On Metaphors[i]

Dr. Alexander Dawoody

On Metaphors

Dr. Alexander Dawoody

Introduction

Things in the world play a role in constructing our reality through our experiences. These experiences differ from one setting to another and depend on the understanding of how we conceptualize and relate to such reality. To do so, we crate metaphors in order to help us better understand our world and the reality that we construct through our experiences.

We use metaphors, for example, to ease communication, describe an organization, characterize a particular culture, or qualify a research (Dawoody, 2003). Metaphorical thought is normal and ubiquitous in our mental life, both conscious and unconscious. The same mechanism of metaphorical thought is used throughout poetry and are present in our most common concepts, such as time, events, causation, emotion, ethics, and business. Conceptual metaphors even remain behind the building of computer interfaces, such as desktop metaphors, and the structuring of the Internet as an "information highway," "chatrooms," and so on. It is the systematicity of metaphorical thoughts that give us permit of such applications (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980).

This article assesses the impact of metaphors on our understanding of language, culture, systems, and organizations. It helps in conceptualizing hidden processes, unfold empirical reality, and decode the logic of transformative change within an organization.

Conceptual Metaphors

Metaphors are conceptual in nature. They are among our principal vehicles for understanding and play a central role in the construction of reality (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). How we think metaphorically, matters, and can determine questions of policy, norms, decisions, and choices. Conceptual metaphors are grounded in everyday life experiences. Abstract thoughts are largely metaphorical and have literal core extended by many inconsistent metaphors. Even our conceptual systems are not consistent since the metaphors used to reason about concepts are themselves inconsistent. This is because we live our lives based on inferences derived via metaphors (ibid.).

Some criticize the use of a single metaphor as too simple. However, the risk is not in simplification, since this is deliberate intent of any representational model and certainly of the metaphor, but rather in oversimplification to the point of distortion or inaccuracy. Some also criticize the single metaphor as merely a pejorative stereotype (Pearce, 1996).

Metaphors can either be developed in conjunction with people within the culture who will be affected by change or evaluated and modified because of input from the participants. Following the selection of the metaphor, the agent should develop three to five sub metaphorical constructs as part of the overarching metaphor. These subconstructs, along with the overarching metaphor,

provide anchors or benchmarks from which to develop a rich and focused understanding of the cultural mindset (ibid.).

The metaphorical structuring of concepts is necessarily partial and reflective in the lexicon of language (including phrasal lexicon, which contains fixed-form expressions). Because concepts are metaphorically structured in a systemic way, it is possible for us use expressions from one domain to talk about corresponding concepts in the metaphorically defined domain and extend beyond the range of ordinary literal ways of thinking (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980).

Metaphors partially structure our everyday concepts reflected in our literal language. The conceptual systems of cultures and religions are metaphorical in nature. Symbolic metonymies are critical links between everyday experience and the coherent metaphorical systems that characterize religions and cultures. Symbolic metonymies that are grounded in our physical experience provide an essential mean for comprehending religious and cultural concepts (ibid.).

There are four major historical barriers to understanding the nature of metaphorical thought and its profundity. These amount to four false views of metaphors. In the Western tradition, they all go back at least as far as Aristotle. The first fallacy is that metaphor is a matter of words, not concepts. The second is that metaphor is based on similarity. The third is that all concepts are literal and that none can be metaphorical. The fourth is that traditional thought is in no way shaped by the nature of our brains and bodies (ibid.).

One of the major strengths of metaphor rests in the fact that it directs attention to the symbolic significance of the most rational aspects of a system. Numerous administrative structures and practices embody patterns of subjective meaning that are crucial for understanding how a system function (Morgan, 1986).

The change agent specifies intervention strategies for dealing with each metaphor. There are several strategies for a specific metaphor. Balance is the key since few strategies can leave the change agent without adequate flexibility while others can lead to inadequate guidance and direction. To take advantage of this model the change agent should use it as a tool to simplify and clarify the process of understanding of the cultural mindset and to specify the precise strategies to achieve the most effective results (Pearce, 1996).

The heart of metaphor, according to Lakoff and Johnson, is inference. Conceptual metaphor allows inferences in sensory-motor domains (such as domains of space and objects) to be used for drawing inferences about other domains (such as domains of subjective judgment) with concepts like intimacy, emotion, justice, and so on. Because we reason in terms of metaphor, the metaphors we use determine a great deal how we live our lives (1980).

Introducing change is analogous to introducing a virus into an organic cell where there is resistance but not immunity. The metaphors identify key points of vulnerability or resistance in a norm or culture. The successful management of metaphors facilitates the implementation of change. If a change agent is not attuned to the metaphor of a particular norm or culture, then the group will revert to its previous state upon removal of the change agent (Pearce, 1996).

