasted, members wanted more stability -- a more continuous sense of community and relationship with colleagues than a series of short-lived jobs could offer.

So the group formed to establish community and a place for artistic expression and exploration, filling a significant gap, as it were, in the largely viable life structures the members were constructing. In terms of the dual developmental tasks, the formation of the group enhanced its members' opportunities to work on both: members gained stability by establishing an artistic home to which they would become increasingly committed; and, they provided themselves a place to explore their creativity, try things and take risks that were not possible in the larger professional environment.

The Eastern group. Unlike the members of the Sacred group, members of the Eastern company had not begun testing themselves in the adult, professional world before they formed their company. The Eastern members first encountered Phillip Rose and his philosophy at an earlier phase of their development, the Early Adult Transition of roughly ages 18 to 22. During this period, a young adult's tasks center around leaving pre-adult relationships and concerns, and making tentative choices and steps toward participation in the adult world. A major component of this process is the separation from the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

family of origin. At a time when members were terminating childhood dependencies and developing adult identities, it is not surprising that Phillip Rose's authority, prominence and idealism had such appeal. The young members were trying to prepare themselves for a career as actors, negotiating the confusing array of training experiences, and probably facing for the first time the essential arbitrariness and uncertainty that their dream entailed. At this crucial juncture, Rose offered them a moral reason for doing theater, a precise and unambiguous acting technique, the assurance that anyone who worked hard enough could succeed, and the inspiration of his own fame and success.

The period of apprenticeship with Rose, during which the group studied with him in Vermont and trained as interns at the Goodman Theater, was a valuable entree into the adult world and gave the students the chance to imagine themselves as participants in the professional theater. But the philosophy and technique was seized upon so fully that it seemed to cut exploration short. The students Entered the Adult World convinced that they had already found the answers to life's questions. At this juncture, Rose formed the company, not the members themselves.

Rather than filling a gap in members' nascent life structures, the Eastern company itself comprised a life

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

structure, a vehicle members could ride into adulthood. Members joined the company at that point because there they could "create their own work" rather than enter the uncertain professional world where agents and auditions were hard to come by, let alone the opportunity to be cast and perform. It provided its members with a haven from the anxieties of competition and uncertainty in the larger profession. As one member phrased it, they joined the company "rather than getting out of school and going, 'Where do I start in this big wide world?'" Thus, while the Sacred group formed to provide themselves with a place to take meaningful risks, the Eastern group's formation effectively shielded the members from risk. The formation of the group enhanced its members' abilities to build stability into their life structures, but it offered little opportunity to explore other personal and material alternatives. Its satisfactoriness was weighted heavily for viability in the world -- it was guided and protected by a recognized success in the profession, and it promised the opportunity to perform -- but achieved this at some cost to its suitability for the members' diverse selves. This missing component proves to be crucial. For even though members were attached to a stable, satisfactorily viable structure, because it did not satisfactorily engage the selves of members, it could not offer them the opportunity to feel personally tested and increasingly

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

competent and confident as young adults.

II. Group Development

From its beginnings to the time of interviews, the Sacred group went through many changes. The character of interpersonal relationship between members changed from selfish and combative to increasingly integrated and mutually supportive. Authority structures were vigorously resisted, then fought for, and gradually incorporated into the system. The nature of the group activities evolved through several stages, from casual readings for each other to individual creative exploration in front of each other, to group exercises for each other, then for an audience, and gradually to increasingly professional productions. Commitment, responsibility, and competence have all developed. Sacred members refer to these changes throughout their interviews. Their thinking about the group seems to be thinking about a process of group development. Members of the Eastern company do not talk about changes within the group. Their thinking about the group seems to be thinking about a timeline -- where they were when and what they did there. But it would seem that the nature of relationship, of activity, of motivation and process have remained the same.

When telling the story of their group (in response to the open Question 1), Sacred members make several references to aspects of the group that have changed since

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the beginning. On average, they made 9.75 spontaneous remarks about changes in the company during their stories. The Eastern members' stories referred to change on average only 2.87 times ($U = 12$, $p < .05$).

In addition, the nature of the change referred to in the stories of the two groups is quite different. Of the 78 spontaneous mentions of change made by Sacred members, only 13 are not specifically growth-related. (An example of a change comment that is not specifically growth-related is "We're spoiled now.") Of the 23 total mentions of change made by Eastern members, only two can be considered growth-related. Most refer to changes in attitude connected with the current upheaval in the casting policy, such as "We're at the point now of saying half of us aren't necessarily great actors."

Even when asked specifically about change (Question 2: "Have the goals or purposes of the company changed over the years?"), three Eastern members say there has been no change. Four more members say that the casting policy is now undergoing change, but that other aspects have remained the same. Only one member suggests that there has been any evolution of perspective, and even this is related to the current casting problem: "the notion that the way we work is truly, truly unique to us is being let go of." In contrast, six Sacred members point to various changes through the years, and two say that the goals have

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

always been nonspecific and that it is therefore hard to say how they've changed.

	Sacred	Eastern
Average # of spontaneous references to change (Q1)	9.75	2.87
% of change references that are growth-related (Q1)	83.33%	8.69%
# who say goals have changed (Q2)		
Yes	6	1
No	-	3
Yes and No	2	4

III. Individual Development

Although the interview was designed to get at the diachronic texture of group life, it does not specifically ask the subjects to remark upon their own individual development during the period of the group's history. Nevertheless, we are interested in the prospects for individual growth within the contexts provided by the two group frameworks -- one characterized by transformation and one characterized by stability. Two of the interview questions provide indirect access to these processes, and a third source is the set of spontaneous references to personal change throughout the transcripts.

Question 4 asks, "Have there been any turning points in your own thinking or feelings about the company?" Members of the two groups approached this question

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

somewhat differently. The Eastern group members more directly answered the question that was asked, and focused on fluctuations in their feelings about the company. Four members highlighted a process of deidealization that has led to the recent reevaluation of the casting policy. They say their feelings have changed from total dedication to the group and to the ideal of providing work for all members, to a recognition that they feel tired of supporting other members. One says, "I don't want it to be anymore a club where we help each other get work." And another says that, for a time, supporting the work of other members was "what I needed and wanted to do and believed in," but that the company has now "become socialistic in its most negative connotations, and it's impossible to fail." Two members talk about periods of discouragement when they have wondered whether being with the group was the right thing for them. Another focuses on his gradually diminishing confidence in his own ability to lead, his sense that the group has not recognized or fostered personal qualities he once valued. Only one member talks about a positive change, an event that made him feel more committed to the group.

