Many people hold a metaphor that accurately describes their perception of the organization in which they work. The metaphor also determines the way people perceive, remember, and analyze information they receive. However, any single metaphor limits people's perception by blocking and distorting the information encountered. Much of the conflict in the organization is caused by people holding different metaphors, oblivious to the fact that they behave in accordance with their metaphor. They are like people speaking in different languages, but totally unaware of their inability to communicate. This article tackles this problem and offers several suggestions on how to improve internal organization relationships using our current knowledge of metaphors. We believe that our ideas provide yet another perspective on the use of the metaphor for understanding organizational conflict. We believe it constitutes a significant addition to this fascinating field.

We use metaphors to describe an experience or an object graphically. In a metaphor there is an implicit or explicit argument that A is like B. Webster's Dictionary defines a metaphor as "a figure of speech containing an implied comparison, in which a word or phrase ordinarily and primarily used for one thing is applied to another" - thus A is B. This process of comparison exchange and interaction between A and B itself creates a new meaning. It is widely accepted that a metaphor includes, or is a transference of, meaning. In etymological terms, metaphor actually means "transference" - from the Greek metah, meaning "behind," and opherein, meaning to carry.

The organizational metaphor is an image used to describe the organization. For example, there are people who perceive their workplace as a family unit, others as a battlefield, or as a machine, or even as a sinking ship. The organizational metaphor is the pair of spectacles through which members examine the process and events in the organization. Using these glasses, they perceive, interpret, and understand the occurrences in the organization.

METAPHORS AND ORGANIZATIONAL LITERATURE

There are three methods generally used by analysts investigating organizations. The first approach, which deals with the investigation of the formal organization, was developed from classical management theory and tends to use models arising from the traditional managerial perspective. It focuses on practical results and encourages empirical research. The second approach deals with the sociology of organizations and is based on the work of Max Weber. The third, the psychological approach, concentrates on the investigation of the individuals within the organization (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). The use of metaphor as an instrument for analyzing organizations is part of the psychological approach. It is also a sociological tool, because the metaphor serves as a marker that divides the members of the organization into groups and thus affects the process at a macro level.
Analysts concerned with the concept of the organizational metaphor have concentrated their efforts on two particular areas -- organizational culture and organizational climate. These two concepts deal with the ways in which members of the organization give meaning to their environment and the way it influences their behavior. Both the culture and the climate of the organization are determined mainly by the socialization process and the symbolic interaction between group members (Reichers & Schneider, 1990).

When we examine the organizational metaphor from this angle, it is perceived as giving meaning to the environment and as a symbolic expression of the atmosphere and process. According to this approach, the social world is no more than a subjective structure of individuals who are creating a social world of meaning through common language and daily interaction (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). People create their own reality individually or in coordination with others. The same is true of the workplace; people are not merely passive observers, but active partners in the creation of their experience. One of the important ways in which they distinguish and translate the world is through explanatory metaphors, which contain patterns of intention, values, and meaning. In this way, the organization is given meaning by its members (Smircich, 1987).

Researchers working in the field of organizational culture attribute a central meaning to the metaphor, within the organizational culture, not as something that the organization has but, rather, what the organization actually is. According to this approach, the culture is not a separate variable within the organization, but one that includes all aspects of it (Morgan, 1989, 1993; Smircich, 1983a; Weick, cited in Peters & Waterman, 1982). Pondy (1983) made a similar distinction, describing metaphors as "symbolic reality," as contrasted with the "objective reality" of empirical objects and events (p. 159). Thus the use of metaphors in the organizational context occurs naturally and will be picked up by anyone observing the comments and conversation of members (Cleary & Packard, 1992).

For the organizational consultant, work using metaphors is both fascinating and rewarding. When someone is asked to describe a situation using symbols, his imagination is stimulated, and he will begin to think creatively (Barker, 1985). Thoughts and feelings that may be painful to declare will find their mode of expression through illustration; Ortony (1975) calls this "the trait vividness of the metaphor". Thus, instead of describing in detail the fierce competitiveness and conflict in his organization, a worker may refer to it as a battlefield. The climate of suspicion in another organization may "become" a spy ring or a secret police force. In this way, the metaphor allows a complex situation to be described in a single word. As Pondy (1983) points out, this metaphor contains many different components of the organization, which it has combined to create a meaningful identity.

