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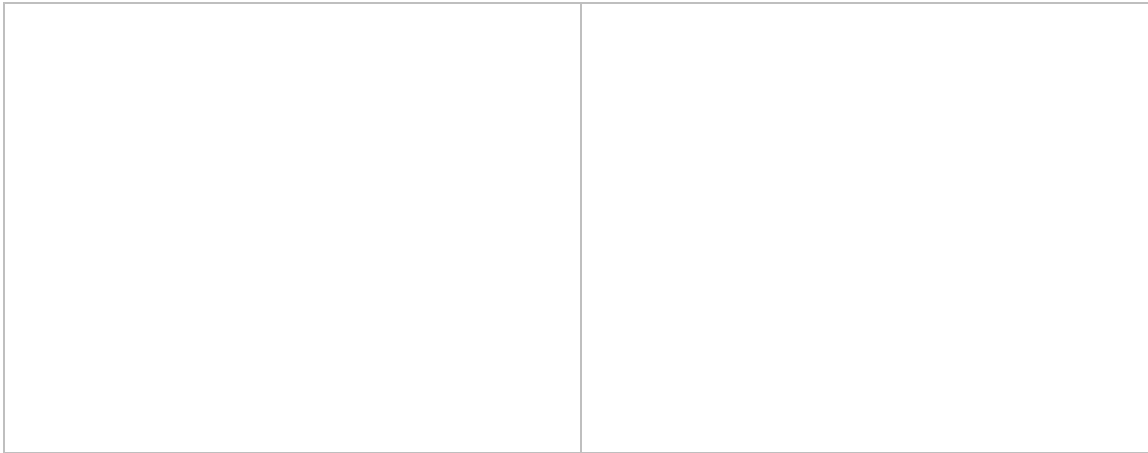
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## **METAPHORS OF MINDFULNESS**

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## **Abstract**

*This critical comparison of Morgan's (2006) 'Images of Organization' and Hanh's (2013) 'Work' considers whether Hanh offers new insights and metaphors. Morgan's legacy resides not in his images but in showing that the dynamism of organisational theorising requires the generation of new metaphors. His images transfer onto Hanh's psychology but largely mediate different messages. This study extends Morgan's imagery and his understanding of the role of metaphor. Morgan's heterogeneous, archetypal metaphors proliferate epistemologies in order to theorise organisations and broaden possible actions, whilst Hanh's more specific, vivid, prescriptive, humanistic, homogeneous and extended metaphors explicate mindfulness across epistemological, (inter)ontological and performative dimensions – mediating the message that mindfulness provides psychological insight to human interconnectedness and guides relationships at work. Hanh's extended metaphors of mindfulness foster a deep psychological and practical understanding of organisational members as ontologically interpenetrated. His mindfulness and metaphors are complementary in that both coherently mediate and realise awareness of this.*

## **Introduction**

This article critically discusses the metaphorical discourse of Thich Nhat Hanh's (2013) book 'Work' against the background of organisational perspectives on metaphors, in particular Gareth Morgan's (2006 [1986]) IoO ('Images of Organization'). As the texts do share a fundamental common ground, heavily relying on metaphors to help organisational members to make sense of their workplace experience, a comparative analysis of Morgan's and Hahn's findings aims to stimulate a critical debate of the comprehensiveness and generalisability of Morgan's (2006) organisational images. Can these images do justice to a cultural and organisational perspective that Morgan did not consider? Which new insights and metaphors does the study of Hanh's

(2013) metaphorical discourse on Buddhist mindfulness at work provide? Following the analysis of Hanh, we extend Morgan's imagery and understanding of the role of metaphor, providing empirical support for the need for new metaphors to improve relationships at work. Doing so, our article helps managers to understand how metaphor can be used to comprehend and enhance workplace relationships. Given the focus on critically debating the usefulness of Morgan's eight images and whether we need new ones, a discussion of organisational metaphors per se and a revisiting of IoO are both beyond the scope of this article. With regard to mindfulness traditions, be they Buddhist or secular adaptations, the current study limits itself to Hanh as one highly influential thinker.

IoO illustrates how evocative metaphors facilitate different ways of theorising organisations. For example, Davis, Menon and Morgan (1982) explain how researchers use images to shape accounting theory and practice. Morgan (2011) himself sees his primary contribution as expounding the epistemological implications of understanding through images and theories that are simultaneously insightful and distorting. Scholars concur that he advanced organisational studies by showing how metaphors construct theory and method (Jermier and Forbes 2011). Thus, Morgan's lasting contribution is not his metaphoric products but his explication of the creative process of metaphoric thinking (McCourt 1997). However, Morgan (2006, 343) possibly goes too far in asserting that 'organization and management theory is no more than a domain of extended metaphor', given that literal language also has epistemological value and it can transform and develop prior metaphorical insights (McCourt, 1997). Furthermore, as the current article will show, metaphor does more than theorise organisations.

Alvesson (2010) argues that one root metaphor cannot capture everything in complex reasoning. Indeed, different metaphors are needed to understand organisational phenomena (Morgan 1980) as social reality is not concrete, certain or deterministic, and hence different approaches to social research are necessary (Morgan 1983a). If metaphors are not to imprison organisation theory, theoretical and methodological pluralism should allow the development of new perspectives and paradigms (Morgan 1980). All theories both illuminate and hide and 'different metaphors give rise to different theories of organization and management' (Morgan 2006, xi) and therefore the aim of IoO is not to present an exhaustive account of every conceivable organisational metaphor. Instead, the book invites readers to explore their own metaphors (Morgan 2011), intending to 'open dialogue and extend horizons rather than to achieve closure around an all-embracing perspective' (Morgan 2006, 8). Consequently, IoO does not

address several metaphors that have a strong case for inclusion: for example, we can view organisations through the perspectives of gender and race, media, text/discourse, and economic or legal systems (Morgan 2011).

The current article adds to this list by examining the metaphorical discourse on mindfulness of Thich Nhat Hanh, the Vietnamese Buddhist leader of the ‘Community of Interbeing’ (‘Interbeing’ refers to interconnected, interpenetrated and interdependent beings). Hanh is a very prominent voice in ‘Engaged Buddhism’ (a phrase that he himself coined), “a contemporary form of Buddhism that engages actively yet non-violently with the social, economic, political (...), and ecological problems of society” (King 2009, 1). The ‘Community of Interbeing’ understands itself as a network of people who practice Buddhist mindfulness in the particular interpretation conceived by Hanh. In 1966 Hanh travelled from Vietnam on a peace mission to the United States and Europe and was subsequently exiled. In 1982, he founded Plum Village in France (plumvillage.org) as the main community centre for his activities. He currently still lives in France with the Plum Village community, but continues to travel worldwide, explaining how Buddhist mindfulness can enhance relationships.

As a Buddhist teacher, Hanh draws heavily on his own Vietnamese Zen - Lam Te and Lieu Quan (Rinzai) - tradition as well as on early Pāli and subsequent Theravāda philosophy and meditation traditions.<sup>i</sup> In his teachings, Hanh is rooted in the contemporary, mainstream, and modernist Buddhist interpretation of mindfulness as ‘present-centred’ and ‘non-judgmental’.<sup>ii</sup> He stresses the quality of mindfulness meditation as reducing mindlessness by cultivating impartial empathy with others and, ultimately, overcoming ‘ego’. In the Buddhist traditions, a central tenet is the realisation that all worldly (‘saṃsāric’) experiences are impermanent and therefore painful (‘suffering’, Sanskrit: *duḥkha*). The reason for this experience is the clinging to the notion of a separate, permanent Self. Buddhist philosophy juxtaposes this view on human identity with its notion of no-self (*anātman*)<sup>iii</sup> and Buddhist methods, such as the practices of merit-making (*punya-sambhāra*) through generosity (*dāna*) and, most of all, meditation techniques aim to break down the artificial construct of a core self, the ego, and realise ‘enlightenment’ (awakening, *bodhi*) that is trans-egoic and free of all disturbing emotions (*kleśas*).

