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Authors: Jennifer K. Hartwell, William R. Torbert

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Analysis of the Group Interview With Andy Wilson
An Illustration of Interweaving First-, Second-, and Third-Person Research/Practice

JENNIFER K. HARTWELL
WILLIAM R. TORBERT
Boston College

This article offers an analysis of the foregoing group interview of Andy Wilson, founder and CEO of Boston Duck Tours and 1997 Massachusetts Entrepreneur of the Year. In so doing, this article highlights several different "voices" or "action-logics" that we hear in Andy’s reflections during our interview, as he questions what his strategic priorities are and what success means in the midst of his unusually successful entrepreneurial venture. We also point to the conduct of the group interview itself and the feedback session the two authors conducted with Andy later as validity tests of our analysis. We begin with a brief overview of the developmental action inquiry theory and practice that underlies both our substantive analysis and our methodological approach.

METHOD

As a research approach, developmental action inquiry generates third-person, generalizable theory and data in a fashion compatible with but fundamentally different from empirical positivism (see Table 1). The aim of empirical positivism is to achieve valid certainty about a generalizable third-person, objective reality outside the researcher by separating dispassionate observation from passionate action as rigorously as possible. The aim of developmental action inquiry is to catalyze personal, social, and epistemological transformations through timely action that interweaves first-person (subjective), second-person (intersubjective), and third-person (objective) inquiry and action in real time (see Tables 1 and 4 and Torbert, 1997, for comparisons across seven social science paradigms).

In general, subjective, increasingly self-critical and self-reconstructing first-person research/practice includes all those forms of research and practice that one can do by oneself to transform one’s awareness and integrate one’s mind, feelings, and body. This includes physical exercise, emotional attunement, intellectual reflection, and awareness-enhancing meditation, and these can be reflected in turn through a variety of ways...
of writing, such as journals and autobiographies. Our interview with Andy provides both his account of some of his first-person research/practice over the past several years and the taped account of his actual first-person research/practice during the interview.

Intersubjective, second-person research/practice includes all conversations such as our interview and subsequent feedback session with Andy where those present share an intent to learn about themselves, about the others present, about a shared activity, or about the relationships that are forming, transforming, or dissolving. Second-person research/practice is characterized by periodic feedback among the participants about their perceptions of themselves and others present and by periodic "feedforward" about what vision and strategies ought to guide continued action. Our feedback session with Andy is an example of second-person research/practice. What constitutes validity testing in first- and second-person research/practice has relatively recently begun to be explored (Argyris, Putnam, & Smith, 1985; Heron, 1996; Reason, 1995; Torbert, 1973). The developmental action inquiry approach asks how first-, second-, and third-person research/practice can triangulate with one another to generate both increasingly valid data and transformation in real time.

Third-person research/practice organizes across time and persons who may be strangers to one another and is based on a mission, strategies, performance guidelines, and assessment measures, all of which will not be fully explicit and consistent with one another at the outset but that will invite public feedback and amendment or transformation of validated incongruities. This is accomplished through an organizational design and practice called liberating disciplines (see Table 3 and Torbert, 1991), which helps participants (emphatically, including the initially designated leadership) integrate first-, second-, and third-person research/practice. For example, the publication of the preceding interview and this analysis can be a liberating discipline both for the authors, as we clarify our theory and practice through responses to third-person critiques and questions, and for those of our readers who accept the invitation to reconceptualize, reexamine, and increasingly integrate their own real-time first-, second-, and third-person research/practices.

**THEORY**

As part of this process, third-person research/practice generates a special kind of substantive theory and organizing practice. Developmental action inquiry is one of the earliest expressions of such theory in contemporary academic social science (though Kegan, 1994, and Wilber, 1995, point in a similar direction). Unlike theories of organizational development that offer a single normative alternative to current functioning (e.g., Argyris & Schon’s 1974 and 1978 distinction between Model I and Model II), developmental action inquiry theory (Fisher & Torbert, 1995; Torbert 1976, 1987, 1991) offers the most rigorous means yet established of defining and measuring multiple possible personal, team, and organizational transformations (Rook & Torbert, 1998). This theory provides a way of understanding personal, organizational, and social scientific development as a sequence of different voices or action-logics. Each later action-logic allows all the previous options and more. Each later voice leads toward increasing integration of inquiry and action in the real-time first-, second-, and third-person research/practices of our day-to-day lives.

As a result, we each develop our own increasingly voluntary action (i.e., unbound by any ideology such as one strategic variable among others in the service of the new, qualitatively different aim. Each paradigm after empirical positivism becomes more inclusive of uncertain realities (rather than counting as reality only that about which one can be certain) and also more inclusive of realities that are transformed by the very act of inquiry into them (e.g., the researchers’ own awareness and actions during the study).