METAPHOR AS SCHEMA

There is insufficient research, either theoretical or empirical, into the impact of the metaphor on the organization. In order to address this problem, we have turned to the literature that examines organizations in terms of their individual schemata. Indeed, one of the more popular definitions of cognitive schema fits the description of organizational metaphor very well. This definition (Brewer & Nakamura, 1984; Fiske & Linville, 1980) describes a cognitive structure that represents knowledge of various types of stimuli, including qualities and connections between qualities.
Schemata help us to organize the massive amount of information with which we are bombarded, to summarize it, interpret it, and understand it. This enables us to feel the control that is so necessary for our psychological well being (Fiske & Taylor, 1991). We believe that we perceive an exact copy of the environment (Fiske & Taylor, 1991). The truth, however, is more complex. Our perception of the world reflects a combination of the environment and our personal contribution, which is a product of our schemata. Schemata enable us to perceive and to identify information that is relevant to them. We also react faster to stimuli associated with such organizational perceptions (Dovidio, Evans & Tyler, 1986; Gartner & McLaughlin, 1983; Klatzky, Martin, & Kane, 1982). Schemata cause a bias in our interpretation of the behavior of the schema target, so the same behavior will be understood differently in terms of different schemata (Brown & Geis, 1984; Darley & Gross, 1983; Duncan, 1976; Langer & Abelson, 1974; Sager & Schofield, 1980; Taylor, Fiske, Etcoff, & Ruderman, 1978).

A concept from the organizational culture that relates to the influence of schemata is the meaning potential. This concept refers to alternative interpretations of an incident on the basis of the environment in which they occurred. For example, one of the studies that examined the impact of schemata on attribution found that a black child who took an eraser from another child was likely to be perceived as more threatening than a white child involved in a similar incident (Sager & Schofield, 1980). In the same way, in an organization using the battlefield metaphor, every normal behavior is likely to be perceived as competitive and aggressive, and even pleasant behavior is likely to be perceived as misleading or implying negative intentions.

An example of meaning potential is given by James, James, and Ashe (1990). They describe Henry, a research assistant to a professor in an academic department. Henry regularly stays at work until late in the evening. This fact can be explained in different ways:

1. Henry would like to make progress at work and achieve tenure, and so he has decided to stay late to work on research.
2. Henry has marital problems, and he avoids his wife by using work as an excuse.
3. Henry works very late as a consultant in order to earn more.
4. Henry is trying to impress his head of department.
5. Henry is workaholic, and he does not know when to stop.
6. Henry's research is full of challenge and demands a great deal of concentrated effort.

These potential explanations are not comprehensive, nor are they mutually exclusive. The probability of accepting one or more of the explanations is a function of the social context in which Henry's behavior is taking place. In addition, the interpretation given to the behavior will depend on the schema held by the observer. This schema will be based on the observer's own life-experience and knowledge of the organizational culture and climate. If, for example, the interpreter - perhaps one of Henry's colleagues - is aware that an Assistant Professor in Henry's department is expected to publish 3-5 articles a year in a highly professional and productive organizational culture, he will choose the first option. However, if he knows that Henry has serious financial difficulties, he might opt for the third explanation. Alternatively, if the observer - let us say the caretaker of the building -- himself has an acrimonious relationship with his wife, he may conclude that the right explanation is second one.
A schema has a significant impact on memory, which it shapes in a way that is most relevant to the schema components. For this reason, it is easy to detect a change in a schema. For example, an individual entering a building for the purpose of introducing efficient crime-prevention methods will notice the bars on the windows, the locks on the doors, the alarm system, and valuable items, such as computers and electronic equipment, that are likely to be stolen. However, on entering the same building, a potential tenant will notice the damp patch on the ceiling and plaster peeling off the walls. Research has shown that people tend to remember only information that is relevant to the schema, at the expense of other information (see, for example, Carlston, 1980; Cohen, 1981; Hastie, 1981; Higgins & Rholes, 1978; Wyer, Srull, & Gordon, 1984). In the same way, the schema or the organizational metaphor can lead to selective perception of the organization in a way that is consistent with its structure.

Another process that contributes to an escalation of the conflict is the attribution bias - that is, that any positive behavior of the group is likely to be attributed to the group, whereas negative behavior is attributed to external causes. Conversely, in the case where an outgroup is concerned, positive behavior will be attributed to external causes, whereas negative behavior will be perceived as coming from internal causes (Fiske & Taylor, 1991).