From the inception of Buddhism, metaphors (*rūpaka*) and similes (*upamā*)<sup>iv</sup> have played a crucial role throughout the history of Buddhist thought. Key concepts of Buddhist teaching (*dharma*), such as *nirvāṇa* (‘extinction’), are actually metaphors (Hwang 2006) and a contextual hermeneutics of metaphorical discourses<sup>v</sup> prominently shapes Buddhist thought. Given the

metaphorical nature of core Buddhist concepts, it is unsurprising that allegories and extended metaphors have been used in Buddhist thought throughout the ages. The usage of extended metaphors is particularly obvious in Ch'an/Zen Buddhism (Vietnamese: *thiền*), Hanh's primary tradition, particularly in the context of *kōans* (meditational riddles), many of which can be interpreted as extended metaphors (see e.g. McRae [2000, 56]). Traditional Zen utilises *kōans* for *kenshō*: recognising one's own Buddha nature.

Hanh uses extended metaphors as interbeing *kōans*: mediating mindfulness, interconnectedness and acting/relating in an enlightened way. His neologism 'interbeing' (Hanh 1988, 68) is the central theme in his thinking (in Buddhist philosophy, the notion of a separate individual being ultimately lacks independent existence and value). With this term, Hanh explains our interconnectedness: '...the boundary between ourselves and the other is not real' (1992b, 62–63) and so 'all is one and one is all' (2009, 94) and because 'we see ourselves everywhere, and we see our life everywhere. That is why we go to help all living phenomena...' (1992b, 62). He metaphorises interbeing as a tree's interconnected leaves (1998), the left and right hand helping each other (1992a, 38), individual waves on water (1993), within one 'boundless ocean of reality',<sup>vi</sup> in which we are not islands - and therefore we should help all living beings (1992a, 61).

Hanh's prominent use of metaphors illustrates their importance in mediating religious thought and narrative. They are the pertinent domain of the 'mythic or narrative dimension' of religion (Smart 1996) and Buddhist Studies have increasingly focused attention on them. Deegalle (2006, 16), following Fernandez (1986, 8), defines metaphors in religious discourse as 'strategic predications that act as tools of persuasion and motivate by leading to the performance, in the Buddhist case, of good deeds.' Metaphors are salient to communicating spiritual experience, as they can erode barriers between religious and political spheres of action, and leaders use them 'to connect personal inner-visions with outer social realities' (Charteris-Black 2007, 1).

In the next two sections, we introduce mindfulness and explain the relationships between it, metaphor, epistemology and (inter)ontology (we do not use the word 'ontology' to refer to or imply the notion of a separate individual being; for Hanh, individual mindfulness is prerequisite to awareness of human interconnectedness). Thereafter, the article explains the research methodology, presents the findings, and ends with a discussion and conclusions.

## **Mindfulness**

Mindfulness is a multidisciplinary and complex term. In Buddhist Studies, it refers to meditative practices that focus on and develop states of psychophysical and mental awareness, which include intercorporeal, relational and trans-egoic awareness (what Hanh calls ‘interbeing’).

In early Buddhism, mindfulness (*sati* in Pāli) is both a function of mind and an important Buddhist practice (Kuan 2008, 1). The most authoritative and influential description of mindfulness in the Theravāda Buddhist traditions is found in the early Buddhist *Discourse on the (Four) Foundations of Mindfulness*<sup>vii</sup> (the Pāli canon version of this discourse has two parallels in the Chinese canon). Hanh (2006) provides an English translation of all three extant versions of the discourse with a commentary that details his own understanding of the Buddhist tradition.

With reference to the present study, Hanh defines mindfulness as ‘awareness and it also means looking deeply’ (2006, 9). For him, mindfulness means ‘keeping one’s consciousness alive to the present reality’ (1976, 11) although nowhere does he condone mindlessness. Hanh affirms the link with practice; ‘mindfulness must be engaged. Once there is seeing, there must be acting’ (1991, 91). While supporting the idea that individual mindfulness supports organisational mindfulness, he does not really address how it is organised. Rather, he follows core teachings of Buddhist philosophy by asserting the interrelationship between awareness, human interconnectedness and relations - epistemology, inter-ontology and performativity.<sup>viii</sup>

According to Buddhist philosophy, due to our fundamental unenlightened state of experiencing reality (ignorance, *avidyā*), we artificially feel separated from the whole in a subject/object dualism. Once the stiff boundaries of the ego are relaxed, non-discrimination between self and other can gradually emerge. Thence, Buddhist ‘knowing’ expresses itself in active compassion and empathy; and the application and, reciprocally, performance of compassion becomes dialectically instrumental for the overcoming of ego, ignorance and suffering.

Hanh’s (1988) approach is salient to the enhancement of a cohesive organisational culture. For example, he advocates, as a mindfulness technique, ‘becoming the other person’. Utilising the technique of metaphorised interbeing at the workplace, colleagues can learn to shift their orientation towards to the co-worker and the work community and experience a fulfilling sense of connection through mutual discernment and patient compassion. In practical terms, this could enhance teamwork, shared decision making, collaboration, and converting interpersonal conflict into a dialogue about the contested issues. In ‘Work’, Hanh (2013) shows how central ‘interbeing’ mindfulness is at both an individual and an organisational level. For Hanh, empathy, understood as deep listening and loving communication should become instrumental for mindful

organisations that strive to develop alternatives to competitiveness, and he discusses how employees can find workplace happiness through understanding, love, and letting go.

Theravāda scholars criticise certain minor aspects of Hanh's interpretation of Buddhist mindfulness as historically inaccurate and influenced by Mahāyāna.<sup>ix</sup> Notwithstanding such debates, in practical terms, Hanh's mindfulness teaching appears to be an authentic, contemporary, yet slightly modernist version of this central early Buddhist meditational technique. Buddhist modernism (McMahan 2008) and the commodification of spirituality in late-capitalist neoliberalism globally mediate and popularise mindfulness, in secular terms, as techniques of individual and trans-individual well-being and, in terms of business and organisation, effective functioning<sup>x</sup> with multiple appropriations, applications and transformations, notably in the sciences and psychology.<sup>xi</sup>

In the field of social psychology, Langer (1989, 138) defines mindfulness as 'active information processing'. As Brummans, Hwang, and Cheong (2013, 347) note, Langer's concept of mindfulness differs significantly from Buddhist concept(s) by focusing on reducing *mindlessness* rather than cultivating *mindfulness*. Contrastingly, Glomb, Duffy, Bono and Yang (2011, 120) define mindfulness as 'nonjudgmental attention to and awareness of internal and external stimuli'.<sup>xii</sup> They conclude that both approaches focus on awareness and attention but diverge in what to do with observations: Buddhists usually claim to observe without judgment, while Langer advises categorising and generating distinctions, an approach that has partially influenced Weick, Sutcliffe, and Obstfeld's (1999) definition of collective mindfulness. In the social psychology literature, mindfulness is generally not seen simply as a cognitive process but involves the whole individual, being wakeful, situated and involved in the present context through drawing novel distinctions, leading to heightened sensitivity to one's environment, greater openness to new information, new categories of perception, and better awareness of multi-perspectival problem solving (Langer and Moldoveanu 2000). In contrast, mindless behaviour involves reliance on past distinctions, so that routines govern behaviour, irrespective of current context (Langer and Moldoveanu 2000). Mindlessness is not just minimal information processing but a state of being that may have behavioural consequences (Langer 1992a). The mindless use of language allows us to 'unwittingly construct our interpersonal world while believing we are only accurately reflecting it' (Langer 1992b, 324).