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distinctive Aims of Seven Social Scientific Paradigms</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Behaviorism: Control of the other (through &quot;operant conditioning&quot;)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Gestalt sociologism: Understanding of the other (better than that other’s self-understanding)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Empirical positivism: Predictive certainty (valid certainty)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Multimethod eclecticism: Useful approximation (through triangulation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Postmodern interpretivism: Re-presentation of perspectival pluralism (includes first-person research/practice)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Cooperative ecological inquiry: Creating transformational communities of inquiry among multiperspectived co-committeds (includes second-person research/practice)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Developmental action inquiry: Enacting inquiry and liberating disciplines across initially estranged cultures and persons without shared purposes (integretes first-, second-, and third-person research/practice in real-time)</td>
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Note: Each later paradigm dethrones the primacy of the previous aim, reinterprets its meaning, and addresses some of its incompleteness by treating it as one strategic variable among others in the perspectival pluralism of which will not be fully explicit and consistent with one another at the outset but that will invite public feedback and amendment or transformation of validated incongruities.
as the very stage sequence in which the theory itself initially appears trapped or trapping). We also develop an increasingly powerful and continual awareness in real time of the multivocal, chaotic interplay of our own and other systems' action-logics. And we give more attractive and effectual voice to the ongoing alchemical social process of promoting timely, creative, liberating actions. We can each thereby contribute to the ever-unfinished transformation of domi­nating, hierarchical, transformation-resistant social structures through the enactment of mutually liberat­ing, transformational, partnership social structures for action and inquiry. Thus, ironically and appropriately, what can initially appear as a rigid, domi­nating, univocal sequence of stages is alleged to transform into something fluid, occasional, and optional as one studies it as part of one's own research/practice (Ke­gan, 1994; Overton, 1997; Torbert & Fisher, 1992).

According to this theory (Lichtenstein, Smith, & Torbert, 1995; Torbert, 1987), as an individual evolves toward the later stages of development (see Table 2), he or she increasingly widens his or her range of relational responsibility and choice in each situation (including the choice to temporarily employ earlier stage action-logics because these may be attuned in a timely way to the evolving understanding and values of the person, group, or organization with whom one is interacting). With each successive developmental transformation, the individual deepens his or her ability to learn and improve performance of self and others, as well as to lead the organization as a whole through desired transformations (as will be explained in the next paragraph). Likewise, as a group or organization evolves toward the later stages (see Table 3), it increasingly approaches the true character of a learning organization (Senge, 1990), one with liberating disciplines that educate and encourage all participants (emphatically, including the leadership itself) toward greater integration of their first-, second-, and third-person research/practice.

It follows from what has just been said that personal development to the later stages in which one views oneself as continually learning in the present is theoretically necessary if one is to play a leadership role in helping an organization transform toward later stages. This hypothetical relationship was tentatively empirically confirmed when Rooke and Torbert (1998) found that one critical variable in successful organizational transformation is the ego development stage of the CEO and her or his advisers, as deter-

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Impulsive*</td>
<td>Short time horizon; focus on concrete things; manipulative; deceptive; rejects feedback; externalizes blame; distrustful; fragile self-control; hostile humor; views luck as central; flouts power, sexuality; stereotypes; views rules as loss of freedom; punishes according to &quot;eye for an eye&quot; ethic; treats what one can get away with as legal; positive ethic = even trade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Opportunist</td>
<td>Observes protocol; avoids inner and outer conflict; works to group standard; speaks in cliches, platitudes; conforms; feels shame if violates norm; sin = hurting others; punishment = disapproval; seeks membership, status; face-saving essential; loyalty to immediate group, not &quot;distant&quot; organization or principles; positive ethic = nice, cooperative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Diplomat</td>
<td>Interested in problem solving; seeks causes; critical of self, others based on craft logic; chooses efficiency over effectiveness; perfectionist; accepts feedback only from &quot;objective&quot; craft masters; dommatic; values decisions based on merit; sees contingencies, exceptions; wants to stand out, be unique, positive ethic = sense of obligation to wider, internally consistent moral order.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Technician</td>
<td>Long-term goals; future is vivid, inspiring; welcomes behavioral feedback; effectiveness and results oriented; feels like initiator, not pawn; appreciates complexity, systems; seeks generalizable reasons for action; seeks mutuality, not hierarchy in relationships; feels guilt if does not meet own standards; blind to own shadow, to the subjectivity behind objectivity; positive ethic = practical day-to-day improvements based on self-chosen (but not self-created) ethical system.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Achiever</td>
<td>Creative at conflict resolution; recognizes importance of principle, contract, theory, and judgment—not just rules, customs, and exceptions—for making and maintaining good decisions; process oriented as well as goal oriented; aware of paradox and contradiction; relativistic, aware that what one sees depends on one's worldview; high value on individuality, unique market niches, particular historical moments; enjoys playing a variety of roles; witty, existential humor (as contrasted to prefabricated jokes); aware of dark side, of profundity of evil, and tempted by its power.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Strategist</td>
<td>Disintegration of ego identity, near-death experience; seeks participation in historical/spiritual transformations; creator of mythical events that reframe situations; anchoring in inclusive present, seeing light and dark, order and mess; blends opposites, creating positive-sum games; exercises own attention, researches... (continued)</td>
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Table 2 Continued

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<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
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<td>interplay of intuition (vision), thought (strategizing), action (performing), and assessing effects on the outside world; treats time and events as symbolic, analogical, metaphorical (not merely linear, digital, literal).</td>
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Note: No managers were tested at this stage of the theoretical paradigm, and therefore no description is provided.