When we observe a particular system, whether in an organization or society, we are observing an evolved form of practice that has been influenced by various complex interactions between people, events, situations, actions, and general circumstances. A living system, according to Morgan (1986) is always evolving. Though at any given time it be having a discernible pattern, this pattern is an abstraction imposed on the system from the outside. It is a pattern that helps the observer make sense of what is taking place in the system and summarize the historic sweep in retrospect. Our understanding of a system, as such is more fragmented and superficial than reality. According to Morgan (1986):

> "Traditional approaches to leadership have tended to focus on the problems of linking tasks and the people who are to perform those tasks by identifying the behavioral styles appropriate for different situations. The culture metaphor encourages us to reinterpret the nature of these styles to recognize the role they play in the social construction of reality. We can see that different leadership styles hinge on a question of how reality is to be defined. Authoritarian leaders "sell" or "tell" a reality, forcing their definition of a situation upon others. More democratic leaders let the reality of a situation evolve from the definitions offered by their colleagues, listening to what is being said, summoning and integrating key themes, and evoking and developing imagery that captures the essence of the emergent system of meaning. Such leaders define the reality of others in a more gentle and subtle way than their authoritarian counterparts, through strategic interventions that communicate key directions and sense of value, rather than by forcing themselves in the forefront of action. They can often play a background role, shaping the all-important stage of action and the general direction that events will take but leaving choice about details to those responsible for their implementation. In viewing leadership as the management of meaning, the culture metaphor leads us to understanding old styles in new ways. The metaphor also helps us to reinterpret the nature and significance of organization-environmental relations…..we can understand familiar organizational concepts, rules, and procedures as interpretive schemes through which we construct and make sense of organizational reality. Equally, we can understand the way an organization makes sense of its environment as a process of social enactment. Organizations choose and structure their environment through a host of interpretive decisions. One's knowledge of and relations with the environment are extensions of one's culture, since we come to know and understand our environment through the belief systems that guide our interpretations and actions." (p. 136).

Kellert and Felthous (1985) identify three types of transfers into the social sciences, applications of quantitative techniques, metaphorical extensions of results and the drawing of normative conclusions. According to Overman and Loraine (1994), the issue is not whether and how the social sciences transfer knowledge from the natural sciences. Rather, there is a convergence taking place between the two, and that the new sciences, particularly quantum theory, are indicators of such a convergence. Overman and Loraine (1996) identity six general principles of the convergent perspective:

1. Classical dichotomies are conceptual illusions.
2. The present is not known in all its detail.

3. There is no independence of observer from the observed.
4. Nonlocal causation, action at a distance, or actuality exists and complement traditional notions of causality.
5. There is some fundamental linking of all activities.
6. The observer is capable of participating in and becoming the reality in which, he lives.

Rumelhart (1993) challenges the literal versus metaphorical dichotomy of non-constructivist theorists and demonstrates that what they call literal preexists cognitive schema. A statement is literally true when we find an existing schema that accounts fully for the data in question. A statement is metaphorically true when others equally primarily do not hold. Petrie and Oschlag's (1993) model expand on Rumelhart's theory and suggest that the changes in one's cognitive structure fall along a continuum: from literal to comparative-metaphorical, and to interactive-metaphorical. Table 1 illustrates the difference between literal, comparative, and interactive metaphors:

Table 1: The Three Types of Metaphorical Continuum

Literal	**Comparative Metaphor**	**Interactive Metaphor**
Assigning to existing framework of understanding.	Facilitating changes in current rules of understanding.	More complex framework of understanding.
Transferring a set of linguistics tools from one cognitive domain to another, without changing the structural metaphor.	Ontological and epistemological assumptions do not change. Rather, their entailments are modified.	A shift from Newtonian knowledge to indeterminate knowledge.
e.g.: Transferring the metaphor of Darwin's Theory of evolution from biology to sociology, without disturbing the image of society.	e.g.: Enhancing the organizational models in our cognitive framework with attributes such as non-linearity.	e.g.: The conceptualization of organization as constructions and emergent relationships.

Source: Morcol (2000).

Language is an important source of evidence for what a system is like. Our conceptual system plays a central role in defining our everyday realities. Human thought processes are largely metaphorical. The human conceptual system is metaphorically structured and defined. Metaphor means metaphorical concept. Metaphorical expressions in our language are tied to metaphorical concepts in a systemic way. Metaphorical concepts is systemic and the language we use to talk about that aspect of the concept is systemic (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980).

Metaphor is not just a matter of language or mere words. Metaphors is not merely in the words we use. It is in our very concept of an argument. The language of argument is literal. We act according to the way we conceive of things. The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of things in terms of another and their conceptual frameworks are grounded in correlation within our experiences (ibid.).

Organizational Metaphors

Gareth Morgan (1986) constructed eight different metaphorical models to analyze the organizational systems both literally and in accordance with the new sciences of complexity:

1. The Machine Metaphor.
2. The Flux Metaphor.
3. The Organismic Metaphor.
4. The Domination Metaphor.
5. The Culture Metaphor.
6. The Holographic Metaphor.
7. The Political Metaphor.
8. The Psychic Prison Metaphor.