In contrast, five of the Sacred group members answer Question 4 by telling what they've learned or how they've grown since the group was formed. They refer to both artistic growth -- learning new skills such as writing or

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

directing, or developing confidence as actors -- and to learning about people and relationships. The other three members, like the Eastern group members, focus more on changes in their feelings toward the group. But where the Eastern answers have a quality of disillusionment, the Sacred answers describe positive changes. One tells of becoming more proud of the group and his satisfaction in watching people's talent grow; another tells of recognizing that if he worked to be more involved with the group, he could have more influence on its activities; and, the third tells of feeling more and more valued, comfortable, and able to contribute to the group over time.

Question 4	Sacred	Eastern
Negatively toned feeling change	-	7
Positively toned feeling change	3	1
Emphasis on growth/learning	5	-

Additional indirect evidence as to how well the two companies have supported individual development comes from subjects' responses to Question 14, "What made you happen to go into theater?" Levinson sees the process of defining and implementing a Dream -- an inspiring vision of the adult self in the world -- as central to the period of early adulthood. He says that "it makes a great difference in his growth whether his initial life

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

structure is consonant with and infused by the Dream, or opposed to it" (1978, p. 92). The dream is thought to facilitate the actualization of the desired self-in-world, functioning rather like representations of future "possible selves" that are both incentives for future behavior and evaluative/interpretive contexts for understanding the current self (Cross & Markus, 1991).

Although it was expected that Question 14 would tap into subjects' Dreams, the answers were, overall, surprisingly unarticulated in the sense of depicting a vision of a kind of life and the self within it. Most subjects spoke of early exposure to the theater and being fascinated with it from that point forward. Others performed as youngsters, felt they were good at it and enjoyed it. Only five subjects (two Eastern members and three Sacred members) talked about specific features of the theater life that they had desired for themselves.

Nevertheless, the two groups' responses to this question did differ in one important respect. Five of the Eastern members prefaced their answers by saying "I don't know." In contrast, none of the Sacred members hedged or hesitated before responding. (Chi square, corrected for continuity = 4.80, $p < .05$). This difference suggests that, however unarticulated the Dream may be for all subjects, members of the Eastern group are more alienated than Sacred members from the Dream. It suggests that the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Dream has not been given meaningful life within their current life structures, and that the way to the future of the Dream is not bridged by the current life structures.

The third source of evidence pertaining to individual development is the set of spontaneous comments about personal growth made throughout the remainder of the interview (i.e., not including comments made during the initial story of the group, or in response to Questions 2-4 that ask specifically about change). Here again there is a significant difference between the two groups. Among the Sacred members, references to personal change are overwhelmingly comments about learning or growth. In contrast, most Eastern members' comments about personal change refer to a decline in function or attitude, or the recognition of stagnation and the need to grow (Chi square = 10.58, $p < .01$).

	Sacred	Eastern
Personal growth	17	6
Personal decline	1	5
Recognition of need for growth	-	3

IV. Age 30 Transition

At the time of the interviews, all of the subjects were within the age range Levinson has called the Age 30 Transition. This period provides an opportunity for young

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

adults to reassess their life structures and to make changes that will create a basis for a more satisfactory structure that will be built in the following period. Levinson notes that, although everyone will make some changes during this period, the process of change may be either smooth or painfully stressful. A smoother transition tends to take place when the life structure built in the Entering the Adult World period suits a person well and provides the desired rewards.

We have reviewed evidence showing that the Sacred group members have experienced greater personal growth, and perceived more change in the company as a whole than have Eastern group members. None of the Sacred group members discuss changes that need to take place in the company at this time, perhaps because it has evolved freely as members' needs have evolved throughout its history. Similarly, only one comment is made by a Sacred group member that suggests that age-related developments are affecting members' relationships to the group or to their career choices. The comment is: "As we get older, it gets more difficult to remember why we do it." The relative absence of such comments and of group upheaval at present suggests that members are experiencing a rather smooth Age 30 Transition.

The Eastern group, as we know, is undergoing radical reevaluation of its founding policies, and several members

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

describe how painful it is to be considering such fundamental change. In addition, members make numerous spontaneous comments referring to age-related developments that have caused them to question the direction of their lives. The following examples, from three different members, are representative:

> "And I'm tired. And I've reached the point where it's not okay to be doing shit work for nothing anymore. It's not okay to be an intern anymore. And so...I'm trying to be calm. And I need to be further clear about what I will give to the company and what I want to get out of it."
>
> "That little black hole is starting to open up within me. And it's really frightened me....There was a night when I finally went, 'I'm not enjoying myself anymore. I don't know why I'm doing theater.' And I don't know if I even want it anymore."
>
> "Right now I'm going through a big transition, which is just that at some point you have to ask yourself, 'Can I make a living at this? Is this something that I can afford to do for the rest of my life? Or need I begin to look somewhere else? Am I just wasting my time?'"

These sorts of comments, combined with the current upheaval in the company, suggest that the Eastern group members are experiencing a more difficult Age 30 Transition than the Sacred group members. It is interesting to note that much of the figurative language used by Eastern members expressed a sense of drift, a diffuse lack of groundedness or orientation. This was hard to understand in the context of their loyalty to a very explicit set of organizing principles; however, it was very evocative of the sense of loss and confusion the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

group feels as it grapples with the need to forge a structure more suitable to its members. Paradoxically, the group's attempt to rationally conquer ambiguity through a system of belief seems to have resulted in an unconscious, affective ambiguity.

This pattern of results strongly suggests that, as significant components of their members' life structures, the two groups have not equally supported adult development. The Sacred group has provided a setting for its members to freely explore alternatives, and one that has been stable enough to allow them to develop and test their professional abilities in increasingly mature formats. It has been successful both as a viable structure in the adult world, and as a suitable structure for living out important aspects of the selves of its members. As Sacred members make the Age 30 Transition, not one member expresses doubts about his chosen career or a sense that changes need to made in his life. Instead, all describe evolving as human beings throughout their histories with the group.

