

# 8

## Developing Metaphors in Light of the Visual and Digital Turns in Organizational Studies

### Toward a Methodological Framework

*Ron Kerr, Sarah K. Robinson, and Carole Elliott*

#### Key Learning Points

- Understand that the increasing complexity of some 21st century organizations and forms of organizing may need, in addition to Morgan's existing metaphors, new metaphors as a means of understanding how these organizations operate.
- Recognize that the visual and digital turns in organizational research reflect the importance that contemporary organizations place on their visual and digital projections: new metaphors may be needed to demonstrate how contemporary organizations use these media.
- Know that Morgan's proposed methodology is a good starting point for identifying further metaphors: however, the complexity of the visual/digital age calls for a more systematic approach to organizational analysis. A shift from *reading* organizations to *actively viewing* them is suggested.

- See that a hermeneutic framework is in keeping with Morgan's existing methodology and allows researchers of organizations to examine organizational projections through different cycles of analysis.
- Understand that when actively viewing organizations' visual and digital projections, what *cannot* be seen is as important as what can be seen.
- Know that a full understanding of how an organization operates cannot be gained solely from analysis of the organization's websites. However, the digital age affords organizational researchers the means to research an organization widely and develop appropriate metaphors from reading and actively viewing both the organization's representations of itself and researching what other entities project about the organization.

This chapter considers how Gareth Morgan's (1986) seminal work can be applied and complemented given developments in organizations and forms of organizing in the thirty years since the original publication of *Images of Organization*. It takes Morgan's original metaphor-based methodology as a starting point and develops a methodological framework for "reading" (Morgan, 2006) the increasingly complex and **dis-integrated organizations** emerging in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. The chapter is framed within two interrelated "turns" understood as shifts in organizational emphasis and associated shifts in epistemological and methodological concern within the field of organization studies: the **visual turn** and the **digital turn**. These turns, it could be argued, are attempts to capture changes in organizing that relate to the increasingly image-rich and digitized nature of contemporary organizations.

In proposing a further development of Morgan's metaphors, given these changes in organizing and in the study of organizations, this chapter asks:

- 1) What can we learn about changes in organizing over the past thirty years through studying visual and digital projections of organizations (the two "turns")?
- 2) How might we develop a methodology for engaging with and examining in-depth this new level of organizational reality? This question leads to the following:
- 3) Which of Morgan's metaphors are helpful in understanding these complex, image-rich organizations and what new organizational metaphors might emerge from this analysis?

This chapter presents an empirical case, that of a contemporary form of a transnational corporation, and provides an in-depth description of its visual and digital presence. Morgan's images of organization are then applied through the development of a **hermeneutic** approach that demonstrates the continued relevance of Morgan's metaphors in understanding this new form of organization. An additional metaphor that captures the organization's use of its digital presence to reveal and conceal specific aspects of its structure is also suggested. In so doing, we propose a methodological framework that can be adapted by other organizational

researchers and students of organizations in working with Morgan's metaphors and developing their own metaphors for studying diverse and multifaceted contemporary organizations.

Extending Morgan's work in this way to examine what is visible and what is not provides a means of reconceptualizing and researching how some contemporary corporations organize themselves and present themselves to the outside world. It also provides an approach that allows the researcher to gain an understanding of the organization that evades the organization's attempts to control its visual and digital projections. The theoretical and methodological background to this chapter is now given through outlining the development of the visual and digital turns in organizational studies.

## The Visual and Digital Turns in Organizational Studies

As previously mentioned, this chapter draws on the development of two interrelated "turns" in organizational studies, the visual and the digital, which both, in different ways, reflect attempts to understand the increasing importance of image and identity for contemporary organizations. An earlier turn, the linguistic turn, was described by Alvesson and Kärreman (2000, p. 136) as an increased interest in and focus on language. For the purposes of this chapter, we consider the visual and digital turns to be an increased academic interest and focus in the visual and digital elements of organizing and organizations. More specifically, the "visual turn" (Meyer, Höllerer, Jancsary, & van Leeuwen, 2013; Warren, 2009) places particular emphasis on the significance of relatively static visual projections of organizations such as branding and advertising. In technological terms, we might associate these phenomena with the concept of Web 1.0, which is understood as the visually static and noninteractive nature of the web before the mid-1990s. The related, but more recent, "digital turn" (Elliott & Robinson, 2014) focuses more on the development of interactive websites, viral marketing, digital entrepreneurship, and attempts to capture the quick-changing digital projections of organizations. These mobile and interactive phenomena align, we argue, with the concept of Web 2.0 (O'Reilly, 2007).