Table 3 Continued

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Collaborative inquiry</td>
<td>Explicit shared reflection about the corporate dream/mission and actuality/history in the wider social context; open rather than masked interpersonal relations, with disclosure, support, and confrontation of apparent value differences; systematic evaluation and feedback of corporate and individual performance on multiple indices; direct facing and creative resolution of paradoxes (which otherwise become polarized conflicts): inquiry-productivity, freedom-control, quality-quality, and so on; interactive development of and commitment to unique, self-amending strategies and structures appropriate to this particular organization at this particular historical moment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Foundational community</td>
<td>Political friction within organization and with different norms of behavior in wider environments; regular, personal, shared research on relations among spiritual, theoretical, and behavioral qualities of experience; structure fails (“dies”), phoenix rises from the ashes, shared purpose (spirit) revealed as sustaining; transcendence of preexisting cultural categories, appreciation of continuous interplay of opposites: action/research, sex/politics, past/future, symbolic/diabolic, and so on; new experiences of time: his-story becomes my-story: interplay of creative timeliness, timeless archetypes, and timebound needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Liberating disciplines</td>
<td>Leadership practices deliberate irony; tasks incomprehensible and undoable without reference to accompanying processes and purposes; premeditated and precommunicated structural evolution over time; constant cycle of experiential and empirical research and feedback; leadership uses all available forms of power to support the previous four qualities, consistent with and also meeting the next three conditions; organizational structure open, in principle, to inspection and challenge by organizational members; leadership becomes vulnerable to attack and public failure in practice if tasks, processes, and mission become incongruous and leadership does not acknowledge and correct such incongruities; requires leadership committed to and highly skilled at seeking out, recognizing, and righting personal and organizational incongruities.</td>
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mined by a well-validated psychometric measure. In 10 organizations studied over an average of 4.2 years apiece, the five CEOs measured at the late strategist stage of development (at which we have found only 10% of managers in general samples [Torbert, 1991]) supported a total of 15 progressive organizational transformations, whereas the five CEOs measured at earlier stages of development accounted for 3 regressive changes, 2 cases of no change, and 3 progressive transformations.

According to developmental action inquiry theory, the relatively late strategist stage of individual development is the first stage at which a leader can initiate personal and organizational transformation (Torbert, 1987). This is so because only at the strategist stage do persons come to an intuitive understanding that (a) we hold different frames that influence how the world appears to us, and (b) to change frames (to transform) requires recognition and respect for the original frame, recognition and respect for each person and organization as capable of changing frames, and recognition and respect for the mutuality of a frame change process. Unlike conformity, which can be forced unilaterally (though unilateral force often results only in resistance), transformation can occur only through the voluntary, mutuality-enhancing participation of the parties to transformation.

ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEW

We assume that you have read the preceding group interview with Andy Wilson. When we interviewed Andy, we were seeking to listen to him and question him in ways that would generate increasing awareness, mutuality, trust, and transformation among us, as we sought to help Andy clarify what action-logics guide his life, his work, and his success. We imagine that you have been struck by how inquiring Andy appears to be in the midst of his entrepreneurial practice. At the same time, you may be asking questions such as, “How much can I trust the accuracy of Andy’s self-description?” “How much does his inquiry contribute to (or detract from) his entrepreneurial success?” “How do any conclusions about these two questions relate to the ways I do and do not integrate certain types of inquiry into my own practice?”

In this section and the next, we offer an analysis of our interview with Andy and of a subsequent feedback session with Andy that speaks to all three of these questions. First, we offer an analysis of the multiple, different action-logics we hear spoken through Andy during the interview. (We presented this material to Andy, along with the transcript that now constitutes the Meet the Person article in this issue, 6 months after the interview in preparation for a 2-hour feedback and validity testing session among the three of us.) After sharing our analysis with you as we did with Andy, we next present new data about Andy from our feedback session with him, which offer an additional validity test of our initial clinical case analysis (just as the publication of these two companion articles is yet another validity test that permits readers to contest our interpretations). We end with a discussion of how this case as a whole illustrates the interweaving of first-person, second-person, and third-person research/practice characteristic of the developmental action inquiry approach.

The following analysis highlights points in the interview when it seems to us that Andy is adopting different developmental action-logics to describe himself. Andy had two answers to the first question, when he was asked why he should reflect now when he was so successful. First, he explained that he is an analytical person and has a tendency to “overanalyze everything.” This is characteristic of the technician stage or action-logic (see Table 2, Technician, “critical of self; seeks causes”). We will offer additional examples from the interview of this technician voice after offering evidence of Andy’s magician/witch/clown voices, or action-logics.

Evidence of Andy’s Magician/Witch/Clown Qualities

The second reason Andy offered for reflecting now, in the midst of success, was that “in business you’re only as good as you are at the moment.” This response hinted at a developmentally late-stage magician/witch/clown desire and ability to focus on what is occurring at the current moment in one’s life. According to Fisher and Torbert (1995), our attention is rarely conscious of most of what is occurring at the moment. Often, we are preoccupied by or reacting to past events or future expectations and pressures and are neither fully receptive to nor active in the present moment, which is the only moment that ever truly exists and through which transformation can occur.
Andy’s comment suggests the possibility that he strives, at least at times, to be conscious in the midst of action in a way that permits him to act in a timely, transforming manner.

This was not the only evidence of a special kind of magician-like attention that Andy shared with us during the interview. For instance, he expressed his ability to “see” what other people don’t see. Andy has vision. (Or are the following comments evidence of nothing more than a narcissistic belief?)