The Eastern group has inhibited its members' abilities to explore the available alternatives, although it has provided a stable and secure setting for its members to test themselves in their field. However, the insularity of the setting has led members to feel that they are protected from genuine risk, and therefore that

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

they have not really yet proved themselves in the adult world. The structure has been successfully viable in the adult world, but it has narrowly defined the aspects of self that might be expressed within it. Members of this group are undergoing a more difficult Age 30 Transition as their life structures require more radical reorganization if they are to support optimal living in the next phase of adulthood.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion

The hypotheses that organized the investigative approach to the data yielded many layers of material that comprised two portraits of distinct cultures and the nature of development within them. To review the findings as relevant to the initial hypotheses:

1. The formations of the group cultures were examined as a balance of the two tasks of Entering Early Adulthood, as defined by Levinson's theory of adult development. The findings suggest that the Sacred group created a structure that embodied a balance of stability and exploration that was suitable to the members' self expression and development, and viable enough to provide challenges and rewards as an adult enterprise. It was a structure that correlated with ongoing growth. The Eastern group created a structure that was more imbalanced in terms of the tasks, characterized by great stability but little exploration. Although it was viable enough in the adult world to provide challenges and rewards to the members, these were in such a proscribed arena that the structure was less suitable for the exploration, expression and development of the members' selves. The imbalanced structure was not correlated with

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

ongoing growth, but with stasis and repetition.

2. The formations of the groups did embody narrative trajectories. We found that the Sacred group story was launched with intention; it was something like the story of the runaway who seeks to escape to a world that will be, in some way, better for the self. That this was undertaken as a group factored in the need to respect the differences between individuals and ensure that the new context be one that would support the development of the various individual artists in their own directions of development. The narrative trajectory also entailed a certain self-education followed by a kind of reintegration with society. The Eastern group story was founded in plight, the story of members swept up in another's vision of the world. As apprentices or disciples, their story trajectory was one in which a craft and ideology would be mastered and subsequently be exemplified as right ever after.

3. In the grip of these storylines and their themes, the members of the two groups did appear to be subject to two different sets of constraints and possibilities, which were reflected in both thought and action. The Sacred group members' worldview was much more permissive in terms of what constituted valuable effort for the group -- kinds of material and the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

ways that it might be engaged were virtually unlimited, encouraging self exploration and interaction with the medium of theater and with each other. The predominant constraint of their story was on the exercise of authority, and the derivative constraints were on the promotion of a singular point of view and the legitimizing of the group's productions. For Eastern group members, possibility was largely limited to excelling within the moral framework of their ideology. They could become good actors as their technique defined such, and they could become good people as their philosophy defined such -- hardworking people of willpower, who use theater to make a positive difference in the world. While the Sacred group is free to experiment with art for its own sake, the Eastern group is entitled only to use art as an instrument of morality. Frivolity, pleasure, play, any gratification that could be construed as narcissisistic or even aimless, was constrained by this worldview. Personal accomplishment became difficult to pursue.

4. The fourth guiding hypothesis was that a group culture with a story providing for change would experience less conflict around personal development. It is difficult to quantify this conflict, and we can only answer this question by inference in this study.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Certainly the evidence suggests that the Sacred group collectively and its members individually have undergone ongoing development throughout the group's history. This in turn suggests that the process has been less conflictual for them than for Eastern group members. As hypothesized, it is the Sacred group that have had a story authorizing change. In the Eastern group's story, change represents disloyalty, betrayal, even a lapse of courage. And the evidence suggests that, in fact, the group and its individual members have undergone relatively little development throughout its history. We assume that it would have been conflictual to do so, although, in the light of all we have learned about the groups, this is a simplistic formulation of the situation.

5. The fifth hypothesis, that the extent to which group cultures were formed defensively would correlate with their resistance to change and personal development, is also answered inferentially. We can only speculate on the degree and nature of anxiety that was present when the groups formed by looking at what the group cultures appear to address as defenses. In the case of the Sacred group, the group seemed to counter fears of anonymity, lack of control, and a dread of finding one's work life devoid of personal meaning and satisfaction. The Eastern group seemed

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

to protect its members from uncertainty, competition and narcissistic striving. Which of these sets of anxieties was more compelling is difficult to say. However, the evidence does support the contention that a defensive dependency culture in the Eastern group became structuralized and proved much more resistant to change than the more dynamic defense system of the Sacred group.

6. The final hypothesis derived from Levinson's timetable of adult development, and posited that subjects would now be less compelled by the factors that influenced the formations of the groups and would be attempting to modify the cultures in ways that support the developmental needs of the Age 30 Transition. Levinson maintains that this transition is more difficult for the person who has had a life structure that inadequately supported work on the tasks of the earlier phase. This study confirms the hypothesis and Levinson's theory that suggested it. Indeed, it is rather striking that the Eastern group, so characterized by repetition and lack of exploration through the phase of Entering Early Adulthood, has suddenly begun confronting and painfully dealing with the need for fundamental changes in their structure. It would appear that the genetic thrust of development is not to be thwarted.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> However, the members' statements of dissatisfaction, their lower life ratings, the desolation expressed in their figuative language and their enervated vocabulary all suggest that this transitional period is more difficult for them than for their contemporaries in the Sacred group. In the Sacred group, where the culture has adequately supported work on the tasks of early adulthood and ongoing development, the Age 30 Transition appears to be a smoother process for group members.

The differences between the groups that correspond to their relative promotion of development are consistent with expectations derived from developmental process and group process theory. The Sacred members, with their emphasis on individuality, managed to harness the excitement and generative power of a commonly focused diversity, thus building an important dialectic into their culture. They demonstrated the ongoing revision of goals and supersession of the old by the new that characterizes the cyclic process of development. They exemplified Winnicott's idea that play facilitates growth and health, and their dynamic system of defense permitted flexibility and tolerance of ambiguity in the face of change. A nearly opposite system of values prevailed in the Eastern group, and its members' development was compromised by its

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

dependency on a doctrine that defined right and wrong and thereby limited transformative interaction between members themselves and between members and their creative products. There was no dialectic here, no potential space for play and self elaboration, and entrenched defenses precluded the identification of limitations within the culture and alternative points of view that might promote transformation.