This bias in the perception of the ingroup and the outgroup causes other judgmental biases - for example, the tendency of ingroup members to believe that forced action toward the outgroup is the most effective way to solve the conflict, whereas a pleasant attitude toward their own members is considered most effective in promoting harmony (Rothbart & Hallmark, 1988). In this way, within a short time the two positions will have become entrenched in their respective positions -- namely, the unrealistically positive perception of the ingroup, together with an unrealistically negative perception of the outgroup and the tendency to react aggressively toward the other group (Rothbart & Hallmark, 1988).

Reed (1990) commenting on Morgan's work, wrote: "Organization theory is transformed into a supermarket of metaphors which its customers can visit to purchase and consume its conceptual wares according to their preference and purchasing power" (p 38). We believe however, that the way in which an individual chooses a metaphor, which he believes will accurately describe his feelings, is not akin to the process of choosing from an array of goods at a supermarket. Rather, it is in fact limited by that individual's personal perceptions and environment. Oswick and Grant (1996) while praising Morgan's scholarship and his great achievement in advancing the study of metaphors, challenge other exponents to initiate innovative and creative ways of looking at the metaphor and thus: "To break Morgan's spell over metaphor" (p. 222). This is our attempt.

If a metaphor is a schema, it follows that other issues relevant to schema are relevant to metaphor as well. One such process is the self fulfilling prophecy.

**SELF-FULFILLING PROPHECY**

When an individual or a group changes its behavior in a way that is consistent with the schema of the perceiver, we call it a "self-fulfilling prophecy" (for a review see Fiske & Taylor, 1991). Many studies have demonstrated this process (for example, see Darley & Fazio, 1980). Briefly, the self-fulfilling prophecy works in the following way: (1) The perceiver holds a schema and a behavior expectation of the target. (2) The perceiver behaves toward the target in a way that accords with this schema and expectation. This perception is transferred through verbal and nonverbal communication (Word, Zanna, & Cooper, 1974). (3) The target (a group or individual)
interprets this behavior as a means for understanding the perception held of it by the source of behavior and reacts according to the message perceived as being sent to it by the source. (4) The source believes that his understanding of the group is correct, when in fact he has determined the group’s behavior in a way that is perceived as being consistent with the initial perception and expectations held by the source (Jussim, 1986; Snyder, 1984). The target (an individual or group) of such a process will encounter tremendous difficulties if he tries to change the original perception, even if he is unclear as to the exact motives of the perceiver. If the perceiver creates a positive schema of the target and behaves according to it, then the target might assume a positive attitude on the part of the perceiver or consider the perceiver to be a nice person. Thinking this, he will behave pleasantly toward the perceiver and thus reinforce the self-fulfilling prophecy process. This process works to promote both positive and negative reinforcement. If the perceiver has a negative schema of the target, he is likely to behave toward the target in a hostile way. The target, in turn, is likely to think that the perceiver is not a nice person and behave accordingly. Here, as in the positive example, the perceiver's schema will be confirmed. It is important to mention that even inconsistent behavior is likely to be distorted and be explained consistently with the schema by means of the attribution bias.

When we talk about organizational metaphor, having a belief that the organization is like a battlefield might lead us to behave accordingly. As a result of this behavior towards other organization members who did not necessarily hold the same metaphor they might adapt the same metaphor. The point is, now, after the self fulfilling process took place in the organization when we will face a battlefield metaphor behavior from other organization members we might take it as conformation to our perception not being aware that maybe a self fulfilling prophecy took place. This might happen with any kind of organizational metaphor and as the organizational member is more dominant in the organization, his metaphor is likely to affect the organization through a process of self fulfilling prophecy to affect the organization.

THE INFLUENCE OF METAPHORS ON THE EFFICIENT FUNCTIONING OF THE ORGANIZATION

Metaphors can play a positive role in the proper functioning and development of the organization. The growth of the social organization depends on a common interpretation of schemata -- among them, the organization metaphor. These schemata are expressed by means of language and symbols that are developed through social interaction (Smircich, 1987). The schema supplies the basis for a united system of meaning that creates cooperation and allows the daily interaction to move fluently, without negotiation of a common interpretation of the tradition, goals, and values of the organization. This, in turn, leads to consistency and clarity of experience and so to the cohesion and common identity that unites and links the members of the organization (Louis, 1983; Smircich, 1983b, 1987). This is one of the characteristics of a successful organization (Morgan, 1989). The stability of the organization depends on the continuity of this mutual understanding among its members. According to Morgan (1989), the need for a common interpretation is especially important today. The modern world is changing quickly, and so there is a great need for well-defined and agreed goals and values. Such a definition will help the organization to cope with change without losing this sense of direction. A common and long-term definition for the goals is created by vision, a clear task, and a shared philosophy, sense of identity, values, symbols, and metaphors (Morgan, 1989).