I think I have, even in stupid things. I look at clothing: Something I buy today that I like becomes the rage 2 years later. I do see things that other people don’t see, I don’t know why. It’s something that I would like to figure out how to capitalize on better, which in several instances I did with the Duck Tours. (p. 206)

Also like a magician, Andy perceives and acts intuitively and outside conventionally rational frames. Sometimes his actions appear sudden and unexpected, even to himself. For instance, Andy’s very idea for the Duck Tour business came to him as an unexpected flash:

After I got back from Memphis I remember one day seeing 10 trolleys packed with people, and it hit me like a lightning bolt: “You know, this Duck Tours idea would work very well in Boston.” That took me down a path of 2 years of going through a hundred halls of government, raising money, and basically being told I was nuts. (p. 205)

Evidence of Andy’s Strategist-Like Qualities

During the interview, Andy explained that he was considering expanding his business worldwide. This expansion, however, might well entail that he go against one of his goals—the goal of balance and to “have a life.”

I’ve worked the last 4 years to build this business and didn’t have a life. One of my goals is to have a life, and all of a sudden I’m saying, “OK, I have one of these operations, and now I’m growing it from one to maybe 20 or 30 worldwide.” And looking at the travel, it all goes against my personal goal. Somehow or other I’m looking for balance. (p. 204)

Here Andy conveys his strategist-like mind—an awareness of multiple goals, self-contradiction, and an effort to balance—in struggle with an achiever-like mind-set—the ambition to accomplish larger and larger goals (Fisher & Torbert, 1995). Indeed, Andy uses the word goal in describing both his professional and personal life. We will focus in more detail on Andy’s achiever voice in the next section.

In the following excerpt, Andy struggles with the idea of what it means to be a hypocrite, further displaying a strategist voice by exhibiting his awareness of contradiction and the paradoxical resolution of contradiction:

How do you debate issues? How do you debate values? And how do you come to some reasonably common set of values in an organization, and in your own life, and then practice those without being a hypocrite, and not have people accuse you of being a hypocrite? But if they do accuse you of being a hypocrite, how do you put yourself in the position to say, “Hey, you know, I’ll change my views. Don’t hold it against me because I was wrong. Only hold it against me if I’m not willing to change my views, or at least be open to other possibilities.” (p. 208)

A major difference in the strategist’s worldview compared with that of the technician and achiever is her or his acceptance of different frames as simultaneously valid. The strategist accepts the existence of multiple simultaneous conflicting goals, values, and practices. But the strategist can envision a transformational learning process over time that can overcome contradictions at any given point in time (in part by collectively creating a new shared vision and mission). Andy demonstrates such paradoxical vision when he defines hypocrisy not as a contradiction between words and actions at a given time but rather as a demonstrated unwillingness to explore and resolve alleged contradictions over time.

In the following passages, Andy exhibits strategist characteristics in several ways: (a) by not simply seeking success as currently defined, (b) by placing a high value on individual freedom, and (c) by explicitly attempting to participate in transforming power while expressing his awareness of the constraints.

“OK, I can’t solve all the world’s problems. The world’s not going to be what I want it to be, either in a macrosense or a microsense, by the time I die.” I want to see the world change, whether I’m the catalyst for it or not, and I want to continue to feel good about myself. I don’t want to end up in slavery. I like living as a free person, and I want those free choices. (p. 207)
Freedom is all about living your life without taking anything away from someone else. (p. 206)

We sense that Andy, like a strategist, is deeply committed to principle (e.g., the principle of freedom and how it interweaves with one's personal, business, and social responsibilities to others). At the same time, Andy explicitly searches for feedback that may change his views in ways he can't initially imagine. His seeking feedback from us after his interview with the class illustrates his willingness to participate in second-person research/practice and to hear something he may not previously have imagined. The following excerpt from the interview also illustrates how seriously he treats the issue of listening and being open to influence:

The most important thing that I'm trying to learn is to listen to other people and let other people influence my life. The single most important thing that I learned in starting this business is the ability to listen and the ability to be influenced by another person (p. 207)

Evidence of Andy's Achiever-Like Qualities

As we noticed earlier, Andy's achiever voice is goal oriented. His achiever-like qualities give him a platform from which his political views can be heard among policy makers, as well as within his own organization and those that are exposed to it. From this platform he tries to make "a difference in the world." Thus, when properly subordinated to strategist-like principles of freedom, learning, mutual influence, and voluntary transformation toward greater justice, the ability to achieve particular goals is an absolutely necessary enabler of greater ends.

The following excerpt shows how Andy, as an achiever, concentrates on helping his organization to be effective in its environment and how he experiences a "rush" from reaching goals:

I mean, there isn't anything I haven't done to start this business and to keep it running.... And it allowed me to get where I am today.... I just got back from Chicago—I'm working on opening in Chicago—and in 2 days I accomplished more than I had accomplished in a year or more in Boston. By the end of those 2 days, I was physically shaking with excitement.... not about making money, but about the excitement of accomplishing things. (p. 206)

In the example below, we see the potential for a darker side to goal achievement. Andy seems to have achieved a significant career goal by creating a very profitable business, but if he immediately renews the achievement cycle, even when a repeat of the cycle could potentially interfere with his reaching his personal goal of "having a life," will he be sacrificing the higher aims of a good and balanced life to the lower goal of more business accomplishment (Torbert, 1994)?

My company's met with such wild success, and it's a concept that can grow. If I don't grow it, somebody else will, and they won't do it as well as I can. If I don't grow it, what I have going on in Boston will probably be taken away. Right now in this industry I'm the front-runner. I mean, there's absolutely no doubt. I know that if I just stop, people are going to pass me by. And it's not so much that I mind people passing me by, it's that in business you need to stay in a position of strength....

[Interviewer]: So, your only choice is to go forward and to expand or to basically drop out of the business?