Dane and Brummel (2013) assert that while mindfulness research has burgeoned in several fields, organisational scholarship has given it relatively little consideration and there has been



very little empirical research. Although mindfulness originated as an individual concept, it has since evolved into an organisational phenomenon that builds upon routinised action through questioning it in complex and unpredictable settings (Jordan, Messner and Becker 2009). Workplace mindfulness is a unique state of consciousness in terms of present moment orientation and attentional breadth (Dane 2011) and is ‘the degree to which individuals are mindful in their work setting’ (Dane and Brummel 2013, 105). In organisational mindfulness, diverse perceptual and cognitive processes interrelate and ‘induce a rich awareness of discriminatory detail and a capacity for action’ (Weick, Sutcliffe, and Obstfeld 1999, 88). In mindful organising,

small failures have to be noticed (preoccupation with failure) and their distinctiveness retained rather than lost in a category (reluctance to simplify). People need to remain aware of ongoing operations if they want to notice nuances that portend failure (sensitivity to operations). Attention also is crucial for locating pathways to recovery (commitment to resilience) and the expertise to implement those pathways (deference to expertise) (Weick and Sutcliffe 2006, 516).

Ray, Baker and Plowman (2011) offer empirical support for these five dimensions of organisational mindfulness, which Weick and his colleagues (Weick et al. 1999; Weick and Sutcliffe 2001, 2006) consistently espouse.

Ashforth and Fried (1988) argue that scripts mindlessly enact much organisational behaviour. Mindlessness is ‘characterized by reliance on past categories, acting on ‘automatic pilot,’ and fixation on a single perspective without awareness that things could be otherwise’ (Weick et al. 1999, 90). Mindful and less-mindful approaches can complement each other, although there are implicit normative claims in the theories and mindfulness entails opportunity costs (Levinthal and Rerup 2006). Dane (2011, 1013) concurs that ‘mindfulness can prove either beneficial or costly from a task performance standpoint.’ It helps organisations to notice issues, process them carefully, and detect and address problems. However, mindfulness is both demanding and difficult, and both it and mindlessness can both help or harm organisations (Rerup 2005). Nevertheless, mindfulness is an important topic as there is ‘support for a positive relationship between workplace mindfulness and job performance’ (Dane and Brummel 2013, 105).

From the short literature review above it has become clear that secular academic conceptualisations of mindfulness indeed appear to be relatively convergent, but maybe not as consistently as Dane (2011) postulates. That notwithstanding, mindfulness research in the

psychological and organisational literature appears to be only just beginning to engage with Buddhist understandings of mindfulness and their implications for mindfully organising (e.g. Weick and Putnam 2006; Brummans et al. 2013).

### **Metaphor and mindfulness: epistemology and (inter)ontology**

This section firstly examines the epistemological and ontological dimensions of metaphor and then establishes how both the trope and Buddhist mindfulness can integrate these dimensions.

Morgan's (1983b) epistemological stance is that knowledge is not foundational but that diverse knowledges possess some merit. For him, research is a creative process, in which scientists view the world metaphorically, filtering and structuring their perceptions (Morgan 1980). He focuses on metaphor because it constructs theory (Morgan 1980) by turning<sup>xiii</sup> our understanding in different directions (Morgan 1983b), in an innovative process of imaginisation (Morgan 1993). The trope creates new words and transfers meaning from one situation to another: Morgan (1980) illustrates this with reference to the meaning of 'organisation', which has altered over time from a biological sense to the process of organising and then to the current depiction of a social institution.

Moreover, all metaphors are ontological (Lakoff and Johnson 1980), although the most obvious ontological metaphors (those that best concretise abstractions) connect with our experiences and deal rationally with them. For example, personification metaphors help us to understand and relate to phenomena in human terms. Similarly, encounters with physical objects, particularly our bodies, generate a range of ontological metaphors for perceiving experiences and motivating actions (Lakoff and Johnson 1980).

Boje, Oswick, and Ford (2004, 576) assert that 'language and discourse are both epistemological knowing and ontological being in material practices of talking and inscribed texts.' We concur with the view that metaphors have value both conceptually (Cornelissen, Kafouros, and Lock 2005) and ontologically, in constructing identities (Alvesson 2010). Metaphor is not only cognitive but also makes things ontologically present (Caicedo 2011), creating reality (Lakoff and Johnson 1987), and helping us to know being through understanding it in more familiar terms (Jacquette 2002).

Morgan (1996) likewise asserted that metaphors are both epistemological (in framing our view of the world) and ontological (by belonging to the realm of being); its ontological dimension is in speaking and writing, which gives form to the metaphorical mode of experience. The trope is apt for discussing organisations because ‘...ontologically, organizations are multidimensional, socially constructed realities’ (Morgan 2011, 467) and hence it is appropriate that organisations are known in that way, through a pluralist and relativist epistemology, open to multiple conceptualisations of complexity, attained through multiple perspectives.

Despite Morgan’s statements, Oswick, Keenoy and Grant (2002, 294) argue that Morgan's ‘primary analytical focus is on the functionality of metaphor: what metaphor *does*’ and that scholars of Morgan's work have done so from within the same frame;

they concentrate on the epistemological rather than ontological aspects of metaphor. Thus, while Morgan advocates the application of metaphors to generate multiple perspectives on organizational phenomena, his conceptualization of the role and cognitive status of metaphor is decidedly one sided. In short, we are presented with many ways of thinking about organizations but only one way of thinking about metaphors.

Unfortunately, Oswick, Keenoy and Grant (2002) do not proceed to explore ontology in metaphor, choosing instead to examine other tropes. Moreover, in view of what Morgan actually says about the ontological nature of metaphors, they appear to formulate a one-sided judgement. Accordingly, Oswick, Keenoy and Jones (2003, 136) subsequently alter the final sentence of the above citation to ‘in short, it seems that within the metaphor literature we are presented with many ways of thinking about organizations, but only one way of thinking about metaphors. This is not a criticism of Morgan. It is a criticism of Morgan's critics.’ This re-versioning is necessary, as the first citation is an inaccurate critique of Morgan. Despite their correction, Oswick, Keenoy and Jones (2003, 137) proceed to repeat the earlier critique of Morgan: that his commentators have simply followed his frame; ‘addressing Morgan's view of what metaphors do. In effect, they have concentrated on epistemological rather than ontological questions’, asserting that ‘we need to question Morgan's taken for granted assumptions about what a metaphor is and how it works.’ They criticise Morgan’s approach as being more about mediating meaning and less about generating new perspectives, and from this they develop their general critique of metaphor, which they see as communicating understanding, although as ‘primarily a vehicle for conveying new ways of thinking rather than a means through which they are developed’ (Oswick, Keenoy and

Jones 2003, 143). Consequently, they downgrade metaphor from its role in effecting insight to be an effect of insight.

IoO is based on the idea that metaphors are wrapped up with ontology and epistemology (Jermier and Forbes 2011). Discourse, epistemology and ontology are not discrete phenomena but interrelated facets of our experience of organisation (Keenoy, Oswick and Grant 2000), although this view has not been universally held. Lakoff and Johnson (1999, 94) assert that, for the Greek philosophers, ‘knowledge that worked was knowledge of Being...There was no split between ontology (what there is) and epistemology (what you could know), because the mind was in direct touch with the world’ whereas Descartes ‘opened a gap between the mind and the world...The mind, separate from the body and the world, could not be directly in touch with the world’. However, the notion that the mind is separate from the body is itself metaphorical (Lakoff and Johnson 1999) and alternative metaphors can reconnect them. Metaphor can reconnect epistemology and ontology in that we come to *know* something differently by saying that it *is* something else.

Mindfulness can also bridge epistemology and ontology. Meditation techniques can cultivate the focus of attention and thereby enhance a sense of being present (Lakoff and Johnson 1999). Indeed, Buddhist philosophy intertwines epistemology and (inter)ontology: ‘the nondifference of object from mind’ implies ‘an abandonment of the subject-object duality’;

So when I say that the consummate nature is the nature a thing is seen to have when it is completely understood, I use an epistemological entree into an ontological insight - things as they really are are empty of the subject-object duality and are empty of any real distinction from the mind through which they are imagined. Likewise, when we characterize the ontology of the imagined nature, we approach it through consideration of the way things appear to consciousness. This interpenetration of epistemological and ontological concerns is unavoidable... (Garfield 2001, 160).