THE IMPACT OF METAPHORS ON ORGANIZATIONAL CONFLICT
As we have seen, common metaphors among the organization members form the basis for stability and a fluent process in the organization. However, finding common meaning in many areas of the life of the organization may be very difficult and problematic. Managers do not control the development of meaning in the organization; all the members of the organization are partners in this process, and they shape the life of the organization through the interpretations and meaning they attach to their daily experience This often results in a situation in which several schemata or metaphors are operating simultaneously and in contradiction of one another (Smircich, 1987; Smircich & Morgan, 1982). Such a situation can lead to what is known as a "short-circuit in communication" (Smircich, 1987).

Since different metaphors create different perceptions, different interpretations, and different behaviors, it makes it particularly difficult for members to find a common understanding when their interpretation of basic facts and events is so varied. This conflict is likely to escalate further due to a process known as social categorization - a tendency among group members to overestimate the similarity among members of their own group and the differences between the groups involved in the conflict.

A will to effect change in an organization can sometimes lead to conflict because of the meaning given to different metaphors for change within the organization. (Marshak, 1993) suggests four different metaphors of change: (1) fix and maintain; (2) build and develop; (3) move and relocate; (4) liberate and recreate. He argues that the manager has to be acutely aware of the meaning attached to the images he creates. Thus he should talk about building on the past if what he really wants to do is to create a total new future. It is important to bear in mind that each party to the conflict believes that they are seeing the whole picture, when in fact they are seeing only one part of it. The situation is akin to that of the allegory of the six blind people who stood around an elephant and tried to decide what it was. One man held the elephant's trunk and decided that it was a long piece of flexible pipe. His friend, who stood at the side of the elephant, argued that it was undoubtedly a wall. A third man holding the elephant's tail decided it was a piece of rope. The fourth, who felt the rush of air created by the flapping of the elephant's ears, believed he stood near a fan. The fifth, who touched one of the elephant's tusks, decided that it was a pointed stick. And the last, who felt one of the elephant's legs, believed that he felt the trunk of a tree. The result was that the six friends stood around the elephant and argued. This story is an allegory for all those people who are too rigid to change their perspective on the organization. As we saw, any single image can bring distorted perception, rigidity, and conflicts. Metaphors are like filters that emphasize some elements of reality and screen out others (Black, 1962).

How can we cope with the negative influences of organizational metaphor and at the same time utilize their advantages? Conflict may develop between organization members even when there is one common metaphor. If, for example, the dominant metaphor within an organization is one of a battlefield or jungle and this is internalized by the workers, the result is endless conflict, which, in turn, leads to a climate of extreme competition, suspicion, and hatred. This will become part of the organization's culture, values, slogans, goals, norms, heroes, communication, and actions.

Morgan (1989) discusses the metaphor of the organization as an instrument of domination. In this metaphor, managers are like the Pharaohs of ancient Egypt, and the workers like slaves building the pyramids. The organization is a way to fulfill the goals of the minority thorough the work of the majority. As in ancient Egypt, the organization is based on hierarchies that are reflected in a differential system of status, rewards, and privileges. The workforce that forms the majority of the organization is ignored, exploited, and deprived. The management is oblivious to this
exploitation. The metaphor of the organization as an instrument of domination influences the workers' daily interpretation of events, so that, for example, even a good-will gesture from the management will be seen in a negative way. Thus the presentation of a gold watch to a worker on his retirement is perceived by the management as a symbol of loyal service to the organization and by the workers as a symbol of buying their loyalty. In this kind of environment, the workers will agree that the gold watch is an exchange for 35 years of exploitation. Similarly, a manager who goes out of his way to show an interest in his workers - for example, by visiting the shop floor, shaking hands, and talking to workers about their problems - will have his actions interpreted as a manipulative trick (Morgan, Frost, & Pondy, 1983).