### The Visual Turn in Organizational Studies

Over the past twenty years, there has been an increasing number of studies using visual approaches to study organizations (Bell, Warren, & Schroeder, 2014; Meyer et al., 2014). Such studies include, for example, research on the function of photographs and other images in organizational documentation such as company reports (Anderson & Imperia, 1992; Benschop & Meihuizen, 2002; Campbell, McPhail, & Slack, 2009; Davison, 2009; Dougherty & Kunda, 1991; Preston & Young, 2000; Warren, 2005). That is, images have come to be used as a basis for reading "clues" about the organization that presents them (Warren, 2009, p. 568).

The visual turn both challenges and is in some way a reaction to the earlier linguistic turn, which, originating in critiques of representationalism ("language represents reality") (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000, p. 137), examines how organizations are constructed through discursive practices (Bell et al., 2014, pp. 2–3). However, as Fairhurst

and Putnam (2004, p. 8) note, discourse-based approaches include both those that focus primarily on texts and other approaches that draw on, for example, Foucault, to look at discourses that are powerful beyond the text.

Nevertheless, according to Bell et al., “the linguistic turn . . . may have gone too far in asserting the primacy of language in the constitution of socially constructed organizational realities,” with the consequence that “visuality and vision have remained under-explored and under-theorised in the organizational literature” and, therefore, that “a focus on the visual . . . potentially opens up areas which have been less explored by management researchers” (Bell et al., 2014, pp. 2–3). Proponents of a visual turn therefore argue that “organizations and individuals inhabit (and generate) a visually saturated culture where visual communication, based on showing, or mimesis, has come to occupy a parallel status to verbal communication based on telling, or diegesis” (Bell et al., 2014, pp. 2–3), with a strategic focus on the visual dimension of goods, services, and brands that are “constructed through corporate livery, logos etc.” (Warren, 2009, p. 567), including the design of monumental buildings intended to project corporate identity (e.g., General Foods corporate headquarters; Kerr & Robinson, 2015; Pelkonen, 2011). This turn to the visual has encouraged a concomitant search for appropriate methodologies from, for example, art historians such as Panofsky (1939/1976; also see Davison & Warren, 2009), visual culture, and, in light of the interactions between text and visuals, from multimodal methods (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006).

Such research interests have also, over the past few years, been extended to the examination of organizations’ web pages and other forms of digital projection, thus connecting to a more nascent turn in organizational studies, “the digital turn.”

## The Digital Turn in Organizational Studies

The concept of the digital turn aims at capturing the move from the static pages of Web 1.0 to the more interactive Web 2.0 (O’Reilly, 2007), which incorporates phenomena such as blogging, wikis, and social media (Bell & McArthur, 2014; Leonard, 2014); communication and mobile technologies (Eriksson-Zetterquist, Lindberg, & Styhre, 2009; Matusik & Mickel, 2011); and digital entrepreneurship (Davidson & Vaast, 2010). This last phenomenon translates as “Enterprise 2.0” in (idealized) business terms, loosely defined as the use of social media to corporate ends (Bughin, 2008). In this context, the study of the use of digital technologies in and by organizations is increasingly wide-ranging, focusing on how organizations use these technologies and how employees and other stakeholders experience their use (Bell et al., 2014; Schultz & Hernes, 2013) and on their role in organizational change (Volkoff, Strong, & Elmes, 2007; Zammuto, Griffith, Majchrzak, Dougherty, & Faraj, 2007). In relation to the present study, what particularly interests us is what comes at the intersection of these two turns (i.e., where the visual and digital intersect in the study of organizational websites). These phenomena are interesting in this context in that they are not solely visual media, but they also contain many digital elements (blogs, interactive fora, hyperlinks) in addition to pictures, video, and text (Pink, 2006).

However, although the study of the role of organizational websites within organizational studies is still relatively new and constantly evolving, the importance of websites, especially in terms of communication of corporate identity, must not be

underestimated. For example, many of an organization's potential stakeholders first encounter an organization through its webpages (Coupland & Brown, 2004; Pablo & Hardy, 2009). Therefore, websites provide stakeholders with information and are a means of transmitting (Segars & Kohut, 2001), and sometimes of responding to, high-level management messages (Coupland & Brown, 2004), and projecting the wider "look and feel" of an organization (Pablo & Hardy, 2009). Websites are therefore complex organizational projections that have evolved from largely mimicking text-based documentation (Coupland & Brown, 2004) to sophisticated combinations of visual, textual, and interactive media.