The findings echo a general theme in developmental psychology, the idea that development always proceeds toward differentiation, from embeddedness in a context to an awareness of it, from merger to separation and individuation (e.g., Mahler, Pine & Bergman, 1975). The process of development as defined here is essentially an interpretive process; an individual must possess sufficient differentiation from his context to be able to engage in thinking recursively about its limitations and possibilities. Interestingly, too, the movement from symptom to insight in the psychoanalytic process also parallels the difference between the two groups: one almost paralyzed by its constrictive view of the world, another more open and inclusive, if more confusing and emotionally unpredictable. Certain characteristics of the groups also relate to findings in the clinical research on attachment. These studies have demonstrated that mental models of attachment pattern the representation of reality

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

in ways that effect cognition and behavior, and that these models are interpersonally developed. In this field of study, too, compromised health is associated with attachment patterns characterized by constriction of behavior and attention, while greater well being is associated with open communication and emotional access between individuals, and ease of movement within the environment (Main, Kaplan & Cassidy, 1985).

A secondary, but significant implication of this study has to do with the method itself. There is an increasing appreciation in psychology of the importance to human mental processes of the culture in which they are situated (see discussion in Feldman, 1992). Dealing in meaning and its cultural mediation is a messy and ambiguous enterprise, one not easily accommodated by positivist scientific procedure. New methods must be explored and the study reported here is a nascent step in that direction. It treated culture as a genuine variable and allowed an examination of its effects. I believe the study provides a convincing illustration of the usefulness of narrative as a tool of access to cultural frames of meaning, for it demonstrated culture's effects on both the structure and content of its members' narratives of self. In this study the narrative analyses were limited to those pertinent to the question of adult development within the cultural contexts, but these are only a small subset of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the analyses that might be applied to such data. I believe it is an example of a methodology that would fruitfully be refined and extended in the study of culture and human thought.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Appendix 1

Word Frequency Analysis Procedure

[The following is the the coding manual developed by David Kalmar for use in the NYU laboratories of Jerome Bruner and Carol Feldman. It appears as an appendix to "Plot, plight and dramatism: Interpretation at three ages" by C. F. Feldman, J. Bruner, D. Kalmar and B. Renderer. The paper is in press at Lawrence Erlbaum, in The Nature and Ontogenesis of Meaning, W. Overton and D. Palermo, Eds.]

The ultimate goal in this data analysis is to determine whether there are any statistically reliable differences among any of the words that the different groups of subjects used.

We begin with transcripts of the interview tapes, prepared on a computer. From these transcripts, we need to know for each subject what words that particular subjects uses, and for each of those words, how frequently that subject used it. With this information, we know all of the words used in the experiment. We also know, for each subject, which of those words he or she used, and how frequently he or she used each word. This information can be placed in the form of a word-by-subject matrix. This matrix can be analyzed using any of a number of major statistical analysis packages. When analyzing such a large dataset, a statistical package might generate on the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

order of sometimes thousands of pages of output. This volume of output needs to be reduced to manageable proportions. The point of this reduction is to highlight words that are candidates for representing interpretive differences between subjects. With the reduced set of analysis results, we can return to the original transcripts and interpret the ways in which subjects use these highlighted words.

The tape recordings of the interviews were transcribed by a professional transcription service. The service used the WordPerfect 4.2 software for the IBM.

1. Converting files to ASCII format

Files in the WordPerfect 4.2 format contain hidden control codes that must be eliminated before analysis begins. We accomplish this by converting the WordPerfect 4.2 files to a basic ASCII (text) format, using the CONVERT program that is part of the WordPerfect 5.0 package.

2. Giving all files a uniform structure

The original files tended to vary slightly from each other when they arrived from the transcriber. Such inconsistencies need to be corrected. We also need to add additional structure to the files for later analysis. To convert all files to a common format, a series of transformations was applied to each transcript, treated as a data file. WordPerfect's Program Editor ws useful for

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

this task because it supports the use of macros. A macro was written for each transformation. The complete set of macros was then chained together to be run one after the other without intervention. The number of such macros required varied from 21 to 52. The macros were set up to loop so that, once invoked, the full set could operate successively on all data files.

3. Remove the experimenter's utterances from the files

Our counts were intended to include only the subject's and not the experimenter's utterances. All of the experimenter's utterances and transcriber's annotations were removed from the transcripts. Again, we used macros written for the Program Editor.

4. Compute word frequency for each subject

Once the transcript files are cleaned and uniformly structured, we can determine the word frequency usage for each subject. For this we used the FREQ program from the 1989 version of the CLAN package (MacWhinney, 1989), directing the output from each analysis to an output file.

5. Clean up output files for further analysis

Along with the basic information concerning the frequency of word usage, the output files also contained a few summary statistics. This summary information was written down for later use, and was then edited out of the file. After editing, the files contained only the words and their associated frequencies, so that these files

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

could be used as input files for the next step in the analysis.

6. Create a word-by-subject matrix

All words in the entire corpus are used. For each subject, the number of times that subject used each word is contained in the matrix. Not all subjects use all words, so some cells in this matrix represent zero entities. Creating the matrix is conceptually simple but computationally difficult for a large vocabulary. It is more easily accomplished using the data manipulation module in the Apple Systat 5.0 program, so we transferred files to a MacIntosh IIci computer. The matrix is then sent to an output file.

7. Transfer data to mainframe

The output matrix was edited with the QUED/M 2.07 editor to reduce blank spaces (reducing the amount of text to be transferred), and was then transferred back to the IBM. Using the ProComm 2.4.2 program on the IBM, the file was then uploaded to an IBM mainframe running the Wylbur 8.1 operating system.

8. Preparing the data set for analysis

The target format for these data was to be a subject-by-words matrix, where the variable names correspond to the actual words. In SAS (the only mainframe package that we know of that will support the data analysis procedure outlined below), variable names are limited to eight

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

characters -- a shorter length than many of the words. Hence, special names must be created by truncating the actual words, and care must be taken to avoid assigning identical truncation to different words. As a final twist, the FREQ program will sometimes capitalize words, sometimes not, and the SYSTAT program treates uppercase and lowercase letters as distinct, causing many words to appear twice in the word-by-subject matrix. These must be summed together.