The Machine Metaphor: We live in a technological society dominated by the needs of machine and mechanical modes of thoughts (Dawoody, 2003). Greek atomists, such as Democritus and Leucippus of the fifth-third centuries B.C. believed that the world was composed of invisible particles in motion in an infinite void, and that all forms, movements, and changes could be explained in terms of size, shape, form, and movement of atoms (Morgan, 1986, p. 347).

Aristotle used mechanistic principles to understand the movement of animals. Archimedes, Galileo, and others used machines to make important contributions to mathematics and physics and did much to advance the idea that it is possible to build an objective science that could reduce all explanations of reality to a physical base, pursuing the atomist's ideal of a universe that could be explained in terms of matter in motion. This mechanistic view influenced scientific though right into the 20th century and received its fullest expression in the contributions of Newton (who developed a theory of the universe as a celestial machine) (p. 347).

Metaphors only create partial ways of seeing. For in encouraging us to see and understand the world from one perspective they discourage us from seeing it from others. This is exactly what has happened while developing mechanistic approaches to organization, administrative and political systems. For in understanding these systems as rational and technical processes, mechanical imagery tends to underplay the human aspects of organization, and to overlook the fact that the tasks facing administrators are often more complex, uncertain, and difficult than those that can be performed by most machines (p. 34).

The strengths of the machine as a metaphor can be stated simple. For mechanistic approaches to administrative and organizational work well only under conditions where machines work well: (a) when there is a straightforward task to perform; (b) when the environment is stable enough to ensure that the products produced will be appropriate; (c) when one wishes to produce exactly the same product time and again; (d) when precision is at a premium; and when the human "machine" parts are compliant and behave as they have been designed to do (p. 34).

By examining a system through the lens of the machine metaphor, we can observe if they are mildly or overly bureaucratic and if they are manifesting increasingly bureaucratic behavior as a concern for control (p. 325). Themes such as authority, patterns of authority, centralization, decentralization, flexibility, unity of command, scalar of chain, and equity are indicators of such

concerns for control (pp. 26-29). Under the influence of the machine metaphor, organization theory investigates a form of engineering that is preoccupied with relations between goals, structures, and efficiency (p. 40).

The Flux Metaphor: Around the year 500 B.C., the Greek Philosopher Heraclitus noted that one could not step into the same river twice, for other waters are continually flowing on. He was one of the first Western philosophers to address the idea that the universe is in constant state of flux embodying characteristics of both permanence and change (p. 233).

According to Heraclitus, everything flows, and nothing abides. Everything gives way and nothing stay fixed. Cool things become warm, the warm grows cool. The moist dries, the parched becomes moist. It is in changing that things find response. For Heraclitus, the secrets of the universe are to be find in hidden tensions and connections that simultaneously create patterns of unity and change (p. 233). Heraclitus' ideas have much in common with the ancient Chinese philosophy of Taoism (p. 371).

Bohm invites us to understand the universe as a flowing and unbroken wholeness. Like Heraclitus, Bohm views process, flux, and change as fundamental, arguing that the state of the universe at any point in time reflects a more basic reality. He calls this reality the implicate order and distinguishes it from the explicate order manifested in the world around us. He argues that the latter realizes and expresses potentials existing within the former (Bohm, 2003).

Bohm believes that the world unfolds and enfolds from moment to moment as a kind of pulsating wholeness. Each moment of existence has similarities with, yet differs from, its predecessors, creating the appearance of continuity during change (ibid.).

Taking Bohm's work as a point of departure, it is clear that if the world of organization is an unfolded empirical reality, then we can best understand the nature of organization by decoding the logic of transformation and change through which this reality unfolds. Such imagery invites us to search for the basic dynamics that generate and sustain organizations and their environments as concreate form (Morgan, 1986, pp. 234-235).

In searching for these hidden dynamics our attention can move in many directions. For example, we could return to the consideration of the unconscious as the implicate source of organizational life and pay more attention to how unconscious energy is transforming into patterns of organization. In this regard, Jung's theory of the role and significance of the collective unconscious (Jung, 1968) has many parallels with Bohm's theory of the implicate order and provides an obvious framework for understanding relations between implicate and explicate aspects of organizations (Morgan, 1986).

Living systems in the world according to this metaphor are best understood as a loop, flowing and unbroken wholeness. This process of flowing in a system is flux, and the changes in the process are fundamental. The state of a system at any point in time reflect a more basic reality, an implicate order. This basic reality is different from the explicate order manifested in the environment around the system. The explicate order is realized and expressed potentials exist only within the implicate order. The strength of this metaphor is that it forces us to understand a system in a constant state

of flux. By understanding this logic, we can create new means of thinking about change in a system. The limitations of the flux metaphor lie in the notion that the metaphor could be too far idealistic, and the understanding of the logic of change may have to depend on our hindsight (ibid.).

The Organismic Metaphor: This model is based on biology and biological methodology in observing the world. Biology has developed as a systematic science concerned with the study and explanation of organic functioning. It studies the autonomy and physiology of living things and investigates the modes and conditions of their survival, reproduction, development, and decay. And it classifies organisms into species, inquires into their geographic description, their lines of descent, and their evolutionary changes (pp. 351-352).