Well, not drop out, but I have an exclusive franchise in Boston right now, in essence, and as I grow this, I think that I can retain exclusivity. If I don't grow it, my conjecture is that somebody else will come in and try to do the same thing in Boston. But if I grow the business, keep my eye on the ball, that will continue to give me, in essence, political strength in Boston, so I can say, "Hey, I'm the best in the world at what I'm doing." (p. 204)

This excerpt is indicative of the achiever stage of action-logic. Andy uses the achiever's characteristic planning-implementation-outcome goal cycle. In this passage, it becomes clear that Andy's achiever voice is in the planning phase of his next goal. At the same time, however, he has not committed to this goal; he is still in inquiry about it, "still striving for that answer."

At this point in his life, Andy feels his professional and personal goals are in conflict. This is, in part, why he chose to interview with our class. Although he states that he aims to find a balance between the two, his current thinking does not seem to us to reflect balance:

I've been in a relationship 15 years, and it had a lot of problems with me traveling a lot. You know, I'm trying to resolve that all right now, and it—it kind of goes against the grain of the whole thing. They don't seem to mesh real well right now, and that's really part of
the whole issue—how I get that mesh. You know, I love to travel. I mean I am traveling. I'm working on starting others of these things elsewhere, and it's really a rush. I'll tell ya! When you land a deal or whatever, that's like critical, it's a rush, and I'm enjoying that part of it. ... I'm hoping that my other half can go with me and actually assist, and that way my life can continue to go on. (pp. 204-205)

Our interpretation of the implicit reasoning in this statement is that Andy wants to grow his company and to have his "other half" accommodate him. This way, Andy can have both his personal and professional goals satisfied, without rebalancing anything. This "meshing" is all within Andy's mind; there is no gesture here (though we hear it at other points in the interview) toward a conversation that may change either or both partners' minds and goals.

Evidence of Andy's Technician-Like Qualities

In the passages below, we find that Andy also holds another paradigm in his innermost conscience, this one reflecting a technician's frame. We have already mentioned the comment he made at the outset of the interview that he "overanalyzes everything." This may merely reflect an unusually high level of energy for both action and reflection, but if it is literally true, then it fits the technician's predominant concern for discovering the internal logic and causes of his own behavior. Also like a technician, Andy strives for moral perfection and sometimes seems to fall victim to self-generated stress:

I'm very strong about my views, and if I say I have one fear in my life, it's that it's impossible to achieve the standard that I've set for myself or the world. (p. 207)

It's not so much that I'm fearful of what they're going to think of me; I just want to feel good about myself. I've been a hypocrite and probably still am on certain things. (p. 208)

On the other hand, Andy's self-reflexive strategist mind shortly reasserts itself: He is conscious of the technician-like, perfectionistic moral demands he places on himself and the world:

I'm trying to strive to the point where I can say these things without being a Puritan. (p. 207)

He also recognizes others' viewpoints and unique qualities and the importance of ongoing conversation and contestation in discovering ethical/political goods—and these are all strategist-like qualities.

Everybody's values are unique, and they'll always be unique.... With my employees, what I'm trying to get is that, "You know, I may be wrong." And so, "Understand that debate is good." I support debate because out of debate comes new forms of thought or new perspectives for people. And so the whole issue is how you respect somebody else's views to encourage debate. (p.208)

I had to listen to them and address all their concerns and adjust my way of thinking. Going to the basic worth and dignity of every human being—everybody has a shred of truth. (p. 207)

**DISCUSSION**

According to our analysis, Andy exhibits speech characteristics of a wide spectrum of developmental action-logics. This supports the notion that no one absolutely transcends earlier stages and that, properly subordinated and at the right times, the politeness, perfectionism, or commitment to goal achievement of the prestrategist stages is absolutely appropriate. At the same time, such multivocality may indicate the confusion of transition between action-logics.

The analysis points to characteristics that fall between the magician/witch/clown stage and the technician stage. Andy's magician voice is visionary, in the moment, and intuitive and seems to have guided him in the original definition of the business. In his strategist voice, to which we hear him recur most frequently, Andy values individuality, accepts multiple views and goals, knows he can be wrong, seeks feedback, and participates in transforming power. His achiever voice, which to us sounds most urgent, is passionate about achieving goals and is so tempted by the excitement of the achievement cycle that he verges on putting his relationship with his partner at risk (yet he does not do so automatically or unawaresly; he continues the inquiry). Like a technician, Andy strives for perfection and adherence to a strict code of morality (yet, at the same time, he is self-reflexive enough to see the demands he places on himself and the world and has therefore found a role for contradiction in his life).

In addition to the interview passages for which we find plausible developmental interpretations, there is also a tone in parts of the interview that is more difficult to interpret. The logic itself seems to reflect the
early opportunist logic in which one interprets life as a battle among narrow self-interests. But is this logic a reflection of a personal developmental logic of Andy's? Or does it reflect an early stage developmental logic of the society as a whole? Consider the following comments:

If I don't grow [my business], what I have going on in Boston will probably be taken away. (p. 204)

I strive to feel good about myself, and there are a lot of people in the world that want to take that away from me. (p. 206)

I like living as a free person, and I want those free choices, and I don't want anybody to take them away from me. Now I'm a success. Now people want to take it away from me. (p. 207)

In these separate comments at different points in the interview, one might interpret Andy's tone as opportunistic. There is a Hobbesian "war of all against all" quality to these sentences. But as a successful businessperson, Andy faces what Nietzsche called the "resentment" of the less successful crowd. Also there is a continuing struggle concerning full civil rights for ethnic minorities, women, and gays (e.g., gays' civil rights are protected in fewer than one in five states in the United States). Under these conditions, is it opportunistic "paranoia" or simple realism to feel anxious about having what rightfully belongs to oneself taken away? As we will now see, Andy himself addressed this question near the outset of our feedback session with him.