Brien (2002, 93) concurs that ‘...one who lives in the awareness of 'Emptiness' is experientially aware of the ontological interconnections with the other person; and is aware that in a sense one is the other person.’ In other words, mindfulness leads to the realisation that the notion of a separate self is hollow, without independent existence, as it comprises of other elements that are not self. One who is thus aware experiences another’s suffering as one's own, causing a compassionate concern to alleviate it (Brien 2002).

For contemporary Engaged Buddhist thinkers such as Hanh and Loy, the lack of individual satisfaction and social suffering (*duḥkha*) interconnect. The crucial link is provided by the abovementioned central notion of Buddhist philosophy: the no-self (*anātman*, Pāli *anattā*), which states that human identity is characterised by the absence (lack) of any inherent core, essence, soul or self (Loy 2008, 15–23). Loy states that there is a ‘sense of lack’ when the realisations dawn upon us that ‘our sense of self is an ungroundable construct’ (2003, 27). Selfish pursuits such as power, wealth and prestige and popularity usually become substitutions for meaning, causing social suffering in the process (Loy 2000, 2003). Loy (2003, 35) sees mindfulness as the answer to the experience of lack and our subsequent egoism: by becoming aware of our compulsion to react to the sense of lack, we can stop the very craving (*trṣṇā*) to fill the hole. Through accepting the lack and letting go of the craving it creates, the reason for gap-filling egoism disappears. Loy (2003 2008) uses this as the foundation of his Buddhist non-dual social theory.

Mindfulness can develop an awareness of human interconnectedness and thereby it can enhance organisational culture. The following section explains the methodology that identifies how Hanh's (2013) extended metaphors mediate his mindful approach to relationships at work, which privileges members' ontological interconnectedness.

### **Research methodology**

This study critically examines the comprehensiveness and generalisability of Morgan's (2006) images. We enquire whether Morgan's images do justice to one of the cultural perspectives that Morgan had not considered. Specifically, can Hanh's (2013) metaphorical discourse on Buddhist mindfulness at work provide new insights and metaphors? Our study critically compares Morgan's (2006) IoO and Hanh's (2013) book ‘Work’, using the following research methodology.

We select Hanh because he is arguably one of the most influential contemporary transnational Buddhist teachers and a global figure in socially engaged Buddhism (King 2009). We also concentrate on him because of his predominant use of metaphor and the distinctive way in which he uses the trope in comparison with Morgan. The study focuses on Hanh's (2013) ‘Work’, given its unique metaphorical discourse on mindfulness at work, which sets his approach apart from other modern Buddhist thinkers who have also addressed issues of work, management and organization, such as, for example, Tibetan (Nyingma) Buddhist master Tarthang Tulku (1978, 1994) and the Zen-Buddhist Economist Inoue (1997).

Both the research and the metaphorical discourse it studies are ‘ontologically constructivist and epistemologically interpretive’ (Yanow 2006, 6). Reflecting on IoO, Morgan (2011, 466) says that he ‘framed the whole book within the context of a specific metaphor – the idea that one can ‘read’ organization as if it were a kind of living text.’ To detect alternative approaches to metaphor, we step outside of Morgan’s frame through an inductive analysis of his metaphors (Palmer and Dunford 1996) that studies their meanings within their linguistic context (Cornelissen, Oswick, Christensen and Phillips 2008). Our inductive analysis of Hanh’s metaphors precedes their critical comparison with those of Morgan.

We compared Morgan’s (2006) analysis of organisational images with our own analysis of Hanh’s (2013) ‘Work’. Ricoeur’s (1971) metaphor of text also suggests that we employ hermeneutical method (Morgan 1980). Both our research method and our findings have hermeneutics at their centre, in that we apply hermeneutical method to Hanh’s metaphorical discourse, which interprets the meaning and application of mindfulness at work. This is commensurate with two key dimensions of hermeneutical theory: interpreting a text and understanding what interpretation is (Palmer 1969). Hermeneutics is both an exegetical method and part of the nature of human sciences themselves: ‘(1) inasmuch as their object displays some of the features constitutive of a text as text, and (2) inasmuch as their methodology develops the same kind of procedures as those of...text-interpretation’ (Ricoeur 1971, 529).

Hermeneutics has a long history in Christian theology, where it is used to recapture authorial intention through textual analysis (Protestant theologians are especially keen to unearth the message of Jesus beneath the encrustations of millennia of subsequent Church teaching in order to determine its original meaning and modern relevance). However, hermeneutics itself has undergone a reinterpretation over time, moving beyond text: the original concern with ascertaining authorial intention expands to a comprehensive epistemology and philosophy of interpretation (Prasad 2002), so that it now ‘asserts the universal claim that all human understanding is interpretive’ (Hoy 1992, 111). Consequently, hermeneutics applies not only to the interpretation of documents but is also used for investigating macro-level organisational phenomena (Prasad 2002).

While this study focuses on Hanh’s (2013) ‘Work’ against a critical evaluation of Morgan’s (2006) IoO, we also examine their whole outputs in order to appreciate both authors’ philosophies and approaches to metaphor. Applying hermeneutical method, we analyse and code the metaphors in Hanh’s (2013) 120-page book, critically comparing it with Morgan’s (2006) IoO, and then we

contextualise the evaluation within their whole works; a breadth of analysis that provides more reliability to identified metaphors (Pragglejaz Group 2007). This comprehensive approach takes account of the thought of both thinkers as a whole (Madison 1988), thus striving ‘for the greatest degree of familiarity with the data to be interpreted’ by ‘becoming aware of the greatest variety of them to determine what is representative and seeing through the easy meanings’ (Deetz 1982, 144).

We apply the rule of thematic unity (Kets de Vries and Miller 1987) to identify unity amongst disparate expressions (Mercier 1994) within Hanh's discourse, until the interpretation provides a cohesive unit, with a mutual enrichment of meaning between texts and the overall pattern (Alvesson and Skoldberg 2000). The interpretation eventually achieves pattern matching – a fit that reveals repetition (Kets de Vries and Miller 1987) – by identifying core themes (mindlessness, mindfulness, here-and-now, transforming, [non]thinking, feelings, interbeing, relationships at work, and outcomes). We also apply the rule of multiple function (Kets de Vries and Miller 1987) to discover the different purposes of the extended metaphors (the mediation of epistemology, [inter]ontology, and performativity).

Specific procedures for metaphor analysis informed our analysis. Firstly, we followed the Pragglejaz Group's (2007) metaphor identification procedure by reading Hanh's (2013) ‘Work’ to develop a solid and broad understanding of his philosophy of mindfulness in the workplace. Next, we determined each lexical unit's meaning within its particular context, subsequently establishing if it has a more basic contemporary meaning in other contexts. Where there is a more basic meaning in other contexts than the given context, we consider whether the contextual meaning contrasts with the basic meaning but can be understood in comparison with it, in which case it is marked as metaphorical. We note source words as older and more basic, physical, concrete and precise than their target. The researchers identify metaphor where we understand a word/phrase beyond the literal meaning within the context, where the literal meaning stems from a source of physical experience, and where the meaning transfers to a target (Schmitt 2005).

Then we also followed Kimmel's (2012) steps for analysing metaphoric discourse. The target area is limited to the purpose of the study in that we only code metaphors (we ignore the few similes that are present). We identify metaphor where a vehicle-word creates tension with a topic term. Then we group metaphors into conceptually similar sets (e.g. ‘interbeing’) and make sense of them through an overall narrative formula, reconstructing metaphor coherence through configuring the tropes into a storyline that conveys Hanh's overall message. The process ends

with an analysis of the thematic relevance of each set (epistemology, [inter]ontology, and performativity) and their discourse function (highlighting how Hanh’s philosophy enhances relationships at work). We now present the findings and then analyse them in the subsequent discussion.