Given the strategic importance of websites as global communication tools, calls have been made to gain a deeper understanding of their role as a component part of corporate identity, especially in terms of communicating messages and shaping perceptions of organizations (Melewar & Karaosmanoglu, 2006; Warren, 2009). The concept of corporate visual identity (CVI; see Melewar, 1993) has developed through the visual turn into a methodological approach, which focuses on how a company name, symbol or logotype, typography, color, and slogan "reflect the company culture and values and . . . create physical recognition for the organization" (Simões et al., 2005, p. 158; see also Bartholme & Melewar, 2011; Melewar & Akel, 2005).

CVI provides a useful first step in considering the effect of organizations' visual projections on their stakeholders. However, given the increasing interactivity of Web 2.0 generation websites, Elliott and Robinson (2014) question the ability of CVI to make sense of the full complexity of web identity, suggesting that it is not fully able to capture the importance of corporate web presence and its relationship to the form and purpose of the organization. This is because websites are part of a wider digital domain that cannot be controlled by the organization. Websites are multimodal and, as such, their role in engaging with an organization's diverse stakeholders and shaping their perceptions of the organization (Melewar & Karaosmanoglu, 2006, p. 853) goes beyond reflecting, transmitting, and protecting visual identity (Elliott & Robinson, 2014).

Elliott and Robinson (2014) therefore examined existing work on the nature, role, and purpose of organizational websites and identified five major features of contemporary corporate websites that, it could be argued, constitute or help to establish an emergent corporate web identity (CWI), focusing on the visitor's experience and interaction with the website. Such an approach helps the organizational theorist to develop a methodology of actively engaging with websites as organizational artifacts: analyzing what the corporation wants to show to its viewers and how it wants them to experience the "visit," but also helping the analyst to identify what is perhaps inadvertently shown and what is not shown.

It has been argued that the philosophical rejection of representationalism (e.g., by Herder and later by Wittgenstein) involved a rejection of the epistemological authority of the visual as a dominant and dominating form (see Jay, 1994). We might suggest that this rejection coincided with, and helped to open the way for, the methodologies of the hermeneutics of suspicion (Ricoeur, 1970) by means of which contradictions can be identified between appearance and reality either between the conscious and the repressed unconscious (as with Freud) or between the "the hidden haunts of production" and the commodity form (as with Marx, 1867/1981, pp. 138–139). This Marxian approach to commodification—which was further developed by, *inter alia*, Lukacs (1923/1971), Polanyi (1936), Benjamin

(1999), and Korsch (1938/1963)—culminated in Debord's (1967/1992) "society of the spectacle," in which "the real world is transformed into mere images then mere images are transformed into real beings" (Jappe, 1993/1999, p. 107). Ultimately, however, for the post-Marxist Baudrillard and the later Debord (see Jay, 1994), there is no longer an "outside" to the spectacle or simulacrum created by late or postmodern capitalism and the hermeneutics of suspicion must fall silent. However, distrust of what is visible—of "taking at face value"—might, we argue, be returning to the forefront as a concern given the developments associated with **Web 3.0** (Berners-Lee, Hendler, & Lassila, 2001), by means of which the web becomes "smarter, is getting to know you better . . . and [is] automatically delivering content to you that is relevant" (Macmillan Dictionary, 2014) through technologies of hidden surveillance such as tracking systems or cookies placed by corporate interests.

The digital turn therefore renews our focus not only on what we see (or what we are shown) but also on what we do not see (or what we are not shown), and this, we argue, calls for a methodological response from organizational studies. That is, how can this combination of the visual and digital turns be applied to *actively view* contemporary organizations (understood as a combination of reading the text and seeing the visual) and then analyzing what this unearths about organizational forms such as the transnational corporation? We suggest that this can be done through Morgan's approach of applying metaphors of organizations (Collinson & Morgan, 2009) and through an interpretation process that requires the analyst to draw on other resources that exist in the digital domain. This means getting "outside" what is directed at the viewer by the corporation in order to get *behind* the corporation's own digitally displayed construction of its identity. Following Morgan's approach, then, is a way of identifying differing or conflicting perspectives in which metaphor can be used as a bridge or conduit, a means of taking us out to the wider picture, and then perhaps bringing us back in again.