This type of inquiry had influenced open systems theory, whereby virtually anything can be defined as a system by drawing a boundary. It also influenced the contingency theory, which is based on differentiation and integration, environmental study, change, stability, homogeneity, heterogeneity, interconnectedness between elements, competition, uncertainty, and the symmetrical or asymmetrical interdependence, political, legal, technological, economic, social, market conditions, and turbulence (pp. 352-353).

If we thought of organizations as organisms, then we may find ourselves thinking about them as living systems, existing in a wider environment on which they depend. We will begin to see that it is possible to identify different species of organizations in different kind of environment (p. 390.

Just as we find polar bears in arctic regions, camels in deserts, and alligators in swamps, we notice that certain species of organizations are better adapted to specific environmental conditions than others. We find that bureaucratic organizations, for example, tend to work most effectively in environments that are stable or protected in some way that very different species are found in more competitive and turbulent regions, such as environments of high-tech firms in the aerospace and microelectronics industries (p. 39).

Organismic metaphor helps organizational theorists identify and study different organizational needs, organizations as open systems, the process of adapting organizations to their environments, organizational life cycles, the factors influencing organizational systems health and development, different species of organizations, and the relations between species and their ecology (p. 40).

One of the main strengths of the organismic metaphor stems from the emphasis placed on understanding relations between a system and its environment. It stresses that the system is open and best understood as a process rather than as collections of parts. By using the image of an organism in constant exchange with the environment we can take an open and flexible view of a system that is different from the views and perspectives of the linear analysis and the machine metaphor (Dawoody, 2003).

The organismic metaphor, however, has some limitations. For example, it has the tendency to view the system and its environment in a way that is far too concrete. The metaphor also views a system as dependent upon forces that are operating in the external world, rather than recognizing these forces as active agents, operating with other forces in the construction of that world (ibid.).

The Domination Metaphor: The domination metaphor brings the seamy side of organizational life to the center of our attention and invites us to examine the extent to which it must be regarded as intrinsic aspect of the way we administer. In viewing the domination metaphor as a primary framework for organizational analysis, the discussion may attempt to make these issues mainstream in the sense that they should be dominated in our consideration of the nature and success of an organization (Morgan, 1986, pp. 376-377).

We need to make a distinction between primary and secondary oppositions. So long as our activities are geared to reframing the latter, then we have power only to make relatively superficial changes in our world. As Marx have shown, significant and lasting change ultimately depends on an ability to reframe oppositions within which the other surface oppositions are set (Marx and Engels, 2010).

Throughout history, organizations have been associated with processes of social domination where individuals or groups find ways of imposing their will on others (Morgan, 1986, P. 275). According to Weber, domination can occur in several ways. First, domination arises when one or more persons coerce others through the direct use oof threat or force. However, domination also occurs in more subtle ways, as when a ruler can impose his/her will on others while being perceived as having a right to do so (Weber, 1949).

Weber identifies three types of social domination that could become legitimate forms of authority or power. He called these “the charismatic”, “the traditional”, and “the rational-legal.” He believed that a ruler’s ability to use one or another of these kinds of authority depends on his/her ability to find support or legitimation in the ideologies or beliefs of those being ruled (ibid.).

If we to examine an organization from the perspective of the domination metaphor, we can observe the organization whether being cohesive, with its components are relatively well placed in the overall structure of society, or not. In terms of Weber’s typology of domination, the organization could either move towards or against a bureaucratized administration. We may also find certain number of organizational or policy components being controlled and exploited or take part in the decision-making process (Weber, 1949).

The overwhelming strength of the domination metaphor is that it draws our attention to the double-edge nature of rational action, illustrating that when we talk about rationality we are always speaking from a partial point of view. What is rational from one organizational point standpoint may be catastrophic from another. A potential limitation of the metaphor stems from the danger that in assessing equivalence between domination and organization we may blind ourselves to the idea that nondenominational forms of organizations are possible (Morgan, 1986, pp. 315-318).

The Cultural Metaphor: The meaning of the word “culture” did not appear in an English language dictionary until the late 1920s. in English, culture is a modern concept used in an anthropological and social sense to refer broadly to civilization and social heritage no earlier than 1871. Kroeber and Kluckhohn claim to have identified almost three hundred definitions of culture, and they provided detailed analysis of one hundred and sixty-four (Kroeber and Kluckhohn, 1952).

The word "culture" itself has been derived metaphorically from the idea of cultivation, the process of tilling and developing land. When we talk about culture, we are typically referring to the pattern of development reflected in a society's system of knowledge, ideology, values, laws, and day-to-day ritual. The word is also used to refer to the degree of reinforcement evident in such systems of beliefs and practice. Today, the concept of culture is used to signify that different groups of people have different ways of life (Morgan, 1986, p. 112).