**Findings: metaphors in Hanh’s (2013) ‘Work’**

Hanh metaphorises our working experience as part of our presence in reality, characterised by change and suffering (conditioned reality: *samsāra*, in Buddhist terms). Although thoroughly grounded in Buddhist thought and metaphorical discourses, he mainly uses his own metaphors in ‘Work.’ They cluster into nine themes (mindlessness, mindfulness, being here-and-now, (non)thinking, managing feelings, transforming, interbeing, relationships at work, and consequent outcomes). The central theme is mindful relationships at work and all the other themes lead to it. Drawn together, they provide a coherent narrative: we should not be mindless at work but mindfully aware of the here-and-now, so that we can manage our thoughts and feelings, and transform and be at one with ourselves and others, in order that we can develop good relationships at work with positive outcomes. Whilst the storyline does not appear in this particular linear format, it is evident when we review the chapters together. Extended metaphors develop each theme with reference to epistemology/(inter)ontology/performativity; mindfulness provides insight to (inter)being and guides action/relating to colleagues in an enlightened way. Table 1 provides a concise summary of selected thematic examples of Hanh’s extended metaphors. (Appendix 1 provides full details that readers can peruse as a data supplement).

**Table 1. Thematic examples of Hanh’s extended metaphors, which explicate (inter)ontological, epistemological and performative implications of mindfulness**

Theme	Metaphor	Extended Metaphor		
		(Inter)ontology	Epistemology	Performativity
Mindlessness	Machine on automatic pilot.	Do not become a machine.	Mindlessness.	Regain self-control.
Mindfulness	In cold room,	Cold air becomes	Mindfulness.	Warmth radiates &



	radiator's waves of warm air do not fight but embrace cold air.	warmer.		embraces.
Here & now	Go home to the here & now.	We have more than enough to be happy now.	Recognise existing conditions of happiness.	Be content.
Transforming	Good gardener uses wilted flowers, broken branches, weeds, grass, fallen leaves.	Nurturing & transforming ourselves.	Good gardener knows how to transform decay into nourishment.	Gardener transforms decay into rich compost to nourish trees & flowers.
(Non)thinking	Traffic jams & red traffic lights as bells of mindfulness.	Rest in present moment.	Stop thinking.	Slow down.
Feelings	Mother & baby.	Baby calms.	Recognise feelings.	Embrace feelings.
Interbeing	Rose consists of non-rose elements (e.g. rain & soil).	Rose not alone. Whole cosmos produces rose.	Mindfulness provides insight of interbeing.	Be one with others.
Workplace relationships	Boat carries tons of rocks.	Pain becomes lighter. Community	Collective energy of mindfulness.	Not sink in ocean of suffering.

	Community embraces us.	buoys us up.		
Outcomes	Art bears signature.	Good art bears signature.	If right thinking.	Compassionate speech/actions.

**TABLE 1. Thematic examples of Hanh’s extended metaphors, which explicate (inter)ontological, epistemological and performative implications of mindfulness**

The first metaphor, of **KINGS/QUEENS/GOVERNORS**<sup>xiv</sup> (Hanh 2013, 75) declining to govern their own state, mediates the theme of mindlessness. This extended metaphor expounds epistemological, ontological and performative messages. Hanh invites us to imagine ourselves as a country without government, with nobody taking care of it. Instead, we must be present and take care of ourselves. This metaphor further extends into another; we must **NOT RUN AWAY FROM OUR OWN LAND** (75) but regain self-control. To explain that which we must not become, Hanh metaphorises mindlessness as **A MACHINE ON AUTOMATIC PILOT** (102). These first images portray mindlessness as not being in control. A contrasting final metaphor compares mindlessness/mindfulness as **DARKNESS/SUNSHINE** (97).

Several metaphors articulate the second theme of mindfulness. Hanh explains this with several interrelated images of a **COLD ROOM**, in which we need to **TURN ON THE RADIATOR**: the ensuing **WAVES OF WARM AIR** do not fight but **EMBRACE THE COLD AIR** (54). Hanh advocates mindful breathing and walking, so that we become a **BELL OF MINDFULNESS** for all (106). Right livelihood (which Hanh interprets as our lifestyles, the work that we do, and the way that we do it) contributes to a **COLLECTIVE AWAKENING OF SOCIETY** (99). The **GOAL** is not perfection but progress on the **PATH** (107).

Being mindful involves being present in the here-and-now (the third theme). In order to be happy, we should not **RUN INTO THE FUTURE** (96), thinking that we have insufficient conditions of happiness currently. Instead, we must **GO HOME** to the here-and-now and recognise our existing conditions of happiness; as they are more than sufficient, we can be happy right now.

Gardening imagery conveys the fourth theme of transformation. The body (which includes the mind) is a **GARDEN** (74). Hanh explains that gardeners cannot garden if they are not

physically present in it. The GOOD GARDENER knows how to TRANSFORM DECAY (WILTED FLOWERS, BROKEN BRANCHES, WEEDS, GRASS, AND FALLEN LEAVES) INTO RICH COMPOST TO NOURISH TREES AND FLOWERS.

The fifth theme is non-thinking, which is the SECRET of success (32). Hanh cautions against thinking about projects, which cannot solve problems. Instead, we ought to PLANT A SEED and allow it to GROW UNDERGROUND, allowing the solution to RIPEN (p. 33). We should also not think at lunchtimes, when we should ONLY EAT FOOD, NOT OUR FEARS OR WORRIES (112). We can achieve non-thinking within our busy lives by using everyday objects, such as TRAFFIC JAMS AND RED TRAFFIC LIGHTS, as BELLS OF MINDFULNESS (111), to slow us down in order that we can rest in the present moment.

Internal regulation of feelings is the sixth theme. To prepare for tough times ahead, we should focus on mindful breathing now, while THE SKY IS CLEAR and THERE ARE NO STORMS ON THE HORIZON (63); otherwise, we will forget what to do when we need it most. Then, when we are engulfed in the STORM OF STRONG EMOTIONS, we should NOT DWELL AT THE TREETOP (the head), where BRANCHES VIOLENTLY SWAY IN THE WIND, making us fear that the TREE WILL BREAK OR BE BLOWN AWAY. Instead, we should EMBRACE THE TREE TRUNK, focusing attention on the abdomen. Then we know that we can RIDE AND HANDLE THE STORM WITHIN.

Hanh metaphorises rising anger as WATERING THE SEED OF ANGER WITHIN US, which can occur when we perceive something unpleasant (55). Several spatial metaphors mediate Hanh's approach to managing emotions. The TERRITORY IS LARGE and we are more than one emotion, consisting of body, feelings and thoughts (62). Therefore, we should avoid enforcing rules from A PLACE OF ANGER AND VIOLENCE (53). If we experience a bad day at work, we should go to our COSY, SAFE AND COMFORTABLE HERMITAGE, CLOSE THE DOORS AND WINDOWS, and GO HOME to ourselves through mindful breathing (51). We should take refuge in our SAFE ISLAND (50), if we are afraid, unstable, or despairing. Moreover, we should CUT AWAY such afflictions to become free so that we can help many people to suffer less (85). Equally, we should seek help from others with our own suffering. Hanh also recommends that we record how to deal with anger mindfully and to keep this piece of paper handy, as a BELL OF MINDFULNESS (57).

A final cluster of metaphors, circulating around the image of maternal care, mediates the regulation of feelings. We should care for our feelings as a MOTHER TENDERLY HOLDS HER

BABY (51). The mother's ENERGY OF TENDERNESS meets the baby's ENERGY OF SUFFERING, penetrating the baby's body. Hanh metaphorises mindfulness as ENERGY, HEAT AND FIRE THAT TRANSFORM THE COLD MISERY OF THE HERMITAGE. The ENERGY OF MINDFULNESS is the MOTHER, WHO EMBRACES THE ENERGY OF THE BABY'S PAIN AND ANGER (we should not fight against feelings but recognise and embrace them). Returning to earlier metaphors, Hanh advises us to GO HOME to our HERMITAGE, our ISLAND OF SELF, to TAKE CARE OF OUR BABY.