The matrix file was then read into SAS 5.18. For each subject, the frequency value for each word represented the actual number of times the subject used the word. These are next converted into relative frequencies based on each subject's total number of words used. In this study, a subset of words with their relative words with their relative word frequencies were selected for further analysis. These were a set of words such that at least three subjects in one of the groups used it at least once.

9. The ANOVA step

Using the ANOVA procedure in SAS 5.18, an ANOVA using a single MODEL statement was performed for each word in the subset.

10. Analyzing the analysis

At this point, hundreds of pages of output must be reduced to manageable proportions. The target format has

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the overall ANOVA significance levels, means, and standard deviations for each word all on one line, with fifty lines on a page, so the words can be examined more easily. This was accomplished be editing and using the ANOVA output as input to a further SAS analysis. With the resulting dataset in hand, a criterion must be established for what words should be considered further. We sorted the words according to significance level (the equivalent of effect size, in this case), and words with a p-value less than .05 were pulled for further analysis.

11. Interpreting the results

Returning with this set of words to the IBM, the Micro Oxford Concordance Program was then used to find and print out each use of each word, along with its surrounding context. This permitted us to determine the usage for each word -- and thereby to infer in what way any word or class of words might be distinctive to a particular group.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Appendix 2

Eastern Group - Synthesized Narrative

Thematic analysis - Supplemental events. The first supplementary event, (5), tells us that students were selected for PR's program by passing a highly esoteric test. Rather than students, they now seem to be initiates in some secret society. But the specialness that this implies is belied by the fact that anyone, if he worked hard enough, could pass the test. No evidence of talent or creativity was required. The criterion for admission was submission, essentially a demonstration of one's willingness to put independent thinking aside and do what PR required, for no apparent reason. The initiate must simply demonstrate faith that a wisdom greater than his own was in charge. The chosen students were thus special, yet not special. The differences between them in terms of talent, ability and past experience were ignored and effectively leveled by this selection process. Although anxieties related to competition (bound to be intense in a group led by such a powerful paternal figure) were diminished, so was the value of the personal resources with which members might overcome their anxieties. This event intensifies the themes of unity and submission, and further subordinates ideas about independent thinking and individuality. It strengthens the idea that acting skill is a special substance (here almost a magical substance)

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

that any hard-working student can acquire. It defeats the idea that acting ability is intrinsic, or something one might develop from innate potentials.

With event (11) the new group, on its own for the first time, experiences the need for restraint or self-control. With its creative resources suppressed, and its ego functions subjugated to PR, aggression and competition may be especially discomfiting to this group. In a rather literal act of identification, the group internalizes the rules as laid down by PR. The conflict between the themes of individual expression and unity of expression seems to be formally resolved by absorbing the former into the latter -- the group agrees that each member's individual interest is indistinguishable from the group's interest.

In (14) and (15) we are told of two dubious productions and begin to question the group's choices. The material and the venue in these cases do not seem to conform to the ideals the group espouses. Rather than improving society, soap opera is a form of drama that can be accused of lulling its viewers into inaction as it recycles the most banal cliche's that our culture has to offer. But soap opera at the transvestite club and three one-acts featuring a person tied to a chair do make sense as instances of enactment. The first may reflect a deep conflict between the group's inner life and the face that it shows the world, its feeling of being trapped in a form

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

that cannot express its inner reality. And the trio of one-acts with someone tied to a chair similarly suggests constraint, lack of freedom, with overtones of guilt and the need to restrain unacceptable impulses.

Events (16) and (17) continue to tell of a difficult time for the group. Event (16), in certain respects, reprises core event (7) where PR required the Workshop to relocate to Chicago. In both cases PR extends an opportunity to the group, but it is a double-edged opportunity that requires sacrifice of personal commitments to his own agenda. He gives, but he also demands in a way that trivializes the lives of the group members insofar as they are distinct from his own. Another way to think about the productions of (14) and (15), using the concept of projective identification, is that the group's choices reflect PR's view of them as trivial. The passage in (17), when the group splits up for the summer instead of going to Vermont, amplifies further the thematic tension between individuality and unity. It depicts a low point for the group. Their solidarity is broken, and as individuals they are alone, needy, without direction.

On the heels of their first successful production in Chicago comes supplemental event (19), another event that raises questions about the group's judgment. The group has been duped by outsiders, suggesting a certain

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

innocence or naivete that calls for some sort of authoritative supervision or intervention. The event also raises the question: why did they close the very successful production before it was necessary, and rush into this ill-fated and apparently ill-prepared project? On the one hand, they may have been encouraged by the success of "Been Taken" and eager to duplicate it. To choose an evening of one-acts to follow the successful full length play seems backward, however. The decision resonates with the opposition between ongoing struggle and accomplishment, and suggests the group's reaffirmation of its commitment to being about hard work and sacrifice. In addition, making a choice that seems to undermine its own success points to the possible conflicts around success for this group sired by a famous father.

Supplemental event (26), like (19), also tells of failure following a successful production. The success of "Boy's Life" was facilitated by PR himself, and it was on a much larger scale than with "Been Taken." Suddenly the group was on its way to fame and fortune, living out a familiar story about actors. But the appeal of this storyline conflicts with the theme of dedicated pursuit of a moral goal. By overpaying themselves, the group calls attention to the hubris that is often a component of the fame and fortune story. It is this aspect of the story that most conflicts with the members' ascetic values, and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

for which they seem to punish themselves. The inability to produce for a year that follows the success suggests a posture of atonement and impotence, as if the group was expiating both the hubris of material ambition and its challenge to PR's authority.

In (27), the group members begin running the Practical Aesthetics Workshop, achieving an even closer identification with PR and ensuring his, and their own, continuity. This is a development in the direction of responsibility and independence, abetted in an interesting way by taking over the role of PR with a new generation of students.