When talking about culture we are really talking about a process of reality construction that allows people to see and understand events, actions, objects, utterances, or situations in distinctive ways. These patterns of understanding also provide a basis for making one's own behavior sensible and meaningful. Thus, shared meaning, shared understanding, and shared sense making are all different ways of describing culture (p. 1288).

One of the major strengths of the culture metaphor rests in the fact that it directs attention to the symbolic significance of the rational aspects of organizational life. The metaphor also provides a new focus and avenue for the creation of organized action. It opens the way to a reinterpretation of many traditional organizational concepts and processes as well as the organization-environment relations (pp. 134-136).

The Holographic Metaphor: The study of holography (brain) poses a unique problem in reflexivity and of knowledge construction since we use brains to understand brains. The process has drawn on many different images to make sense of this complex part of anatomy (p. 355).

The holographic character of the brain provides an account of the different metaphors that have shaped theories of the mind in science and social thought. Under the influence of the findings of split-brain research, there has been much interest in understanding the implications of the functioning of the creative right and the analytical left hemispheres. The specialization of the functions between these two hemispheres is important, but it is also important not to underestimate the degree of interconnection as well (pp. 355-356).

It is possible to design organizations so that they have the capacity to be as flexible, resilient, and inventive as the functioning of the brain? Most of our current thinking conceives of organizations as a relationship between specialized parts linked by lines of communication, command, and control. Even in the matrix and organic forms we seem able only to fin new ways of linking the organizational parts (p. 78).

In the matrix organization this is achieved by combining dual patterns of authority and responsibility and by encouraging more democratic styles of administration and key decision-makers. In the organic form this is achieved by allowing different organizational elements degree of freedom in which to find their own mode of integration (ibid.).

It is possible that by using the brain as a metaphor for organization we may improve our ability to organize in a manner that promotes flexible and creative action. To the extent that we build organizations on mechanistic principles, we develop instrumental rationality where people are valued for their ability to fit in and contribute to the efficient operation of a predetermined structures. This is fine for performing a fixed task in stable circumstances (ibid.).

But when these conditions are violated, organizations along these lines encounter many problems. It is for this kind of capacity that the brain is renowned. The brain, thus, offers itself as an obvious metaphor for organization, particularly if our concern is to improve capacities for organizational intelligence (pp. 78-79).

2400 years since Hippocrates located the seat of intellect in the skull, humans have been presented with increasing evidence that their greatest thoughts, emotions, and achievements may stem from a three-pound glob of matter with the consistency of Jell-O and the color of day-old slush. Numerous metaphors ranging from the mystical to the mechanical have been summoned to shape our understanding of the bran (ibid).

Holography demonstrates in a very concrete way that it is possible to create processes where the whole can be encoded in all the parts so that each part represents the whole. The brain functions in accordance with holographic principles, which memory is distributed throughout the brain and can thus be reconstituted from any of the parts (p. 80).

Exploring the parallels between human decision-making and organizational decision-making, Herbert Simon argued that organizations can never be perfectly rational because their members have limited information-processing abilities and can achieve only limited forms of rationality (Simon, 1947).

Individuals and organizations thus settle for a bounded rationality of good enough decisions based on simple rules of thumb and limited search and information. If organizations are indeed products or reflections of information-processing capacities as Simon has suggested, then new capacities will lead to new organizational forms (ibid.).

One of the interpretations used in this metaphor is that of the cybernetics. Cybernetic is relatively new interdisciplinary science focusing upon the study of information, communication, and control. The term was coined in the 1940s by MIT mathematician Norbert Wiener as a metaphorical application of the Greek *kubernetes,* meaning “steersman” (Wiener, 1961).

The Greek had developed the concept of steersmanship probably from their understanding of the processes involved in the control and navigation of watercraft and extended its use to the process of government and statecraft. Wiener used this imagery to characterize processes of information exchange through which machines and organisms engage in self-regulating behaviors that maintain steady states (ibid.).

The core insight emerging from this early work was that the ability of a system to engage in self-regulating behavior depends on processes of information exchange involving negative feedback, where more leads to less and less leads to more. This concept is central to the process of steersmanship. If we shift a boat off course by taking the rudder too far in one direction, we can get it back on course again by moving it in the opposite direction (Morgan, 1986, p. 85).

Cybernetics leads to a theory of communication and learning by stressing four key principles. First, that systems must have the capacity to sense, monitor, and scan significant aspects of their environment. Second, that they must be able to relate this information to the operating norms that

guide system behavior. Third, that they must be able to detect significant deviations from these norms. And fourth, that they must be able to initiate corrective action when discrepancies are detected (pp. 86-87).

If these four conditions are satisfied, a continuous process of information exchange is created between a system and its environment, allowing the system to monitor changes and initiate appropriate responses. However, the learning abilities are limited in that the system can maintain only the course of action determined by the operating norms of standards guiding it. A house thermometer, for example, can learn in the sense of being able to detect and correct variations from predetermined norms, but it is unable to determine what level of temperature is appropriate to meet the preferences of the inhabitants of a room and to adjust take that (ibid.).