In theme seven, interbeing, Hanh's metaphors ask us to think of ourselves not as individuals but as ontologically interpenetrated with others, an insight that comes from mindfulness. The continuing imagery of the natural world communicates how it is natural that we should live interdependently, as in ECOLOGY (95). The ROSE IS MADE OF NON-ROSE ELEMENTS (CLOUD, RAIN, SUNSHINE, MINERALS, SOIL, AND THE GARDENER) and so it cannot be alone; the WHOLE COSMOS PRODUCES THE ROSE, which must inter-be with it. Similarly, HAPPINESS IS A ROSE that is made of non-happiness elements and LOTUS FLOWERS NEED MUD, just as happiness needs non-happiness elements. Happiness is interdependent: a HEALTHY, UPRIGHT AND BEAUTIFUL TREE BENEFITS THE WHOLE WORLD (90) and, in the same way, happiness is not an individual phenomenon, as it affects others.

Recurring ecological imagery conveys that it is natural that we have good relationships at work (the penultimate theme). Encouraging mindful conversation in the workplace, Hanh explains that when we have enough internal peace and happiness, our speech transmits positivity to others, thus WATERING AND GROWING THEIR GOOD SEEDS, so that they will also know how to WATER POSITIVITY when talking to others (64). Hanh cites the example of a LAWYER WHO SPEAKS HER HEART by helping her client to understand the opponent's perspective and who WATERS THE SEEDS OF UNDERSTANDING AND COMPASSION IN EVERYONE'S HEARTS, including the JUDGE (101).

This non-dualistic approach is also evident in the admonition not to engage in a power struggle with colleagues, otherwise we can never unite as an ORGANISM (89), as a community. The HEART HAS ROOM FOR ALL if it GROWS (84) and the community provides necessary support for dealing with suffering. Hanh warns us that we ought not to embrace pain alone; otherwise, we will be A ROCK SINKING INTO A RIVER (106),<sup>xv</sup> as no-one is individually strong enough to embrace pain. Just as a BOAT CARRIES TONS OF ROCKS, so a community,

with its collective ENERGY OF MINDFULNESS, embraces us so that our pain becomes lighter and we NO LONGER SINK INTO THE OCEAN OF SUFFERING.

Hanh's metaphor of 'WORK WITHIN OURSELVES' (53) mirrors the phrase 'work environment', emphasising that self-understanding is a prerequisite for promoting relationships at work. We are co-responsible for each other's work and everyone should TAKE STEPS IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION together, in order to promote compassion and reduce suffering (107). To this end, Hanh calls for a PEACE TREATY that, in case of anger, we can read regularly to remind ourselves how to ease and calm difficulties between colleagues (57).

The final theme is that of outcomes. Just as COMPOSERS AND PAINTERS SIGN GOOD WORKS OF ART, our thoughts, speech, and actions BEAR OUR SIGNATURE (63). Such art is our LEGACY and our CREATION and therefore BEARS OUR MARK.

### **Discussion**

Morgan's (2006, 4) IoO is based on the premise that "all theories of organization and management are based on implicit images or metaphors that lead us to see, understand, and manage organizations in distinctive yet partial ways." He provides 'some' images of organisations, as machines, organisms, brains, cultures, political systems, psychic prisons, flux and transformation, and instruments of domination. He identifies multiple images because a single metaphor only produces "a way of seeing" and "one-sided insight" (Morgan 2006, 4). Because no single management theory is sufficient, no single metaphor can suffice either. In contrast, Hanh's (2013) 'Work' deploys different metaphors to deepen insight into his key message of 'interbeing'. Morgan does not advocate a single perspective and so does not advocate a single metaphor: he explores different metaphors in order to embrace different ways of thinking. In contrast, Hanh's intention is that of embracing different organisational members, using metaphors to convey insight (epistemology) into their essential unity (inter-ontology). Both authors draw out the practical implications of their metaphors, although again Hanh dwells on the implications for relationships at work (performativity).

Analysing the findings in the previous section, we observe that Morgan's *images* roughly transfer onto Hanh's philosophy, although as *metaphors* they do not necessarily mediate the same message. Hanh counsels against mindlessness with his image of a machine running on automatic pilot; here Hanh provides an individually focussed counterpart to Morgan's image of organisations as machines. Instead of the mechanic mindlessness, Hanh advocates individual and

organisational circumspection and processual oversight as alert mindfulness (brain<sup>xvi</sup>), noting how it influences what we perceive (psychic prison), how we constitute reality (culture) and experience suffering in the workplace (politics and domination). He teaches that everything is always changing (flux and transformation) and his primary message is that we are all interrelated (organism and culture).

It is unsurprising that there are broad similarities between the images of these authors, given the abstract nature of half of Morgan's root metaphors (culture, politics, domination, flux and transformation) and the generic nature of the others (our common experiences of organisms, machines, the brain, and psychic imprisonment). They can be characterised as archetypal metaphors, which are potent and appealing tropes of basic and salient patterns of experience (Osborn 1967). However, there can only be a limited resemblance between the metaphors of Morgan and Hanh, as the trope obtains its novel nature by interacting with a specific discourse in which it acquires new meaning (Ricoeur 1981): 'it is the conflict between these two interpretations that sustains the metaphor' (Ricoeur 1976, 50). Furthermore, the abstract and general nature of Morgan's metaphors that allows their transferability across contexts also makes them ontologically weak (ontological metaphors concretise abstractions), epistemologically vague (with non-specific messages), and performatively imprecise (in not specifying actions).

Two of Morgan's images resonate particularly with Hanh's notion of interbeing. The first is that of organisations as organisms that 'are not really discrete entities' but which 'exist as elements in a complex ecosystem' in an 'ecology of organizational relations' (Morgan 2006, 64). However, Morgan is imaging relationships between stakeholder groups (e.g. 'between labor and management', [2006, 64]), not the individual human relationships that Hanh emphasises. The second is Morgan's (2006) image of organisations as cultures, where he contrasts western individualistic culture with interdependent collectivity in the Japanese workplace. While this image is commensurate with Hanh's notion of interdependence, Hanh (who lives with his transnational Buddhist community in France) does not make the same cross-cultural observation (his central message being concerned with homogeneity and not with differentiating people) – and he does not utilise the image of culture.

Apart from the two metaphors that Morgan and Hanh explicitly share (organism and transformation), Morgan's are not the most obvious ones to select for mediating Hanh's other core themes. This is because different worldviews favour metaphors that constitute organisations and organisation theory in different ways (Morgan 1980). In order to explain mindful relationships at

work, Hanh employs different, more specific, vivid and extended metaphors (e.g. queen, bell, radiator, home, garden, hermitage, traffic lights, traffic jams, storm, island, boat, painter, mother and baby), none of which correspond to IoO. While Hanh specifies and extends his metaphors in order to relate mindfulness to relationships at work, Morgan creates new generalised metaphors in order to theorise organisations. Directing his choice of metaphors at organisational theorising, Morgan (2011) presents theory as metaphor. Thus, despite confirming the ontological and epistemological nature of metaphor, he seems more concerned with the former as a means to the latter, seeing organisations as something else in order to understand them differently.

Morgan (2011) sees metaphor generation as a never-ending process of constructing theories that possess both strengths and weaknesses: given the insights and distortions of the metaphorical process, each theory calls for another and epistemology is the driver of perpetual metaphorising. His language revolves around his epistemological concern: ‘challenging thinking’, ‘point of view’, ‘insights’, ‘a more open and reflective approach to social science’, and exploring new metaphors in a process of ‘constructive deconstruction’ (Morgan 2011, 464). He is more concerned with proliferating epistemologies and therefore IoO juxtaposes a heterogeneous array of metaphors that are only complementary in terms of compensating for each other’s limitations. In contrast, Hanh’s homogeneous set of metaphors present a single philosophy and elaborate it across epistemological, (inter)ontological and performative dimensions. We metaphorise Hanh’s role as a miner, digging ever deeper into one philosophy (and sending golden nuggets of wisdom up to the mine’s surface for his readers), while Morgan is an explorer, a pluralist constantly searching for new terrains of thought.