Given that we are looking for contradictions *within* a website and contradictions *between* what is shown and what is not and for conflicting perspectives, and given that this builds on Morgan's own approach, which, as he explains, "has a good deal in common with the hermeneutic approach to social analysis that views social life as a 'text' that has to be interpreted and 'read'" (Morgan, 2006, p. 417), we believe that critical hermeneutic analysis is an appropriate methodology to adopt (Prasad & Mir, 2002; Robinson & Kerr, 2009, 2015). This is because although hermeneutics has its origins in the study of written texts, it has been adopted or adapted to the study of the visual in art history by, in particular Panofsky, as argued in Panofsky (1932) and developed as a three-cycle approach to visual analysis (Panofsky, 1939/1976). This approach has more recently been used to analyze websites (e.g., see Elliott and Robinson, 2012). In the following section, we present a "visual-digital" case study in which we initially approach a contemporary organization through its website using a three-stage hermeneutic process of analysis.

## The Case: Mondelēz International

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Stake (1995) identifies three types of case studies: intrinsic, instrumental, and collective. This study is, in Stake's terms, an instrumental case study because it aims to provide insight into an issue or problem. For an example of this, see Myers (1994),



who uses a single case to address wider social and organizational issues. In this type of analysis, understanding the complexities of the case is secondary to understanding wider organization phenomena.

Our study therefore focuses on one organization because 1) its website provides a wealth and depth of data, both visual and textual, that allow us to identify some of the characteristics of the contemporary transnational corporation and 2) the company has a long history, although it is in some senses new (it was founded in 2012), as will be explained below. Drawing on Ovide (2011), a brief overview of the corporation's origins and development is also provided below.

So what or who is Mondelēz International? On its corporate website and in its publicity material, Mondelēz International (2012) is presented as a "reimagined company . . . with a single focus in mind: 'create delicious moments of joy.'" It is "a whole new company" with a newly fabricated name intended to represent a "delicious world" (on the basis of *monde + delice*; Mondelēz International, 2012). However, in order to understand more thoroughly what Mondelēz International is as an entity and its relationship to the food giant Kraft, we need first to track its history (for more details on its prehistory, see Ovide, 2011).

In 2010, Kraft took over the U.K. chocolate maker Cadbury in a £11.5 billion hostile bid. Later, in 2012, Kraft Foods Inc. demerged into two companies: Kraft Foods Group Inc., with a North American grocery focus, and Mondelēz International, with a "snacking" focus (Mondelēz brands include Oreo, Cadbury Dairy Milk, and Chiclets). Mondelēz International, the demerged company, has its head office in Northfield, Illinois, and its shares are quoted on the NASDAQ securities exchange market in New York. The company's operations are global but strategically focused on "emerging markets," with new or expanded manufacturing centers in Brazil, China, Mexico, India, and Russia, in addition to older centers in the United Kingdom, United States, Canada, and North Africa. Many changes continue to take place within the organization that are not documented on their website, such as the closing down of factories in Kenya and the moving of operations to Bahrain and the coffee business spun off in 2014 to form a joint venture controlled by Douwe Egberts (Gasparro & Calia, 2014). This information is available online from specialist resources such as *Confectionery News* (<http://www.confectionerynews.com>), *Marketing Week* (<http://www.marketingweek.co.uk>), Oxfam (<http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk>), the *Wall Street Journal* (<http://www.wsj.com>), and the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF; <http://www.iuf.org>). The next section discusses how we can research and understand the nature of this new organization through a focus on its most visible and accessible external projection, its corporate website. This move to the digital requires a move by the researcher from "reading" the organization to "active viewing" that involves an engagement that, starting from the website, moves beyond and behind to try to understand the full complexity of the organization.

## Actively Viewing Mondelēz International:

### A Methodological Framework

Given that Mondelēz International is a new corporate entity with a new web presence, we were able to follow the evolution of its website from its beginning in

2012, capturing changes at regular periods (every three months or so since the website's launch). We then examined the website using a three-stage hermeneutic approach, which includes 1) informal analysis: our first impressions and description of what we see; 2) formal analysis: using the framework of CWI (Elliott & Robinson, 2014); and 3) synthesis: in which the two forms of analysis are brought together through a critical application of metaphor (Morgan's original metaphors leading to the development of our own emergent metaphor; see Table 8.1).