By using the metaphor of a holographic brain, we can see how an organization, or a policy can stumble on some of the principles of holographic design. Mode of operation may reflect the principle redundant design, and the team-based, client-centered approach. Teams and units could be constructed as microcosms of the whole. Learning and development could be designed to be as open-ended and self-organizing (p. 326).

The main strengths of the holographic metaphor are their contributions to our understanding of organizational learning and capacities for self-organizing. They suggest that innovative organizations must be designed as learning systems that place emphasis on being open to inquiry and self-criticism, and to move beyond the bounded rationality. The weakness of this metaphor is a danger of overlooking important conflicts between the requirements of learning and self-organization one one hand and the realities of power and control on the other (pp. 105-108).

The Political Metaphor: According to Aristotle, politics is a way of creating order and for society to avoid degenerating into a war of all against all. Most political philosophers, from Machiavelli to Hobbes, Proudhon, Mosca, and Popper are all concerned with solutions to this problem of order (p. 362).

The political metaphor can be used to unravel the politics of day-to-day administrative and organizational lives. Most people working in an administration or organization admit that they are surrounded by forms of “wheeling and dealing” through which different people attempt to advance specific interests. Yet, the idea that administrations are supposed to be rational enterprises in which their members seek common goals tend to discourage discussion or attribution of political motive. Politics, in short, is seen as a dirty word (p. 142).

In ancient Greece, Aristotle advocated politics as a means of reconciliating the need for unity in the Greek city-states with the fact that the city-state was an aggregate of many members. Politics, for him, provided a means of creating order out of diversity while avoiding forms of totalitarian rule (Aristotle, 2011).

Political science and many systems of government have built on this basic idea, advocating politics and the recognition of the interplay of competing interests as a means of creating a non-coercive form of social order. By attempting to understand organization as a political system, and by

attempting to unravel the detailed policies of organizational life, we can grasp important qualities of organization that are often glossed over or ignored (Morgan, 1986, pp. 142-143).

We can analyze organizational politics in a systematic way by focusing on relations between interests, conflict, and power. Organizational politics arise when managers think differently and want to act differently. This diversity creates a tension that must be resolved through political means. This can be done autocratically (we will do it this way), bureaucratically (we are supposed to do it this way), technocratically (it is best to do it this way), or democratically (how shall we do it?) (p. 148).

The political metaphor encourages us to see how organizational activity is interest-based and to evaluate all aspects of organizational functioning. Organizational goals and leadership style have a political dimension. The model of interests, conflicts, and power provides a practical and systematic means of understanding the relationship between politics and organization and emphasizes the key role of power in determining political outcomes. The political metaphor overcomes this deficiency, placing knowledge of the role and use of power at the center of organizational analysis (p. 195).

Under the influence of a political mode of understanding everything becomes political. The analysis of interests, conflicts, and power easily gives us rise to Machiavellian interpretation that suggests everyone is trying to outwit and outmaneuver everyone else. And rather than using the political metaphor to generate new insights, we often reduce the metaphor to a tool to be used to advance our own personal interests (p. 197).

The Psychic Prison Metaphor: The idea that people create their worlds and then imprison themselves in these worlds has provided a popular theme in social thought and literature. It is explored in Shakespeare's *Othello*, in Melville's *Moby Dick*, and in the cries of alienation that pervade the novels of Beckett, Camus, Kafka, and Sartre. The ideas expressed in these and other works draw upon a long history of social though stretching back to Plato. This received forceful treatment in schemes developed by Freud, Marx, and other radical humanists (p. 365).

Plato was the first to intellectualize the predicament of human beings as prisoners of their thoughts and actions. His allegory of the cave has provided an evocative image that has inspired many to explore the relationship between illusion and reality. The work of Freud, Jung, and various other theorists have developed new attacks on the basic problem, linking the idea that humans become trapped by their preoccupations, images, and ideas with the need for radical critique of this situation (p. 366).

While individuals create their own reality, they often do so in confining and perhaps alienating ways. The images of psychic prison suggest that the enactment, accomplishments, and language games that shape everyday life often serve hidden purposes and can be much more confining and oppressive than typically presumed (ibid.).

Human beings have a knack of getting trapped in webs of their own creation. Administration and politics are psychic phenomena, in the sense that they are ultimately created and sustained by

conscious and unconscious processes, with the notion that people can become imprisoned or confined by the images, ideas, thoughts, and actions to which these processes give rise (p. 199).

Socrates addresses the relations among appearance, reality, and knowledge. The allegory of the cave pictures an underground cave with its mouth open toward the light of a blazing fire. Within the cave are people chained so that they cannot move. They can see only the cave wall directly in front of them. This is illustrated by the light of the fire, which throws shadows of people and objects onto the wall. The cave dwellers equate the shadows with reality, naming them, talking about them, and even linking sounds from outside the cave with the movements on the wall. Truth and reality for the prisoners, rest in this shadowy world, because they have no knowledge of any other (pp. 199-200).