The events of (28) again pit the group's principles against commercial success. Although a compromise would further the group professionally, it would violate the group's commitment to solidarity and its belief in the singularity of its knowledge. We know the great conflict that success represents to this group, so it is not surprising that the group chooses to make a martyr of itself -- an act entirely consistent with its thematic stance. But it may also be determined, in this case, by the need to protect each other from the destructive competitive impulses that would be unleashed if their solidarity was challenged. If the decision, in its rigidity, suggests vulnerability, it may reflect the power of those repressed competitive feelings.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

In (29) further steps toward independence and professional maturity are reported. There is also another relocation, reprising the travel motif, and a sponsorship that echoes the past sponsporships of the Goodman Theater and Lincoln Center. This support may scaffold the group's moves toward independence.

Events (30) and (31) offer little detail, serving rather to reinforce the repetitive nature of producing small plays and the summer season in Vermont.

Following the significant core event of establishing its own home, the group faces cataclysmic new developments in (33). Suddenly the group faces massive realignment of its thematic equilibrium, with members questioning its unity of belief, its solidarity of composition, even its allegiance to Practical Aesthetics. This event is truly of crisis proportions. It is true that it is consonant with the transition to maturity that establishing their own theater represents, and with the need to de-idealize PR in order to assert their own identity. But it also means abandoning the moral enterprise that has been their raison d'etre, the faith that has sustained years of extremely hard work and justified their sacrifice and dedication.

The final supplemental event, (34), seems to effect a kind of compromise for the conflict of (33) and to be an attempt at continuity. In a gesture of loyalty and an

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

assertion of lineage, the first production in the new theater will be PR's adaptation of Three Sisters.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Appendix 3

Sacred Group - Synthesized Narrative

Thematic analysis - Supplemental events. The first supplemental event, (4), in which the group grows in number, is a scene of unruly generativity. The impression of uncontrolled self-reproduction adds to the storyline of the unrestricted runaways. The theme of friendship is modified with this event, and seems to refer to "others who want to do what I want to do" as much as it refers to relationship. This notion then enters into a thematic competition between inclusion and exclusion, a contrast that is introduced when boundaries are suddenly drawn to put an end to the group's rampant expansion. And we become aware of the impact of sheer scale, of the sense of excitement that seems to be part of the experience of belonging to a large group of others who are there just because they want to be.

In (8) there is a feeling of closeness and a sense of the narcissistic pleasure the group derives from creating and performing for each other. We are aware of the group's insularity, its disinterest in affirmation from outsiders. The use of improvisation emphasizes the group's freedom from the authority of tradition, and the value it places on spontaneity and its own creative product. With core events (5) and (7), this event strengthens the theme of creative action for its own sake.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

This theme competes with the core storyline of steadily increasing professionalism.

In event (9) we see the group's preoccupation with its identity and the difficulty and reluctance with which it accepts a single, unifying expression of itself. The group seems torn between the attraction of combining its energies, and the fear of losing individual potency in that merger. Still, in naming themselves the group does achieve a powerful act of self-creation. The name, Sacred & Profane Players, blends innocence and vulnerability with provocativeness and bravado -- they are simultaneously beyond reproach yet naughty. (S&P Players is a pseudonym. The actual name also emphasizes the group's independence by suggesting on several levels that is has no need to depend on anyone outside the group.)

Event (10) lacks detail, but adds to the storyline of gradual socialization, albeit on the group's own terms. It is the first time they interface with the public, and their offering, a play written by a company member, is a sample of their own creative product.

All of the remaining supplemental events occur in a large block between core event (16) and the core ending (27). The series of supplemental events includes a dramatic sequence, (17) through (21), that suggests the storyline of revolution or coup d'etat. We learn that the company is divided into two distinct factions: one that

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

favors the path of socialization represented by production, and one that adheres to the alterity represented by the group's origins. The "revolution" can be seen as a thematic reaction to the authoritarian trend that was emerging in the group as it pursued the path of production. The planning and control required to produce successfully, and the need to appeal to some segment of the public, results, perhaps inevitably, in the repression of the uninhibited, individualistic and spontaneous impulses which were so valued by this group. Given the thematic dynamics in the group, it is not really surprising that events came to this crisis. An emphasis on the sovereignty of each individual is extremely difficult to practice in a group setting, for an individual can only maintain his sovereignty by remaining free of the influence and power of anyone else in his sphere. It is a situation that must result in a lack of trust and openness between group members, perhaps in defensive attempts to extend one's personal power. These outcomes are not only incompatible with unrestricted individuality, but also with the important theme of friendship. Clearly, all of these thematic allegiances cannot be maintained; it is a volatile combination, and must be reconciled to a more comfortable equilibrium. The event, as it unfolds, is an example of a "social drama," as described by Turner (1986). The process,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

consisting of a breach of norm, crisis, redress and either reintegration or recognition of schism, is the means by which cultures revise norms and evolve new structures of consensual meaning. In this case, GT had breached the group's norms against authoritative behavior by attempting to focus the group upon becoming a producing organization. A crisis resulted in which GT was overpowered and in turn threatened the company with the loss of an important power base, their space. When BK, the member who opposed GT, could not successfully integrate the competing thrusts of production and independence, he, too, was ejected. Redress was achieved with the reinstatement of GT and the ouster of his challenger. Finally, reintegration was accomplished by subordinating independent creativity to the requirements of production. Subordination is not suppression; the new equilibrium did recognize the importance of the alternative forms of theater that the group's opposition to tradition had generated. Supplemental events (22) through (25) show that features of the group's original alterity were successfully integrated, though subordinated, with increasingly professional production standards.

A second storyline is also suggested by these events, one that is forecast by the group's parentless, "runaway" status. This is the story of the symbolic murder of the father that prefigures entrance into the social structures

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

of lawful order. Since this group had no "father," one member arose to represent authority, and another arose to symbolically murder him. The murderer was soon expelled and the group made reparations by submitting to the reinstated authority. From that point on they upheld his vision and proceeded to mature into a producing organization, developing in a direction increasingly accepted and applauded by society. Through this event, the group was enabled to complete the runaway's cycle by rejoining society.