Morgan ontologises in order to theorise, ‘seeing-as’ in order to gain new insights, whereas Hanh’s metaphors facilitate ‘seeing-as’ at the epistemological level to reveal a new ‘being-as’ at the ontological level (Ricoeur 1984, 50) so that ‘with metaphor we experience the metamorphosis of both language and reality’ (Ricoeur 1973, 111). Ultimately though, for Hanh the notion of separate individual beings is empty: metaphor accommodates this in conveying both ‘is and is-not’, avoiding both ontological naïveté (assuming that one thing is another) and fundamentalism (that one thing is not another); ‘being is a being-as’ that ‘expresses beings in their different possibilities’ (Vedder 2002, 207-208). Hanh uses metaphor in an analogous way to a Zen Buddhist *kōan* that discloses reality, in order to awaken his readers to (inter)being. The trope comes into being and thereby awakens the dormant potential of being (Vedder 2002).

Hanh's metaphorical mediation of interbeing contrasts with the Cartesian approach to language and the self, based upon language's capacity to objectify: in western cultures, ontological metaphor is Cartesian and embedded in language and theorising (Nothstine 1988). However, we can call this approach into question when considering the situatedness of our being within the world and our indivisibility from it. The epistemological problem of intersubjectivity is only a pseudo-problem, based on the ontological assumption of a subject-object duality, whereas a non-Cartesian ontological perspective interprets our situation as members of a community. This interpretive 'as' is a hermeneutic ontology, within which we are not subjects searching for objects and not individuals searching for community but already immersed within it. The current study draws attention to ontological interrelatedness, addressing the ontological questions of being; 'How does it exist? As what does it exist? In what relation to me does it exist? How does its being-in-relationship to me define us both?' (Nothstine 1988, 158).

The study's final dimension of performativity highlights its practical implications. Hanh expresses his metaphors as both nouns (e.g. mother and baby) that concretise his philosophy and as verbs (e.g. radiate happiness to others) that explain how we should be mindful. His metaphors are more immediately prescriptive (e.g. do not sink into the ocean of suffering.) than those of Morgan. Furthermore, while Morgan's level of analysis is that of the organisation, Hanh focuses on the (inter)personal dimensions of work. Accordingly, Morgan's relatively impersonal images contrast with those of Hanh, who encourages us not to behave like machines, deploying metaphors that are more people focused (king, governor, composer, painter and lawyer), human (e.g. heart and warmth), deeply interpersonal (mother and baby) and nurturing (e.g. food, gardening and energy).

This study confirms Morgan's (2006, 365) view that metaphor enables acting in new ways: he links metaphor and practice, which he says is '*never* theory free', and argues that images guide us and theorise action. The third section of IoO draws out implications for practice (although still with an emphasis on 'thinking', 'seeing', and 'reading' organisations). Morgan's approach is that of broadening understanding through competing metaphors in order to broaden possible actions: metaphor generates multiple ways of thinking and acting - and therefore limiting thinking limits the range of action. In contrast, this study highlights how metaphor deepens understanding of mindful relationships at work.

As well as extending Morgan's imagery and his understanding of the role of metaphor, our study significantly contributes to and has general importance for the field of organisational



culture, drawing out practical implications. Firstly, Hanh's discourse on mindfulness advocates an understanding of organisations from the perspective of interbeing: members form a relational nexus of interbeing; they are conceived as interconnected, mutually permeating and, in Buddhist terms, interdependent – privileging collective, collaborative and cooperative forms of working. Secondly, his use of metaphor is also salient to the field: underlying our understanding of culture might be a metaphor of ontological separation that undermines a sense of workplace community. This study shows how tropes that erode the notion of a separate self and instead build an awareness of interconnectedness can challenge such a metaphor. Thirdly, the article shows managers how to apply extended metaphor to the understanding and improvement of relationships at work, providing specific examples of how the trope applies to this process. Managers, indeed all organisational members, can be encouraged and trained to apply metaphors in order to mediate a cohesive culture (e.g. [anonymised] University uses the metaphor of a stained glass window, with its many different pieces of glass unified within a single artwork, to convey unity amongst diverse staff). Extending such metaphors (for example through constant reuse, discussion and application to interpersonal relationships) can extend mutual understanding.

Innovatively, this study extends Morgan's imagery and his understanding of the role of metaphor, empirically supporting the need for new metaphors that mediate Hanh's philosophy. Indubitably, Hanh elects to teach through metaphor because it is commensurate with his philosophy. He advocates becoming the other person: similarly, metaphor involves seeing one thing as another. Mindfulness involves immersion in the here-and-now and awareness of interrelatedness: likewise, discursive context enables the metaphoric effect of a word. Hanh's mindfulness leads away from abstractions and towards embodied experience, informing interpersonal situations: his extended metaphors explicate mindfulness across epistemological, (inter)ontological and performative dimensions. Furthermore, Hanh's metaphors and mindfulness approach complement each other: both are vehicles for the realisation of the fundamental nexus of interbeing beyond the pettiness of the ego; for mindful work relations, a greater sense of interpersonal organisational connection and awareness ensues.

However, the seductive power of a battery of mutually reinforcing extended metaphors could erode competing, critical, and even mindful approaches to human relationships. Therefore, we recommend that further research should examine how Hanh's followers understand his metaphorical discourse, critically apply it to their work, and use it to enhance relationships at work. The study goes beyond critically comparing two books, as we triangulate the findings

across both authors' whole works. Nevertheless, the research is limited to examining only one trope within the formal text of a single Buddhist teacher of mindfulness. The findings are situated, contingent and partial because all knowledge is so considered (Taylor 2001), as Morgan (2006) himself asserts. This study innovatively compares the metaphors of Morgan and Hanh. Similarly, future research should innovatively compare metaphors and other tropes across diverse faiths, ideologies, cultures and workplaces, in order to continuously test Morgan's work, identify new metaphors and, potentially, discover new deployments (the trope might serve different purposes in mediating organisational culture). Future research should also include formal texts and informal discourse (e.g. comparing Buddhist scriptures with online discussion forums about applying Buddhist mindfulness to the workplace), in different Buddhist traditions, and indeed in workplaces across other cultures, in order to examine the role of metaphor in mediating philosophies and applying them to relationships at work.

### **Conclusions**

In summary, Morgan's overarching legacy resides not so much in his images but in showing that the inherent dynamism of organisational theorising requires the generation of new metaphors. His images transfer onto Hanh's philosophy but largely mediate different messages, as words obtain their metaphoric effect by interacting with a specific discourse, and because different worldviews favour different metaphors. This study extends Morgan's imagery and his understanding of the role of metaphor. Morgan's heterogeneous, archetypal metaphors proliferate epistemologies in order to theorise organisations and broaden possible actions, whilst Hanh's more specific, vivid, prescriptive, humanistic, homogeneous and extended metaphors explicate mindfulness across epistemological, (inter)ontological and performative dimensions – mediating the message that mindfulness provides insight to human interconnectedness and guides relationships at work. Hanh's extended metaphors of mindfulness foster a deep practical understanding of organisational members as ontologically interpenetrated. His mindfulness and metaphors are complementary in that both coherently mediate and realise awareness of this.