Another metaphor suggested by Morgan (1989) is of the organization as a political system. It is easy to see how this metaphor applies to different organizations. Managers frequently talk of their relationship with their workers as one based on power and authority, while workers complain that their managers do not listen to them. Organizations such as governments are using the system as a means for creating and maintaining order. Some organizations are managed in an autocratic way, others work according to written rules and regulations. These organizations are called bureaucratic organizations.

In the technocratic organization, power is achieved through knowledge and expertise. A representative democracy is one in which the organization works by choosing bureaucrats whose activities are decided by their voters. This permission to act is limited in time. There are other types of regimes to be found within organizations, and many are governed by a mixture of regimes. The nature of the conflict in each organization depends on the type of regime operating there. For example, in the democratic organization, unlike the autocratic regime, there is a legitimization of the expression of different opinions, which itself can lead to conflict.

According to the political metaphor, a conflict may develop every time there is a clash of interests. In an organization there are many opportunities for such a clash - for example, conflict over limited resources, status, reward, or promotion, vertical conflicts between management and workers, horizontal conflicts between competing departments and units in the organization. Power is a medium through which conflict is managed and results are achieved, and the sources of power in the hands of organization members will determine who gets what and when.

Despite its negative connotations, it is worth remembering that originally politics was a means of enabling societies to find solutions to their conflicting interests through discussion and negotiation. Thus politics is a means of creating social order and cohesiveness. Conflict plays a major role in the political metaphor because an organized opposition to the ruling power forms part of the rules. This opposition can be a positive factor in that it acts as an instrument for the examination of the regime and as a counter-power that balances it.

A different kind of metaphor is the organization as a machine. From this perspective, there is no place for conflict at all, because the organization is a system functioning automatically and rationally to achieve clear goals. There is an emphasis on common interest, and conflict is perceived as a rare divergent phenomenon that has to be eliminated. Despite the fact that it has no legitimization, conflict is, however, likely to occur. Conflict, struggle, and contradicting interest will always exist, but this struggle and conflict will be held underground and will be expressed in informal conversation and in the way work is performed. Instead of venting his frustration, anger, and disagreement publicly, the worker has to obey; however, he can, for example, sabotage the work or not keep to the timetable.
It is important to realize that certain metaphors held by members of the organization are likely to cause conflict over what to do and when. People will argue sometimes without understanding that their conflict stems from the fact that they hold different metaphors on the organization (Marshak, 1992). Sometimes there is one comprehensive metaphor in the organization; however, the use of this one metaphor creates conflict because it discriminates against one of the groups within the organization. For example, women are unlikely to have the same military or sporting experience or interest as the men with whom they work. They are therefore at a disadvantage when the dominant metaphor is male-oriented, and they simply do not possess the tools to play the game (Cleary & Packard, 1992).

METAPHOR AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR SOLVING CONFLICT

There is some general guidance in the literature dealing with the ideal approach for the industrial consultant and organizational researcher to take when working within the organization. According to Turner (1971), the key to understanding an organization is the degree to which members are aware of their own situation, together with their understanding of their own role and that of the manager, co-workers, and the wider context in which the organization operates. The analyst is then able to amass subjective data given to him by individuals, and using it he builds up a picture of the whole operation. The picture is completed through data collection, observation, reports from informants, and through the analyst's own participation in the organizational environment (Smircich, 1987).

The analyst must continuously be aware that meanings do not exist in objects or action; they are attributed to events by people who perceive and interpret. So the researcher seeking to assess the culture of the organization has to examine the social interaction fully. This will usually involve spending a significant amount of time in the environment, observing and interacting, aiming to learn directly from the organization members. To do so, and to avoid creating a threat to the members of the organization, the researcher has to establish a climate of trust, acceptance, honor, caring, and openness, and build a rapport with the workforce (Smircich, 1987).

In the world of social interaction, there is no single objective answer to such questions as "What is happening here?" or "What does it mean?" The consultant and the organization researcher have to be sensitive to different perspectives and different ways of looking at every situation. They must avoid holding a priori assumptions. They must attempt to get into the shoes of the other person. Just as a therapist tries to achieve empathic understanding in therapy focused on the patient, so the organization researcher must aim to achieve an empathic understanding of the existing organization meanings held by its members. In order to achieve this, the researcher has to show interest, listening skills, and a full acceptance of the message transmitted by the organization members. This awareness must take into account both explicit and implicit messages and any underlying feelings. He must encourage the speaker to develop his thoughts. The researcher has to be able to cope with the high level of "fog," because learning the world of others takes a long time (Smircich, 1987).