In (26) the thematic poles of inclusivity and exclusivity, and commercialism versus uninhibited artistic expression are worked again. Those who now seek to be a part of the group do so because of its popularity, whereas the original members formed it as a retreat from the public eye and its commercial demands. Most of all, this event seems to underline how much the group has changed since that first meeting in a bar.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

References

Arlow, J. A. (1979). Metaphor and the psychoanalytic situation. Psychoanalytic Quarterly, 48, 363-385.

Auerhahn, N. C. (1979). Interpretation in the psychoanalytic narrative: A literary framework for the analytic process. International Review of Psychoanalysis, 6, pp. 423-436.

Bakhtin, M. (1984). Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. (Original work published 1929).

Barthes, R. (1966). Introduction to the structural analysis of narratives. Communications, 8, pp. 1-27.

Becker, H. S. & Geer, B. (1970). Participant observation and interviewing: A comparison. In W. J. Filstead (Ed.), Qualitative Methodology. Chicago: Rand McNally.

Bion, W. R. (1974). Experiences in Groups. New York: Ballantine Books.

Brooks, P. (1985). Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative. New York: Vintage Books.

Bruner, J. (1990). Acts of Meaning. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bruner, J. (1986). Actual Minds, Possible Worlds. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bruner, J., & Weisser, S., (1991). The invention of self: autobiography and its forms. In D. R. Olson & N. Torrance (Eds.), Literacy and Orality. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Coste, D. (1989). Narrative as Communication. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Cross, S. & Markus, H. (1991). Possible selves across the lifespan. Human Development, 34, pp. 230-255.

Edelson, M. (1992). Can psychotherapy research answer this psychotherapist's questions? Contemporary Psychoanalysis, 28, (1), pp. 118-151.

Edelson, M. (1988). Psychoanalysis: A Theory in Crisis. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Feldman, C. F. (1992). The new theory of theory of mind. Human Development, 35, pp. 107-117.

Feldman, C. F., Bruner, J., Kalmar, D., & Renderer, B. (in press). Plot, plight, and dramatism: Interpretation at three ages. In W. Overton & D. Palermo (Eds.), The Nature and Ontogenesis of Meaning. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Freeman, M. & Robinson, R. E. (1990). The development within: an alternative approach to the study of lives. New Ideas in Psychology, 8 (1), pp. 53-72.

Freeman, M. (1985). Psychoanalytic narration and the problem of historical knowledge. Psychoanalysis and Contemporary Thought, 8, (2), pp. 133-181.

Fowler, A. (1982). Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Geertz, Clifford. (1973). The Interpretation of Cultures. New York: Basic Books.

Grice, H. P. (1975). Logic and conversation. In P. Cole & J. L. Morgan (Eds.), Syntax and Semantics 3: Speech Acts. New York: Academic Press.

Hirschhorn, L. (1988) The Workplace Within: Psychodynamics of Organizational Life. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Jaques, E. (1955). Social systems as a defence against persecutory and depressive anxiety. In New Directions in Psycho-Analysis. London: Tavistock Publications.

Jaques, E. (1953). On the dynamics of social structure: A contribution to the psychoanalytic study of social phenomena deriving from the views of Melanie Klein. Human Relations, 6, pp. 3-24.

Lakoff, George. (1987). Women, Fire and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal About the Mind. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Levinson, D. J. (1986). A conception of adult development. American Psychologist, 41, (1), pp. 3-13.

Levinson, D. J., Darrow, C. N., Klein, E. B., Levinson, M. H., & Braxton, M. (1978). The Seasons of a Man's Life. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Louis, M. (1983). Organizations as culture-bearing milieux. In L. Pondy, P. Frost, G. Morgan, & T. Dandridge (Eds.), Organizational Symbolism. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, Inc.

Mahler, M., Pine, F., & Bergman, A. (1975). The Psychological Birth of the Human Infant: Symbiosis and Individuation. New York: Basic Books.

Main, M., Kaplan, N. & Cassidy, J. (1985). Security in infancy, childhood and adulthood: A move to the level of representation. In I. Bretherton and E. Waters (Eds.), Growing Points of Attachment Theory and Research. Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development, 1985, 50 (1-2, Serial No. 209).

Mellard, J. M. (1987). Doing Tropology: Analysis of Narrative Discourse. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Menzies Lyth, I. (1990). A psychoanalytical perspective on social institutions. In E. Trist and H. Murray (Eds.), The Social Engagement of Science: A Tavistock Anthology, Vol. I. Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press.

Menzies, I. E. P. (1975). A case-study in the functioning of social systems as a defense against anxiety. In A. D. Coleman & W. H. Bexton (Eds.), Group Relations Reader 1. Springfield, VA: Goetz Printing.

Miller, E. J. & Rice, A. K. (1969). Systems of Organization. London: Tavistock Publications.

Mishler, Elliot. (1986). Research Interviewing: Context and Narrative. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Nemiroff, R. A. & Colarusso, C. A. (1990) New Dimensions in Adult Development. New York: Basic Books.

Packer, M. J. & Addison, R. B. (1989) Entering the Circle: Hermeneutic Investigation in Psychology. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Prince, G. (1987). Ceci n'est pas l'ine'narre'. Paper presented at the 20th Century French Studies Colloquium, March 1987, Duke University, Durham, NC.

Rioch, M. J. (1970). The Work of Wilfred Bion on Groups. Psychiatry, pp. 56-65.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Runyon, W. M. (1982). Life Histories and Psychobiography: Explorations in Theory and Method. New York: Oxford University Press.

Scarr, S. (1992). Developmental Theories for the 1990s: Development and Individual Differences. Child Development, 63, pp. 1-19.

Schafer, R. (1992). Retelling a Life: Narration and Dialogue in Psychoanalysis. New York: Basic Books.

Schafer, R. (1983). The Analytic Attitude. New York: Basic Books.

Settlage, C. F. (1990). Childhood to adulthood: Structural change in development toward independence and autonomy. In R. A. Nemiroff & C. A. Colarusso (Eds.), New Dimensions in Adult Development. New York: Basic Books.

Settlage, C. F., Curtis, J., Lozoff, M., Lozoff, M., Silberschatz, G., & Simburg, E. J. (1988). Conceptualizing Adult Development. Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association, 36 (2), pp. 347-369.