OUR FEEDBACK SESSION WITH ANDY

Six months after our interview with Andy, we sent him the transcript and an earlier version of the foregoing analysis. A week later we met with him at his office in downtown Boston for a feedback session. Andy began our 2-hour feedback session by telling us that he felt both scared and interested by our analysis. Toward the close of our session, he acknowledged a "huge discomfort" with the final quoted excerpts in the analysis. "The 'war of all against all' sure doesn't sound very optimistic, and I want to be an optimist. But investor greed . . . concierges kickbacks . . . am I paranoid?" These were the only points at which Andy conveyed any hesitation about the material, a hesitation that we interpreted as indicating how seriously he was considering our comments. The remainder of our meeting was enthusiastically led by Andy, reflecting on the material and sharing personal insights and decisions he had come to over the intervening period.

Andy agreed with our analysis of his technician-like quality of generating internal stress for himself and chose to further describe his personal struggle around this issue with us. In his own terms, Andy holds a "passion and action" paradigm that he describes as a personal commitment to solving the problems he feels passionate about. His passions are many, and he wishes he had "a thousand lives to lead" to have the time to work on each. When discrepancies arise between his values and his behaviors, and he realizes he is not holding strictly to his passion and action paradigm, he generates stress for himself. Andy expressed concern about this tendency. He admitted to wanting to "turn his mind off" when it uncontrollably consumes him, keeps him awake at night, and judges him for insufficient action. Learning how to distribute one's attention more evenly and acceptingly across the four distinctive territories of visioning, strategizing, performing, and assessing results in the outside world is an aspect of developing toward the magician/witch/clown action-logic (see Table 2 and Fisher & Torbert, 1995; Torbert, 1973), and this developmental aim seems of genuine significance to Andy at this time.

When we first interviewed Andy, it appeared that the urgency of his achiever voice strongly attached him to the achiever's planning-implementation-outcome, goal-oriented cycle. He spoke with a driven look in his eye and sound in his voice when describing the thrill of "accomplishing things," the power provided by success, and his potential for expanding his business worldwide. He was in the midst of deciding whether to open his Duck Tours business in 20 different sites around the country, followed by the possibility of opening his business worldwide. He spent the summer months traveling around the country, meeting with city government officials and potential investors to assess his opportunities. Despite the potential for growth, Andy made the difficult choice not to expand his business. We talked with him about this decision during the feedback session.

He told us that three significant issues emerged to influence this decision. First, Andy decided to have a "good life," to live out some of his personal goals that he had put on the back burner while aggressively building his company. He recognized that expansion
would require tremendous amounts of time traveling away from home and concluded that helping his own town to flourish may be more rewarding than diluting his energies. Furthermore, he acknowledged that he already has made significant contributions to changing the world and has affected many people. He no longer felt the need to burden himself with the responsibility of fulfilling every opportunity he creates. If, at the time of our interview, Andy seemed to be actively suffering the contradictory pulls of the achiever and the strategist action-logics, 6 months later, at the time of our feedback session, he seemed to have completed a transition on this issue to treating the strategist action-logic as primary, valuing quality over quantity. "I'm at peace with the decision not to expand. I wish I hadn't had to spend all the money to find out, but I'm glad I gave myself the basis for making the best decision." (It is important to point out that the reasoning about the decision is at stake here, not the content of the decision; one can conceive of a strategist-like way of developing a multisite business—indeed, an earlier study shows several medical entrepreneurs, scored as strategists, doing just that [Hirsch, 1988; Torbert, 1991].)

Second, Andy highly values the face-to-face connection he has with his employees and fears that with expansion and less personalized relationships, he would lose the key to success. This belief was reinforced by other successful entrepreneurs whom he met at the Entrepreneur of the Year gathering at the White House in June 1997, where Andy conducted an informal survey to shed light on the values of other entrepreneurs. "My colleagues, again and again, said people are the secret," Andy summarized. "Passion, people, and money are the important ingredients to a successful business, in that order," he concluded. Andy clarified for us that he has plenty of passion and money and that the important ingredient now is to continue nurturing his relationships at work and at home.

Third, Andy was confronted with the negative influence of greed as he explored expansion. Andy found that his new potential investors greedily tried to bend him from his loyalties to his original investors, an influence attempt that Andy both resisted and found distasteful.

When we review our interview with Andy, we see the most frequent recurrence of the strategist action-logic in his comments, particularly in his openness to exploring possible incongruities in himself, though the achiever voice was certainly strongly represented as well. The predominance of the strategist action-logic seems both confirmed and even clearer during our feedback dialogue with Andy several months later, when we discussed his interim decisions and his reflections on the interview and this analysis. This very decision process may have helped him move somewhat from greater attunement to his achiever voice to greater appreciation of and attunement to his strategist voice.

However, we should emphasize that our analysis of Andy is based on short episodes of second-person research/practice (the single interview and the single follow-up session we have held with him), whereas the data we have reported or referenced at other points in this article are based on executives who have taken a "third-person" sentence completion measure, the analysis of which has been highly structured, quantified, and validated over many years. Thus, we offer you our analysis, as we offered it to Andy, in the spirit of a continuing inquiry.