Our multilayered critical hermeneutic approach (Elliott & Robinson, 2012; Phillips & Brown, 1993; Prasad & Mir, 2002; Robinson & Kerr, 2009, 2015; Thompson, 1981) is in keeping with Morgan's own methodological approach (as noted above; see Morgan, 2006). In discussing his approach, Morgan (2006, p. 417) explains: "Taking the domain of organizational theory as a reference point, it shows how we can open the way to different modes of understanding by using different metaphors to bring organizations into focus in different ways."

Again, following Morgan, we do not see these applications of metaphor as "a regimented approach," but rather "the aim is to use understanding of metaphor to create a sensitivity for the competing dimensions of a situation, so that we can proceed with our interpretations in a flexible manner" (Morgan, 2006, p. 419). What we add is a framework for organizational researchers to systematically consider what the organization is visually and digitally projecting (and what it is not) and thus to develop appropriate metaphors accordingly. This framework is outlined below.

**TABLE 8.1 • Analytical Framework for Website Case Analysis**

Stage of analysis	Type of analysis	Findings
First cycle (informal)	Our first impressions and description of what we see.	Dominance of brands. Distanced management and family of 'founders'.
Second cycle (formal)	Corporate web identity (CWI): <i>mobility, accessibility, visibility, interactivity, customisation</i> Evaluates visitor's encounter with the website.	Dominance of brand images. Bands active and mobile. Lack of opportunity for the viewer to interact with the site. Customisation policy unclear to the viewer.
Third cycle (synthesis)	Applying images – bringing the outside in. Active viewing – identifying different perspectives. Application of images: brain, flux, instrument of domination. Creation of new metaphor: <i>trompe l'oeil</i> .	Dominant corporate perspective. What is visible: brands, 'founders', management; What is not shown: workers, history of corporate predation. Apotheosis of the brands, invisibility of the workers.



## Hermeneutic Cycle 1: Informal, Our First Impressions

In this first section of analysis, we describe what we as active viewers see on accessing the Mondelēz International website (accessed November 18, 2014). For ease of description, we go through the different constituent panels or blocks that constitute the home page, as shown in Figure 8.1.

On the Mondelēz home page, in panel 1, the corporate name appears spelled out in a purple, cursive font with small, red teardrops on each end and the word “International” underneath. In panel 2, we find the continuously updated share price tracker. Panel 7 is the “Investor Center,” which hyperlinks to information on the company’s financial position, including reports, announcements, statements to analysts, and so forth. Panel 8 (“News Center”) clicks to press releases. Panel 6 is “Well Being,” which links to information on “mindful snacking” aimed at “empowering” the consumer, who needs snacks to “treat, fuel, boost” the machine-like body. There is no nutritional information here nor are there warnings or recommendations about snacking responsibly, so it unclear to us how this “mindful snacking” can be achieved.

On panel 4, “About Us” links to the management team, pictured celebrating at the corporation’s public opening in New York. The chief executive officer (CEO), Irene Rosenfeld, is at the center of the group, surrounded by the rest of the team, which includes one person dressed as an Oreo cookie and another dressed as a Milka cow (both Mondelēz International brands). Members of the management are all applauding and smiling for the camera, so there is an informal snapshot feeling to the photo. There is no information identifying individual team members (e.g., names, background, and experience).

The “About Us” box also links to a “Heritage” page that shows pictures and “Our Founders” as one of the headings. We are surprised that this new organization could claim to have 19th and 20th century founders, and also that the history of so many historic companies and their products (Cadbury, Suchard) is reduced to what they term “great men” (and one woman).

Then, in the “Our Values, Our Manifesto” section (also accessed from “About Us”), we find the corporate manifesto, which evokes: “A world full of differences,” “Different lives . . . But really, we’re all the same . . . We all seek joy.” We find ourselves not exactly disagreeing with this statement but reflecting on its relevance and relationship to the products presented here. Panel 10, the main display panel on the front page, presents a purple and white globe (*le monde*) that opens up so that named and animated brands can explode out, appearing, rising, falling, disappearing. These

**FIGURE 8.1 • Mondelēz International Home Page as of October 2012, Formal Analysis**

[1] Corporate Name/Logo		[2] Share Price Tracker			[3] Search Function
[4] About Us	[5] Brand Family	[6] Well Being	[7] Investor Center	[8] News Center	[9] Join Us
[10] Front Page Illustration					

brands are the *delice* in “Mondelēz.” We are again surprised to see that what we term “the bouncing brands” are the most animated “beings” on the website. We now move on from our first impressions to a more structured analysis.