During the diagnosis of the organization and culture, the consultant tries to show the organization members the deepest possible meaning of the organization. This, in turn, leads the members to develop a deeper awareness of the behavior dynamics in the organization, leading to insights that will bring about change (Smircich, 1987).
When the process of producing the metaphor takes place in a group form, different metaphors suggested by individuals within the group shed light on different aspects of the conflict. This in itself can prove to be the first stage in dealing with the conflict. Another advantage of using the metaphor is that group members can attribute their conflicts and frustrations to metaphors rather than to the evils of the outgroup. By listening to the symbols others use to explain their position, all parties to the conflict can see the situation from a new perspective and find similarities between their positions that they had not noticed hitherto. Moreover, as each side pounces on the limitations of the others' metaphors, all sides will recognize the need for a wider perspective and a more comprehensive analysis. Gradually the organization members begin to realize that they are in the position of the blind man seeing only one part of the large elephant. Thus the metaphor allows the organization members to initiate the change from within themselves.

When the metaphor that arises out of the intervention process is built with the cooperation of the organization members, they become committed to the process taking place. Even when the consultant supplies the organization metaphor, the organization members can still own the process, because the consultant has only supplied the instrument - they are the ones who give it its individual meaning (Morgan, 1993). Moreover, when the metaphor is built by the workers in conjunction with the analysis this can add immeasurably to the building and cementing of their relationship; this is especially true when they deal with sensitive issues (Barker, 1985).

**PRACTICAL DIAGNOSIS**

The most basic method of beginning research is to ask each organization member to choose the metaphor he believes best represents his organization. He can choose from his imagination or from a sample of pictures. It is important to emphasize that there are no good or bad metaphors and no right or wrong answers; sincerity, however, is crucial.

The consultant can ask the member to choose a metaphor that embodies the whole organization or just one department within it. This can be done in a group or individually. After choosing the motif, the consultant can begin to build on the basic metaphor, asking questions such as: "Where do you see yourself on the battlefield - as a foot-soldier or as a general? What are the advantages and disadvantages of seeing your organization in this way? What metaphor would represent the ideal organization?"

The act of diagnosis is principally the analysis of all the commentary received from individuals and the transformation of it into meaningful data. This is done by taking into account alternative theories and competing explanations. The analyst must be prepared continuously to rework his perspective on the organization. The final analysis will include a thorough examination of all the metaphors that together form a comprehensive perspective of the organization from different angles (Morgan, 1989).

How effective is the metaphor as an instrument for the examination of organizational conflict and for finding solutions? The answer found in the organizational literature is dull and partial. A more comprehensive answer is to be found in the clinical literature. There are, in fact, many similarities between the use of metaphor in the clinical intervention and the intervention of the organizational consultant. This is not entirely surprising when we consider that when people are in state of conflict, they are often aroused, excited, and very sensitive. As a result, they find it difficult to express their feelings and may refuse to talk freely and frankly. This is particularly true of workers in an organization, who may feel frightened to express opinions that contradict those of
their managers. It is in such cases that working through the metaphor is extremely advantageous, because the metaphor is symbolic and not direct. It has the power to show the same situation from many vantage points, some very close and some more distant. It also provides a complete dictionary of words and phrases with which to describe a situation without using terms that would automatically provoke anger and arouse the sensitivities of the protagonists. As a result, it alleviates the difficulty that exists in the direct expression of sensitive issues and feelings and in many cases brings out meanings, understandings, and analysis from deep in the unconscious (Barker, 1985).

Participants may, for example, refer to their organization as a ship; a member may say, for example, that the ship is lost at sea, or that it is sinking, or that the captain puts too much pressure on the sailors. It may be that the ship is motionless and has been for some time and that there is no sign of a breeze to get it moving. Another suggestion may be that there is a hole in the bottom of the vessel, and the sailors ignore it. It would be extremely awkward and very sensitive to describe these facts bluntly without using a metaphor, whereas through the metaphor the meaning is made clear and far less aggression is generated. Moreover, as Barker (1985) points out, the use of metaphors helps the information move from within the unconscious to the conscious.

THE MANAGER VISION AND THE ORGANIZATIONAL METAPHOR

The role of the manager is a pivotal part of the mechanism to solve conflict in the organization. An effective manager has a crucial influence in shaping the culture of the organization (Greiner, 1983). The leader-manager has the power to give meaning and create a mutual vision and common values that will influence the workforce (Burns, 1978; Smircich & Morgan, 1982).