DEVELOPMENTAL ACTION INQUIRY AS RESEARCH METHOD AND ACTION PRACTICE

Andy's rank ordering of passion, people, and money as keys to success in business correlates in an interesting way with the research/practice of developmental action inquiry. According to the theory and practice of developmental action inquiry, one's passion becomes increasingly focused, clarified, and constructive through forms of first-person research/practice (interwoven with second- and third-person experiences). One's relationships with particular other people and teams become increasingly focused and liberatingly transformational through forms of second-person research/practice. Money is generated through successful third-person research/practices that develop products and strategies that appeal to third-persons whom one does not know personally (e.g., customers).

The early developmental action-logics (opportunist, diplomat, technician) are the least oriented toward research in the midst of practice. They treat unresearched and unintegrated first-, second-, and third-person action-logics as governing variables. More precisely, the opportunist treats his or her own first-person preferences, exclusive of others' preferences, as guides for action. The diplomat treats the second-person preferences of his or her significant others as determinative. And the technician treats the third-
person "objective" logics of crafts (be the craft mathematics, sailboating, or dialogical conversation) as regulative. The achiever action-logic attempts to balance these three sources of influence (the subjective, the intersubjective, and the objective) with one another but still without critically examining and potentially transforming the assumptions guiding personal preference, group norms, or wider organizational structures and traditions. Thus, the achiever action-logic is still driven by uncritically introjected cultural elements and does not self-consciously seek to integrate one's own and others' real-time research and practice. It is only in the transition between the achiever and the strategist action-logics that a voluntary self-criticalness, a mutual criticalness with others, and a critical study of vital cultural values begin to become the basis for action. It is only in this transition that inquiry begins to take priority over conformity, that research truly begins to guide practice. (And one of the disorienting things one initially encounters in an intentional effort to integrate research and practice, as Andy did when he spoke of hypocrisy, is how incongruent one's daily practice typically is from what one espouses as one's deepest values [Argyris & Schon, 1974; Harrison, 1995; Torbert, 1976].)

The strategist seeks theory, method, and practices that help interweave first-, second-, and third-person research/practice and that help align visioning, strategizing, performing, and assessing results. But each approach has its blind sides, so ultimately the question arises, "Not by what kind of general strategy, but by what kind of moment-to-moment alchemy does one, with others, maintain an active inquiry amid action?" Addressing this dilemma brings one to the transition to the "chaotic" magician/witch/clown action-logic, in which one learns to remain present to the continual inner interplay of transformational energies as well as to the external appearance of stability and intractable problems that we conventionally encounter.

Thus, developmental action inquiry is primarily an approach that is generalized one person at a time (and slowly, at best, across a lifetime of inquiry) about how to focus one's own passions and actions to create a good life; about how to create minicommunities of inquiry with one's family, friends, and colleagues; and about how to enact constructive leadership in the third-person organizational roles one plays (Torbert, 1997, 1999). To us, Andy Wilson seems deeply engaged in such self-critical and self-transforming first-, second-, and third-person research/practices.

Developmental Action Inquiry in This Group Interview

As just described in the previous paragraphs, insofar as this group interview concerned an effort to discover the first-person research/practice action-logic underlying Andy Wilson's entrepreneurial success, our analysis suggests that his orientation toward late-stage action-logics, centered on the strategist voice, is a plausible basis for his success. To make somewhat too neat a package of it, his visioning has a strong magician element, his strategizing (balancing passion, principle, people, and money) is predominantly strategist-like, his entrepreneurial performing has a strong achiever quality, and his (self-)assessing has a definite technician flavor. Our two experiences with Andy across 6 months suggest that he was moving developmentally through an achiever-strategist transition, gradually aligning his practice more solidly on strategist-like governing variables.

Insofar as this group interview with Andy concerned second-person research/practice, we see an interaction process much more characteristic of collaborative inquiry organizing than of systematic productivity organizing (see Table 3). First, we were quite explicitly inquiring together about the underlying patterns of Andy's leadership and success. Second, instead of conducting the interview through a predetermined interview schedule that focuses solely on the interview subject, the consulting class used no prescribed interview schedule and no prescribed sequence of interlocutors. The interview took place on a snowy morning in the professor's cozy living room. Several of the class members removed their shoes, and others trotted back and forth to the kitchen for coffee refills. Andy, dressed in jeans, sat back casually in a deep arm chair. Once everyone settled down and the professor (Bill) welcomed Andy, Jennifer kicked off the unstructured interview by suggesting that we make the direction of the interview a discussible process ("I wanted to make a recommendation also, that we, as a class, stop if we feel like we're going on the wrong tangent and discuss outwardly why we think we're going on the wrong path."). Although this precise process does not take place, the reader will recall that different members of the interviewing group pursue distinctive directions of questioning and actively test attributions about Andy that might ordinarily go undiscussed and untested. For example, Ben, the student who speaks at the outset right after Jennifer, reveals that he has been opposed to the interview as an
exercise and asks Andy a rather confronting question: "Given that things [i.e., the business] are going positively ... why would this be a time for you, personally, to reflect?"