## Hermeneutic Cycle 2: Formal Analysis

The digital turn, as we argued above, calls for a multimodal analysis of text plus image but extends this to include Web 2.0 features such as interactivity, accessibility, mobility, visuality, and customization. In this context, *mobility* refers to the movement both of the site itself and how visitors can navigate freely around it. In the Mondelēz website, the animation and lively colors of the brands simulate the “joy” proclaimed as the overarching corporate value. However, there is much less sign of the mobility of human agents, with very little in the way of videos or talking heads. *Accessibility* relates to how visitors are able to navigate through a mass of information and how they receive, react to, and make sense of the information and messages. Here, the Mondelēz site is quite clearly signposted and easy to follow. A lot of information is readily available (e.g., financial), but there is also quite a bit missing, in particular, where are the major sites of production?

The visual function of a website is significant in its own right: we use the term *visuality*, or what can be seen by the eye, to refer to this element. The main visual feature on the Mondelēz homepage is the very prominent purple globe that opens, allowing the global brands to leap out. The role of the colorful teardrops that accompany the brands is unclear, although they may be intended as a visual expression of “joy.”

A potential role played by the website visitor is that of *interactivity*, or engagement in dialogue with the corporation, often facilitated through multiple channels of communication such as blogs and discussion fora. We note here that such features are missing from this site, although we note that there is considerable *customization*, or variation between different regional sites, depending on which brands are being strongly marketed in different contexts; examples would be dark chocolate and coffee in Ukraine.

## Hermeneutic Cycle 3: Synthesis, the Critical Cycle

So where are we so far? From our analysis above, what emerges as significant about the visual and digital projections of this organization? We note the following aspects that we find worthy of more critical investigation: 1) the dominance and personification of the brands, 2) the importance of the foundational history, 3) the lack of human presence, and 4) the lack of opportunity for the viewer to interact with human beings, in particular with Mondelēz employees, and ask questions.

In addressing these four issues through the use of metaphor, we note that Morgan’s images emerge from engagement *within* organizations and therefore do not deal with the organization’s visual or digitally projected identity—although certain images, in particular the brain, flux, and instrument of domination, do resonate from behind the screen of commodification, allowing us to capture contradictions between the corporation’s and other, different, perspectives. On the other hand, the

image of the organism with its origins in biology obscures, we think, the role of human agency, as does the image of the Taylorist machine, which reduces the human agents to calculable numbers, while culture suggests a natural and total way of life. No doubt the corporation is in some senses a political system, but this is nowhere visible on the website; the psychic prison evokes a psychological rather than a visual or material perspective.

From an external perspective, then, we note the need to legitimate the object as “brand” through the mobilization of “history” to guarantee the continuity of the brand even though the “founder’s” business as such no longer exists. Although the organization can be seen as being in a condition of flux and transformation (Morgan, 2006), with its acquisitions, divestments, and changes of name, a corporate version of history is used to provide an illusion of permanence—an enduring identity as a “family” of brands and founders that is presented to the viewer as a defined, enduring entity. As organizational researchers, we know this is not unusual as a means of establishing organizational legitimacy; however, we note that, as applied to an apparently “new” organization, it provides an interesting internal contradiction: “A whole new company that’s been reimagined with a single focus in mind: Create joy.” Within the website, corporate history is also reduced to a succession of “great men” (and one woman) and to the production of brands (“Our Founders” and “Historic Brands”) that are co-opted into the new corporate history. This presents (i.e., makes visible) a fictitious continuity or genealogy, one that might be contradicted by a not visible alternative history of corporate predation.

From the Mondelēz website we learn about the brands, their activities and histories, and how they have been gathered into Mondelēz as a “brand family” or “house of brands.” We also learn about the constantly updated share price: part of the corporate website is designed primarily to communicate with investors. This is consistent with the concept of a “house of brands” in that the Mondelēz identity gives a unifying umbrella under which the brands can “live.” Although there are, as we have noted, visibility, mobility, accessibility, and customization, there is no form of interaction on the website; it is a spectacle of investment and consumption controlled by a corporate brain (Morgan 2006).

In **actively viewing** the website, we might ask: where does the manufacture of the products take place? How and by whom are the material objects, the material basis of the brands and the profits they produce, themselves produced? In fact, the production workers are either invisible on the website or appear only as fungible financial “costs.” To learn about them, we must turn to a parody website, *Screamdelēz International* (<http://screamdelez.org>), which was set up by the IUF as part of a campaign to support trade unionists in Mondelēz’s geographically distant manufacturing centers. The *Screamdelēz* website was designed to bring to light the widely dispersed struggles of the production workers, who are absent both visually and textually from the Mondelēz corporate website.