Seung, T. K. (1982). Semiotics and Thematics in Hermeneutics. New York: Columbia University Press.

Shweder, R. A. (1990). Cultural psychology: What is it? In J. Stigler, R. A. Shweder, & G. Herdt (Eds.), Cultural Psychology: The Chicago Symposium on Culture and Human Development. Caumbridge: Cambridge University Press.

Siegelman, E. Y. (1990). Metaphor and Meaning in Psychotherapy. New York: The Guilford Press.

Smircich, Linda. (1983a). Organizations as shared meanings. In Pondy, L., Frost, P., Morgan, G. & Dandridge, T. (Eds.), Organizational Symbolism. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Smircich, Linda. (1983b). Studying organizations as cultures. In Morgan, Gareth (Ed.): Beyond Method: Strategies for Social Research. Beverly Hills: Sage.

Spence, D. P. (1989). Rhetoric vs. evidence as a source of persuasion: A critique of the case study genre. In Packer, M., and Addison, R. (Eds.), Entering the Circle: Hermeneutic Investigation in Psychology. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Srivastva, S., & Barrett, F. J. (1988). The transforming nature of metaphors in group development: A study in group theory. Human Relations, 41 (1), pp. 31-64.

Suleiman, S. R. (1983). Authoritarian Fictions: The Ideological Novel as a Literary Genre. New York: Columbia University Press.

Turner, V. (1986). Social dramas and stories about them. In W. J. T. Mitchell (Ed.), On Narrative. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Turner, V. (1974). Dramas, Fields and Metaphors. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1962). Thought and Language. Cambridge: The M.I.T. Press.

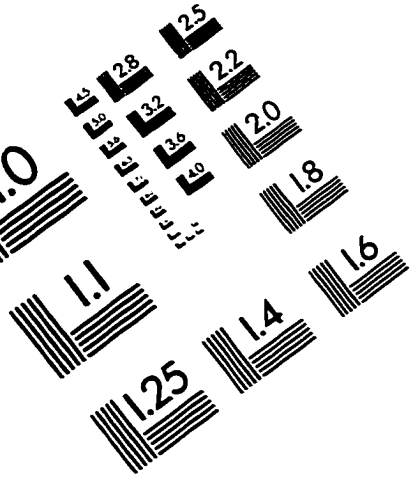
White, H. (1981). The value of narrativity in the representation of reality. In W. J. T. Mitchell (Ed.), On Narrative. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

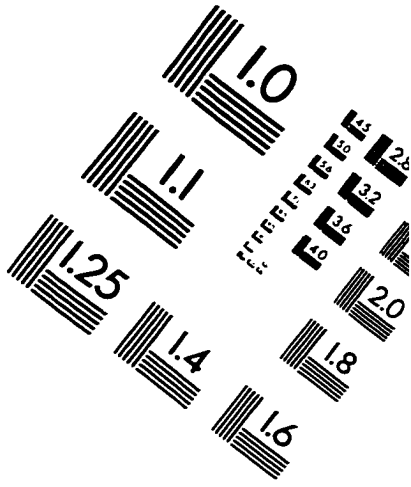
Winnicott, D. W. (1965). The Maturational Processes and the Facilitating Environment: Studies in the Theory of Emotional Development. Madison, WI: International Universities Press.

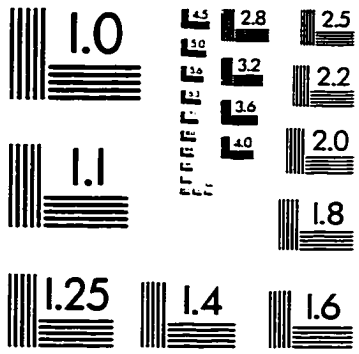
Winnicott, D. W. (1971). Playing and Reality. London: Tavistock Publications.

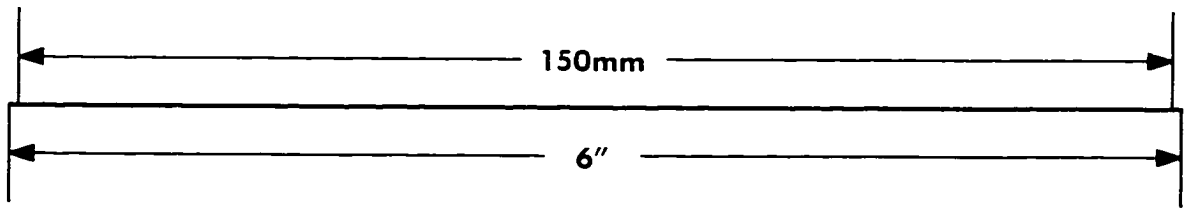
Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

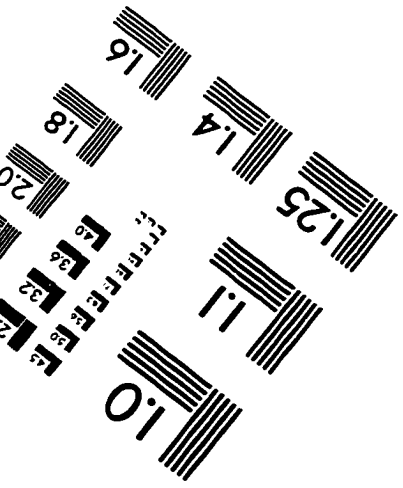
IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)

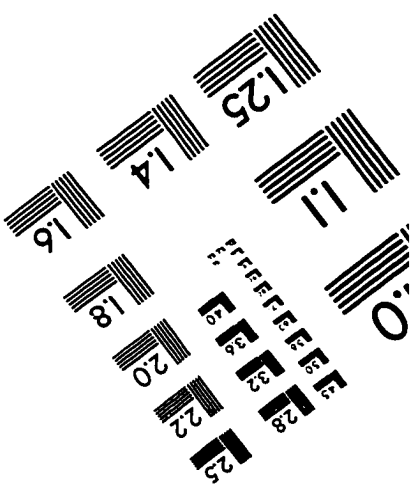












APPLIED IMAGE, Inc
1653 East Main Street
Rochester, NY 14609 USA
Phone: 716/482-0300
Fax: 716/288-5989

© 1993, Applied Image, Inc., All Rights Reserved

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.