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**Table 1a. Thematic summary of Hanh’s extended metaphors, which explicate (inter)ontological, epistemological and performative implications of mindfulness**

Theme	Metaphor	Extended Metaphor		
		(Inter)ontology	Epistemology	Performativity
Mindlessness	Kings/queens/governors refuse to govern state.	Not being present. Not governing our country.	Imagine a country without government.	Be present for ourselves. Take care of ourselves.
	Run away from our land.	Not being present.	Not wanting to return to our land.	Regain self-control.
	Machine on automatic pilot.	Do not become a machine.	Mindlessness.	Regain self-control.
	Sunshine/dark.	Not living in dark.	Seeing.	
Mindfulness	In cold room, radiator’s waves of warm air do not fight but embrace cold air.	Cold air becomes warmer.	Mindfulness.	Warmth radiates & embraces.
	Bell of mindfulness.	Become bell for all.	Mindfulness.	Breathe mindfully.
	Nourishing.		Mindfulness.	Mindfully continue in non-nourishing job or find nourishing job.
	Awakening.		Collective awakening.	Right livelihood.
	Goal not perfection but progress on path.			To progress.
Here & now	Running into future...	...to look for happiness.	We believe current conditions of happiness are insufficient.	Be content.
	Go home to the here & now.	We have more than enough to be happy right now.	Recognise existing conditions of happiness.	Be content.
	Return to body.	Presence.		Follow in/out breath.

Transforming	Gardeners not in garden cannot garden.	Presence.		Be present.
	Body is garden.	Our body & feelings.	Perceptions, mind.	
	Good gardener uses wilted flowers, broken branches, weeds, grass, fallen leaves.	Nurturing & transforming ourselves.	Good gardener knows how to transform decay into nourishment.	Gardener transforms decay into rich compost to nourish trees & flowers.
(Non)thinking	Caught in thinking...	...you become tired.		Be (do not think).
	Secret of success.	Being truly present.	Stop worrying about projects/past/future.	Practice non-thinking. Focus on breath.
	Plant, grow & ripen seed.	Natural growth.	Solution ripens.	Focus on present.
	Traffic jams & red traffic lights as bells of mindfulness.	Rest in present moment.	Stop thinking.	Slow down.
	At lunchtime, eat only food.		Do not eat fears/worries.	Neither fear nor worry.
Feelings	Clear sky, no storms on horizon.		Be mindful now or you will forget what to do when most needed.	Mindfully breath now, not wait for emotion.
	Engulfed in emotional storm.	Do not dwell at treetop.	Stop thinking: embrace trunk.	Lower attention to abdomen.
	Ride/handle storm.	Storm within you.	You know can handle.	
	If we water seed of anger...	...within us...	...on seeing unpleasant thing...	...we become angry.
	Avoid place of anger/violence.			Avoid enforcing rules from anger/violence.
	Large territory.	We are more than 1	..having thoughts, feelings &	

		emotion	body	
	Cosy hermitage.	Safe & comfortable.	If bad day at work...	...close doors/windows.
	Go home.	Return to yourself.	Mindfulness.	By mindful breathing.
	Take refuge in safe island...	Be safe...	...when afraid.	Mindful walking/breathing.
	Cut away afflictions.	Be free	Let go of anger...	...to help many to suffer less
	Bell of mindfulness.	Seek help from others.	Record how to deal with anger.	Keep piece of paper handy.
	Mother & baby.	Baby calms.	Recognise feelings.	Embrace feelings.
Interbeing	Rose consists of non-rose elements (e.g. rain & soil).	Rose not alone. Whole cosmos produces rose.	Mindfulness provides insight of interbeing.	Be one with others.
	Happiness is a rose. Growing lotus needs mud.	Happiness made of non-happiness elements.	In lotus flower, you can see the mud.	Look deeply.
	Healthy tree benefits world.	Happiness affects others.		Radiate happiness to others.
Workplace relationships	Water & grow good seeds.	Peace & happiness within.	Water positivity in people.	Speech transmits positivity.
	Lawyer speaks heart & waters seeds.	Compassion.	Lawyer shares insights, helping client understand other.	Spread understanding, insight, & compassion.
	Organism.	Community disunites...		...if power-struggle.
	Heart: room for all...	...if heart grows.		Be compassionate.
	Rock sinks into river.	No individual strong enough.		Do not embrace pain alone.
	Boat carries tons of rocks.	Community buoys us up.	Mindfulness.	Not sink.
	Community embraces us.	Pain becomes lighter.	Collective energy of	Not sink in ocean of

			mindfulness.	suffering
	Work within ourselves.	Work within.	Bring understanding into work...	...to help colleagues.
	All step in right direction.	Co-responsibility for work.		Be compassionate.
	Peace Treaty.	Eases colleague difficulties.	Remind ourselves when angry.	Read regularly to remind.
Outcomes	Art bears signature.	Good art bears signature.	If right thinking.	Compassionate speech/actions.
	Creation/legacy.		If right thinking, insight, understanding.	Compassionate speech/actions.

**TABLE 1a.** Thematic summary of Hanh’s extended metaphors, which explicate (inter)ontological, epistemological and performative implications of mindfulness

<sup>i</sup> On Hanh’s location in the Buddhist tradition and practice, see King (1996, 1999, pp. 462-464), Hunt-Perry and Fine (2000), and Kemmerer (2007). See also the insider view from Plum Village (2014).

<sup>ii</sup> See e.g. Griffiths (1983, p. 61), Kuan (2008, p. 42), and Loy (2003, p. 35). For criticism of this simplified interpretation of Buddhist mindfulness see Sujato (2006, pp. 118-121) and Dreyfus (2011).

<sup>iii</sup> On no-self in Buddhist philosophy see Carlisle (2006); Collins (1982: 85-143); and Hamilton (1996).

<sup>iv</sup> Buddhist literary culture draws on the Indian *ālaṃkāra-śāstra* tradition of literary theory as entailed in the handbook (*śāstra*), *Kāvyaḍarśa* by *Daṇḍin* (7th century CE). On the terms and their correspondence with concepts in the European tradition of literary theory, see Kragh (2010, pp. 481-483).

<sup>v</sup> See e.g. Hamilton (2000), McMahan (2002), Cole (2005), Flores (2008) and Ohnuma (2012).

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<sup>vi</sup> The ocean of (conditioned) reality (*samsāra*) is an established and frequent traditional Indian metaphor found e.g. in the Pāli canon (*Jātaka* iii 241 PTS) and the Bhagavadgītā (12.7).

<sup>vii</sup> This discourse is attributed to the historical Buddha *Śākyamuni* (ca. 5th c. BCE) and is part of the Pāli canon of Buddhist scripture: *Majjhima-Nikāya* (MN) 10 and *Dīghanikāya* (DN) 22. The authoritative Pāli Buddhist scholastic treatment of these discourses is found in *Abhidhamma Vibhaṅga* (section 7).

<sup>viii</sup> Performativity is understood here as discourse that effects action.

<sup>ix</sup> E.g. Sujato (2006, p. 84 and p. 255 note 383).

<sup>x</sup> Cp. in particular McMahan (2008, Ch. 8, pp. 215-240) and Carrette and King (2005, Ch. 2, pp. 57-86).

<sup>xi</sup> See Fennell and Segal (2011), Gilpin (2008), Grossman and Van Dam (2011), Kabat-Zinn (2011), Metcalf (2002), and Van Quekelberghe (2009). For applications in higher education, see Bush (2011).

<sup>xii</sup> This is, indeed, in line with Buddhist consensus on the nature of contemplation (*anupassanā*) and with most cognitive therapeutic appropriations (Kabat-Zinn, 1994; Teasdale, 2004, pp. 270-289).

<sup>xiii</sup> Morgan (1983b) explains that ‘trope’ etymologically derives from the Greek ‘tropos’, ‘to turn’.

<sup>xiv</sup> In accordance with convention (e.g. Lakoff and Johnson, 1987), we capitalise metaphorical words/phrases (including those not already capitalised within quotations), whilst for simplicity, we do not capitalise the surrounding discourse that creates the metaphoric effect.

<sup>xv</sup> The river metaphor alludes to the famous Buddhist imagery of the raft (the teachings), on which one can cross from the world of suffering (*samsāra*) to *nirvāṇa* (MN 22); on the ocean metaphor, see above.

<sup>xvi</sup> In this paragraph, each word or phrase in brackets indicates a broad comparison with one of Morgan’s (2006) images.