The IUF’s parody website replicates the Mondelēz website, but with significant differences, in that recognizable aspects of the original’s form are retained but the content is replaced. On the home page, panel 1 contains the website’s name, “*Screamdelēz*,” exactly replicating the “Mondelēz International” logo, while panel 2 (top center) replaces Mondelēz International’s share price tracker with the CEO’s “executive compensation this year” (\$28 million as of October 2013).

However, the main focus of the IUF's campaign is to reinstate sacked union organizers in Mondelēz's production plants in Egypt and Tunisia, textually expressed as "Mondelēz International workers scream for justice." Immediately below the top line, there is a row of headings that are almost identical to those on the Mondelēz website. These are panel 4 ("About the campaign"), in which the history of the workers' struggles, not only in Tunisia and Egypt but also in Pakistan, the United States, and Canada, replaces the spectral "Founders," thus connecting local antiunion activities by Mondelēz into a global narrative. Panel 10, the dominant panel in size, presents a color photograph of workers demonstrating against Mondelēz in Egypt. This takes the place of the brands on the Mondelēz front page, thus making visible the corporeally embodied human agents involved in challenging the employment practices of Mondelēz, which can be understood here in Morgan's terms as an instrument of domination.

Finally, returning to Mondelēz, although the website contains little that is evidently interactive or indeed mobile (only the brands and the share price are animated), our analysis does tell us something about changes in how corporate power interacts with us, developments that are captured in the concept of Web 3.0 (in Morgan's terms, the organization as brain), with Mondelēz's plans to collaborate with Google, Twitter, and Facebook in directing tailored advertising to consumers through digital technology (Joseph, 2014).

## Discussion: Evolving a New Image Through Our Digital Methodology

For the situated observer, contradictions and conflicts are discernible both within the website and outside in the digital and material world. By utilizing what Jay (1994) identifies as a generalized suspicion of the visual, we can say that, from the corporation's perspective, the workers (as producers) are invisible behind a veil of commodification, whereas the products (as commodities) are made visible, mobile, and active to consumers and the changing share price is made visible to investors. So, like the shadows cast on the walls of Plato's cave that the prisoners view as reality (Morgan's psychic prison; Morgan, 2006), the website presents the active viewer with a distorted view of the corporation: a world turned upside down that can be interpreted as an allegory of contemporary capitalism (Marx's *camera obscura*; see Marx & Engels, 1845) with its visible and animated commodities that "take on a semblance of life . . . seem to be masters of their own destiny" (Polanyi, 1936, p. 349), whereas the producers are invisible or hidden.

Although, as we explain below, we feel that it is necessary to develop a new metaphor to capture what our analysis has revealed of this organization, this is not to argue that Morgan's images no longer have a firm grip on contemporary corporations. Indeed, for us, engaging with Mondelēz as a psychic prison, brain, or flux has been particularly fruitful in understanding contemporary dis-integrated transnational corporations. However, we believe that, in order to capture what digital and visual corporate identity shows and what it hides, a further image is needed. What we are looking for is an image that will capture our suspicion of what these images present. Here, we suggest that, from the perspective of a corporeally embodied spectator

placed in front of a computer screen, the organization presents a *trompe l'oeil* or “the actual tricking of the eye into assuming that a painted object is real” (Kitson, 1966, p. 33). *Trompe l'oeil* painting is based on the manipulation of perspective to create an illusion of bodies in space (Jay, 1994), as in Late Baroque ceiling paintings on the interior vaults of church domes that are only coherent to the spectator from one fixed position.

The key example we are thinking of is Andrea Pozzo's *Allegory of the Missionary Work of the Jesuits* (c. 1685–1694), also known as *Apotheosis of St. Ignatius*, painted on the vault of Sant'Ignazio, the Jesuit church in Rome (Figure 8.2). Here, *trompe l'oeil* architecture and painting exploit theories of linear perspective to present a soaring vision of the saint ascending into heaven. It has been argued (e.g., by Buci-Glucksmann; see Turner, 1996) that Late Baroque art is paradigmatically art in the service of religious or secular power. In Sant'Ignazio, the aim of the *trompe l'oeil* painting is to glorify the power of a particular religious organization, the Jesuits, through the apotheosis of the Order's founder, St. Ignatius. By contrast, on the Mondelēz home page, the exploding world of commodities presents an apotheosis of the brands, ascending out of the world and returning to it bringing “joy” to consumers, but it is also an assertion of the power of the corporation that has collected all of these brands into its “family.”