As Socrates relates, if one of the inhabitants could leave the cave, he would realize that the shadows are but dark reflections of more complex reality, and that the knowledge and perceptions of his fellow cave dwellers are distorted and flawed. If he were then to return to the cave, he would never be able to live in the old way, since for him the world would be a vastly different place. Yet, if he were to try and share his new knowledge with them, he would probably be ridiculed for his views (p. 200).

For the cave prisoners, the familiar images of the cave would be much more meaningful than any story about a world they have never seen and would probably regard the world outside the cave as a potential source of danger, to be avoided rather than embraced. The experience of the person who left the cave could thus actually lead the cave dwellers to tighten their grip on their familiar way of seeing (ibid.).

People in everyday life are trapped by illusions, hence the way they understand reality is limited and flawed. By appreciating this, and by making a determined effort to see beyond the superficial, people have an ability to free themselves from imperfect ways of seeing. And as the allegory suggests, many of us often resist or ridicule efforts at enlightenment, preferring to remain in the dark rather than to risk exposure to a new world and its threat to the old ways (ibid.).

According to Freud, the unconscious is created as humans repress their innermost desires and private thoughts. He believed that to live in harmony with one another, humans must moderate and control their impulses, and that the unconscious and culture were thus really two sides of the same coin, giving hidden and manifest form to the repression that accompanied the development of human sociability (Freud, 2018).

Organizations are not just shaped by their environments. Rather, they are also shaped by the unconscious concerns of their members and key players and the unconscious forces shaping the societies in which they exist. Many organizations, for example, have a narcissistic character rooted in sublimated forms of oral eroticism geared to the satisfaction of individual needs. For some, this is expressed in an aggressive individualism where the main organizational and individual values hinge on an ability to gain personal success and to win recognition from others (p. 210).

According to Jung (1968), the human psyche is part of a collective unconscious that transcends the limits of space and time. Jung dematerialized our understanding of the psyche just as Einstein dematerialized our understanding of the physical world (Morgan, 1986, p. 223).

Jung came to see matter and psyche as two different aspects of one and the same thing (Jung, 1968). The physical energy that Einstein saw as underlying all matter came to be parallel in Jung's work by a conception of psychic energy, which, like physical energy, was often open to many transformations through conscious and unconscious (Morgan, 1986, p. 223).

One of the most distinctive features of Jung's analysis is his emphasis on the role of archetypes. Archetypes, which literally means "original pattern" is defined by Jung in a variety of ways and plays critical role in linking the individual t the collective unconscious (Jung, 1968).

At the most basic level archetypes are defined as patterns that structure thought and hence give order to the world (ibid.). Jung's se of archetypes was inspired by Plato's view of images or schemata, and he talks about them in various ways, such as living ideas that constantly produce new interpretations, or as ground plans that give the stuff of experience a specific configuration (Morgan, 1986, p. 223).

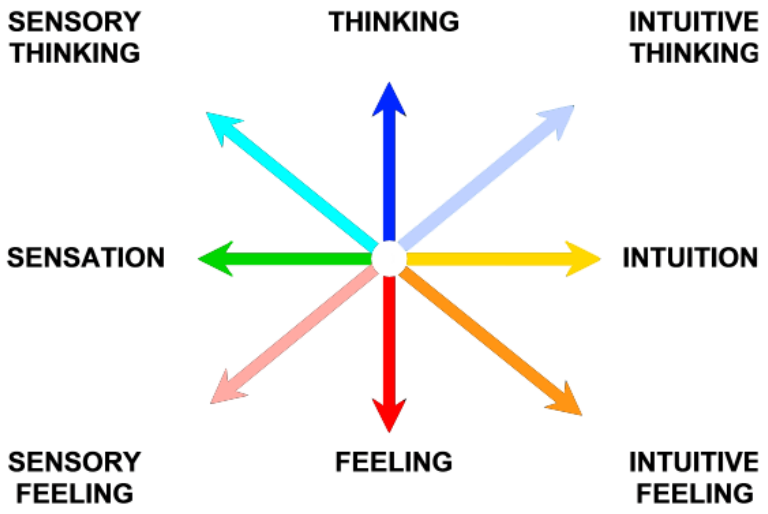
Jung's work has major implications for understanding how people enact organizational reality. Two of the most important are the way Jung encourages us to understand the general relations between internal and external life, and the role which archetypes play in shaping our understanding of the external world (p. 224).

Jung distinguishes two ways of perceiving reality, thought sensation and intuition. He also distinguishes two ways of judging reality by thinking and feeling. These dimensions are often combined to identify different personality types and to demonstrate styles of decision making. This scheme provides a nice illustration of how repressed elements of the psyche may signify unused skill and potential within the human which, if tapped, could contribute much to an individual's ability to cope with problems he faces (Jung, 1968).

Jung suggests that people tend to process data about the world in terms of sense or intuition, and to make judgements in terms of thought or feeling. According to which functions are dominant or in the shadow, we can identify four ways of dealing with the world and of shaping one's reality (ibid.).