This nonconventional interview opening signals the multivocal, second-person community of on-line reflective practice (Schon, 1983) into which Andy is being invited. From the opening comments of the professor and two other class members, the field of inquiry is widened to include the question of how the interviewers themselves are performing and how the interview as a process is proceeding. There was nothing "canned" about the exercise (at that time, there was no plan to transcribe, analyze, and publish the result). There was a living sense from moment to moment that we were cooperating together to see as deeply and clearly as possible—to confront and penetrate beyond possible illusions—to test the relations between "espoused theories" and "theories-in-use" (Argyris & Schon, 1974).

Although this single case permits no final empirical judgment about the matter, we suggest that both the openness of the class about its own process and the promise and eventual realization of a feedback and validity testing session with Andy played a significant role in the openness with which he was willing to explore his action dilemmas with us. At the same time, Andy's willingness to engage in these self-study activities and to reveal his vulnerabilities and unanswered questions is an unobtrusive measure of the strategist-like quality of his action-logic.

Developmental Action Inquiry as a Third-Person Research/Practice

Our group interview with Andy also contributes to third-person research/practice in several ways. The tape recording and transcription of the interview, as well as its presentation in the "Meet the Person" section of this issue, give third-person readers a third-person (if only single-channel) version of what was said. (The transcript has been lightly edited for clarity, one tangential section has been omitted to reduce length, and one short set of comments has been eliminated because it would have unethically violated someone's confidentiality.) The transcript as it appears here in the Journal of Management Inquiry is open to any number of interpretations and permits the reader to make an independent judgment about the interpretations we offer.

A second way that this group interview contributes to third-person research/practice is that it demonstrates how extensive prior testing, using psychometric and behavioral measures (see various Fisher and Torbert references), can give a theory—in this case, developmental action inquiry—grounding in empirical positivist and multimethod eclectic approaches to third-person research/practice (see Table 1 again, as well as Table 4) that can be put to use in analyzing a single clinical case such as this interview. At the same time, the multivocal conduct and analysis of this interview, as well as the practice of the feedback session, illustrate the postmodern interpretivist and the cooperative ecological inquiry aspects of developmental action inquiry (see Tables 1 and 4).

Our action aim in presenting these two articles together cannot be to prove anything because we present but a single case. Rather, our aim has been twofold: (a) to illustrate one of many ways in which both business practice and research on management can be enriched by methods that interweave first-person, second-person, and third-person research/practice and (b) to invite each reader (Andy Wilson, the other consulting class participants, and JMI readers) to consider whether to commit to examining one's own and others' action-logics in real-time interactions as a way to gauge what subsequent actions are more or less likely to generate greater efficiency, effectiveness, legitimacy, and transformation.

In conclusion, our call for further research into the theory, method, and practice of developmental action inquiry is not a call for more third-person research only but rather is a call for interweaving first-, second-, and third-person research/practice as illustrated here by Andy Wilson, the consulting class, and this article.

REFERENCES

### Table 4
**Analogies Among Personal, Organizational, and Social Scientific Developmental Paths**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Development</th>
<th>Organizational Development</th>
<th>Social Scientific Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Birth-Impulsive (0-6 years)</td>
<td>I. Conception</td>
<td>I. Anarchism (e.g., see Feyerabend, 1975)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Multiple, distinctive impulses gradually resolve into characteristic approach; e.g., many fantasies into a particular dream for a new organization)</td>
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<tr>
<td>II. Opportunist (7-12)?</td>
<td>II. Investments</td>
<td>II. Behaviorism</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Dominant task: gain power [e.g., bike riding skill] to have desired effect on outside world)</td>
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<tr>
<td>III. Diplomat (12-?)</td>
<td>III. Incorporation</td>
<td>III. Gestalt sociologism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Looking-glass self: understanding others' culture/expectations and molding own actions to succeed in their [e.g., market] terms)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Technician (16-?)</td>
<td>IV. Experiments</td>
<td>IV. Empirical positivism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Intellectual mastery of outside-self systems such that actions = experiments that confirm or disconfirm hypotheses and lead toward valid certainty)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>V. Achiever (20-?)</td>
<td>V. Systematic Productivity</td>
<td>V. Multimethod Eclecticism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Pragmatic triangulation among plan/theory, operation/implementation, and outcome/assessment in incompletely predefined environment)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. Strategist (30-?)</td>
<td>VI. Collaborative inquiry</td>
<td>VI. Postmodern interpretivism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Self-conscious mission/philosophy, sense of timing/historicity, invitation to conversation among multiple voices and to reframing of boundaries)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>VII. Magician/witch/clown (?40-?)</td>
<td>VII. Foundational community</td>
<td>VII. Cooperative ecological inquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Life/science = a mind/matter, love/death/transformation praxis among others, cultivating interplay and reattunement among inquiry, friendship, work, and earth/material goods)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII. Ironist (?50-?)</td>
<td>VIII. Liberating disciplines</td>
<td>VIII. Developmental action inquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Full acceptance of multiparadigmatic nature of human consciousness/reality, including distances/alienations among paradigms, such that (a) few recognize paradigm differences as cause of wars, (b) few seek paradigm disconfirmation and transformation, and (c) few face dilemma/paradox of &quot;empowering leadership&quot;: that it must work indirectly through ironic words, gestures, and event-structures that create a moment-to-moment field of choice)</td>
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</table>


a. The age ranges for each developmental action-logic are offered tentatively and for the reader’s heuristic purposes only, hence the multiple question marks. According to developmental action inquiry theory, a person may at any time in life cease transforming toward later action-logics and develop toward one of the earlier action-logics.

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