**FIGURE 8.2** • *Trompe l'oeil: Pozzo's Allegory of the Missionary Work of the Jesuits* (c. 1685–1694)



However, Pozzo's *Allegory* can only be seen as a coherent vision from one spot immediately below the vault. When you as the spectator move, the illusion collapses and you begin to see how it is fabricated. Such an approach, we argue, helps us to ask: Wait a minute, what is going on here? What is not being shown? In this, we take our cue from Morgan, who introduced the idea of multiple perspectives on organizations and that no image of an organization is neutral. So with the corporation's website, the corporation is visible as a coherent organization of history and brands from one perspective only. From the alternative perspective of the IUF, we can see beyond the *trompe l'oeil* of commodification to the embodied material existence of workers whose local struggles are widely separated in geographical terms but who can come together and be known in digital space, making these local yet connected disputes globally visible.

In addition, from our present analysis but also moving into the future, we gain the sense of *something* behind the presented corporate identity: not just the hidden producers and the employees, but also something active that wants to learn about us (who we are, where we live), and that wants to change the way we behave (see Harvey, 1990, pp. 285–286). The brands, and therefore the corporation that owns them, have material effects through the reconstruction of everyday life, particularly in the “emerging markets” around a “fast” and “vibrant” yet solitary lifestyle—by producing the neoliberal subject—“got to get to work” . . . no time of breakfast? Have a breakfast bar. Running out of energy? “Refuel” at your desk. Hooked on incessant activity . . . as Mondelēz's brand consultants explain: “Mondelēz International brands came together, ready to move forward into the future, inviting people to live vibrantly” ([http://www.attik.com/case\\_study/Mondelēz-visual-identity/](http://www.attik.com/case_study/Mondelēz-visual-identity/)).

These comparatively recent developments, which we have associated with Web 3.0 as used for corporate ends, present further theoretical and methodological challenges for organizational researchers: we suggest that further images and metaphors, again taking inspiration from Morgan's work, will be needed to meet these challenges.

## Conclusions: Contributions of This Chapter and Ways Forward For Organizational Studies

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In this chapter, we set out first to illustrate how Morgan's metaphors from *Images of Organization* might be used in research, teaching, and practice. Next, we offer insights into different ways of using Morgan's metaphors (providing guidelines for how to use them in practice) and, finally, we present innovations and new developments in the application of Morgan's metaphors.

To do this, we asked three questions:

- 1) What can we learn about changes in organizing over the past thirty years through studying visual and digital projections of organizations (the two “turns”)?
- 2) How might we develop a methodology for engaging with and examining in-depth this new level of organizational reality? This question leads to the following:



- 3) Which of Morgan's metaphors are helpful in understanding these complex, image-rich organizations and what new organizational metaphors might emerge from this analysis?

In answering these questions, we have shown how new ways of actively viewing arising from the digital turn and employing new images and methodological frameworks can be used to analyze how corporate identities are projected, thus helping us to understand the historical evolution of organizations and organizing.

This has also allowed us to demonstrate the continuing relevance of Morgan's work as extended to the understanding of contemporary organizations. In particular, our analysis has uncovered changes in organizing that can be understood through Morgan's images of the brain, flux, and domination. However, we also suggest that, in order to understand more fully a transnational corporation such as Mondelēz International and its visual and digital projections, we need to introduce a new metaphor, the one that we have chosen here: the *trompe l'oeil*. We argue that, in presenting the spectator with a picture of a family of vibrant brands while hiding the story of the embodied workers on whose labor Mondelēz's corporate profits are based, the website operates as a *trompe l'oeil*. This metaphor could therefore be used further to interrogate such practices and, following Morgan, could help in developing "an organization theory for the exploited" (Morgan, 2006, p. 30), thus giving this methodology a practical application.

This visual-digital case study therefore helps us to understand the recent evolutions of organizing as reflected through a corporation's visual and digital projections, capturing how, though active viewing, we might see behind and beyond the perspective of the corporate center, an approach that provides great purchase in researching 21st-century forms of organization.

## Key Terms

**Actively viewing**  
**Digital turn**  
**Dis-integrated organizations**

**Hermeneutics**  
**Trompe l'oeil**  
**Visual turn**  
**Web 3.0**

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