Sensory Thinking (ST) individuals tend to be empiricists who sense and think their way through life, making judgements and interpretations based on hard facts and logical analysis. **Sensory Feeling (SF)** individuals also tend to pay a great deal of attention to data derived from the senses but arrive at judgements in terms of what feels right rather than in terms of analysis. **Intuitive Thinking (IT)** individuals tend to work their way through life by thinking about the possibilities inherent in a situation. Their actions tend to be shaped by ideas and insight rather than facts. **Intuitive Feeling (IF)** individuals tend to be guided by a combination of insight and feeling which pays much more attention to values than to facts. When one style of action is dominant, then the other styles occupy background roles. And since each style presents an alternative way of understanding the same situation, opportunities are lost in this imbalance (ibid).

Figure 1 illustrates the Jungian interplay of opposites.



(source: Watchword Personality Test, 2021)

The pattern of organizational life is created and recreated in accordance with the structures found in history of myth and literature. Organizational life can be understood in terms of the relations between fools, magicians, high priests, lovers, and other symbolic characters. We may be able to understand the unconscious significance of much organizational behavior in terms of the great themes that have shaped history. For we are all primitives at heart, reproducing archetypal relations to make sense of the basic dilemmas of life (Morgan, 1986, p. 227).

Examining an organization from the perspective of the psychic prison metaphor we may be able to investigate the hidden and unconscious aspects of interpersonal relations within an organization. As we explore the real situation, we may find that unconscious factors may shape the leaders desire for more control, or we may drive others toward a commitment to looser forms of organization. We may well find that political divisions are ultimately built on unconscious processes. Or, we may find interesting cognitive traps and double binds exerting a major influence on organizational dynamics (p. 327).

Conclusion

Ontological metaphors are cognitive-domain references that define our experiences as if experiences are discrete entities. Once we identify our experiences as entities or substances, we can then refer to them, categorize them, group them, and reason about them. We use ontological metaphors to comprehend events, actions, activities, and states (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980).

Each of us is a container, with a bounding surface and in-out orientation. We project our own in-out orientation onto other physical objects that are bounded by surface. Thus, we view them also as containers with an inside and outside. In understanding this we are creating new means of

thinking about change and of dealing with change. For rather than attempting to deal with the discrete events that contribute to uncertainty and the manifestation of logic, we attempt to deal with the logic itself. In doing so, we begin to shape and guide the forces that now often experience as belonging to an objective reality that appears independent of our own making.

References

Aristotle. (2011). *Politics.* B. Jowett, translator. NY: Cosimo Classics.

Bohm, D. (2003). *The Essential David Bohm*. Lee Nichol (Ed.). London: Routledge.

Dawoody, A. (2003). *The Matriarch as a Leader and the Metaphors of Quantum Theories.* Bloomington, IN: 1st Books.

Freud, S. (2018). *Civilization and its Discontents*. New Delhi: General Press.

Jung, C. (1968). *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*. R. Hull (*translation*). Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Kellert, S. and A. Felthous. (1985). Childhood Cruelty toward Animals among Criminals and Non-Criminals. *Human Relations*, 38(12): 1113-1129.

Kroeber, A. and C. Kluckhohn. (1952). Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions. *Papers. Peabody Museum of Archaeology & Ethnology, Harvard University*, 47(1), viii, 223.

Lakoff, G. and M. Johnson. (1980). *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: university of Chicago Press.

Marx, K. and F. Engels. (2010). *Marx and Engels Collected Works, Volume 3: Karl Marx March 1843-August 1844*. London, UK: Lawrence and Wishart.

Morcol, G. (2000). New Sciences for Public Administration and Policy. In Morcol, G. and L. Dennard (Ed.), *New Sciences for Public Administration and Policy: Connections and Reflections.* Burke, VA: Chatelaine Press.

Morgan, G. (1986). *Images of Organization.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

Overman, S., and D. Loraine. (1994). Information for Control: Another Management Proverb? *Public Administration Review*, 54(2): 193-491.

Overman, S., and D. Loraine. (1996). The New Sciences of Administration: Chaos and Quantum Theory. *Public Administration Review*, 56(5): 487-491.

Pearce, C. (1996). Metaphors for Change: The ALPs Model of Change Management. *Organizational Dynamics*, (24) 23-35.

Pettie, H., and R. Oshlag. (1993). Metaphor and Learning. In A. Ortony (Ed.), *Metaphor and Thought*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Rumelhart, D. (1993). *Some Problems with the Notion of Literal Meanings*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Simon, S. (1947). *Administrative Behavior*. NY: Macmillan.

Watchword Personality Test. (2021). *Jung's Theory of Psychological Types*. Available at: http://watchwordtest.com/watchword/types

Weber, M. (1949). *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*. NY: Free Press.

Wiener, N. (1961). *Cybernetics*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

[i] *Aspects of this article are based on a book published by the author in 2003, entitled "The Matriarch as a Leader and the Metaphors of Quantum Theories."*

.