The ability to read the organization from numerous angles is one of the characteristics of successful managers (Morgan, 1989). Such managers are open and flexible and delay immediate judgment until they have a comprehensive perspective of the situation. They know that a new definition of the situation may well arise when the situation is "read" from different perspectives. In fact, the act of reading can create a whole new agenda of possibilities. In comparison, less efficient managers interpret everything from a constant perspective. As a result, they often encounter obstacles they cannot overcome. Their actions and behavior are frequently rigid and create conflict. Their repertoire of skills is so limited that when they are faced with new problems or conflict within the organization, they have no alternative to their traditional methods. These frequently comprise a frantic scramble to create consensus by persuading others to concur with their own opinion on the matter. Rigid managers are trapped in their image of themselves and of the organization (Morgan, 1993).

Bennis and Nanus (1985) investigated leaders who were defined as transformational - that is, those who had the ability to transform people's expectations and the organizational systems. They found that the characteristic that all these leaders have in common is that they have a vision. This vision encompasses many components: the tasks, basic values, organizational culture, behaviors, standards of work, activities, expected action level, the decision-making process, and the ethical standards expected from workers. Among the instruments the transformational leader uses to create the vision and so create the meaning of the organization is the metaphor (Smircich & Morgan, 1982). It transforms the vision into a picture that amounts to more than its components. This makes it easy for the workers to relate to the vision in the most effective way possible. This
picture often seems to be composed in three dimensions, and workers are able to feel it using all their senses. The vision has to build positive interdependence between group members and attempt to break all the obstacles existing between the various groups in the organization. Only when group members are able to see the shared superordinate goal will they cooperate toward its achievement (see Amir, 1976; Sherif, 1966).

One good example of the successful transference of a vision through a metaphor is that of Walt Disney, who expounded his vision of his company using the metaphor of the theater. Thus, the organization was the theater, the workers were transformed into actors, and their work was to act the roles assigned to them; clients were not consumers, but the audience. Creating the vision and transmitting it is a unique part of the role of the transformational leader. The metaphor should form a catalyst to which workers on all the levels can relate. It is important to remember that merely declaring a vision will not create a company with a vision. The manager has to live according to his vision, to be a symbol of his vision, and to use a metaphor that will help the workers to relate to the vision - to see the vision through the metaphor. If the transformational leader is successful, the vision will form the core values of the organization and will be translated into strategy, tactic, policy, and action (Collins & Porras, 1994).

CLOSING WORDS

The ability of the metaphor to act as a catalyst for change is enhanced by the fact that it is produced from the right brain hemisphere (Watzlawick, 1978). Here again organizational psychology is influenced by clinical psychology. In order to show a significant improvement, a patient undergoing psychotherapy must change his method of interpreting information and his emotional attitude, both of which are controlled by the right hemisphere of the brain (Barker, 1985). Intervention using the metaphor causes not only logical insight and rational change but an emotional change through the right brain hemisphere. The metaphor gives us an insight into the way organization members perceive, organize, and interpret the event and process in the organization. This character of the metaphor, together with its many other advantages in the intervention process, makes it a very powerful instrument in solving organizational conflict and effecting other organizational interventions.

It is, however, important to remember that just as we cautioned against managers and workers being rigid in their outlook, the same warning must be given to analysts. For those working in the field, it is often tempting to oversimplify the situation and to choose only one metaphor and impose it on the company. As well as going against the whole collective ethos of this type of work, using a single metaphor can cause the analyst to overlook some very important features of the situation. Analysts must realize that their own insight is limited, as will be their contribution if they impose only their own perceptions on the company. As Morgan (1986) points out, "any realistic approach to organization analysis must start from the premise that organization can be many things at one and the same time" (p. 321).

Work with metaphors has important implications for the diagnosis of the cause of conflict within the organization and in the finding and application of effective solutions. The analyst can use metaphors from the very beginning of his work in the organization. The process can start by using metaphors as a way of removing inhibition and encouraging open communication. This process will itself lead to the expression of new ideas and a variety of opinions. Gradually the work will
become more focused as participants suggest changes that will help the organization to achieve excellence.

In order to implement a successful change within the organization, new ideas should be welcomed, and creative schemes that replace the old methods should be encouraged. Metaphors can be of great help in this process. In using metaphors, it is not only their content that is important, but also the processes of inquiry and interaction that are engendered.

REFERENCES


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