



Re-reading masculine organization: Phallic, testicular and seminal metaphors

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Abstract

This article examines the metaphorical resources provided by specific parts of the male body for thinking masculinity in social and organizational contexts. The genital metaphor of the male phallus is the most familiar, being associated with a form of hegemonic masculinity identified with power and control. However, other parts of the male genitalia can and do act as root metaphors for alternative forms of masculinity. Where the phallic metaphor focuses attention on power and control, the testicular and seminal metaphors highlight aspects of masculinity that are more relational and creative and bring it closer to the feminine. Whilst in social and organizational practice these coexist, in organizational analysis the emphasis has implicitly and explicitly been on the phallic. We generate a framework of the characteristics of each metaphor identifying positive, negative and excessive/inverted modalities that they can take, especially within organizational and institutional settings. We argue that applying a richer metaphorical frame to the study of gendered organizations will facilitate the acknowledgement of neglected potentials in masculinity for co-creating initiatives for organizational change.

Keywords

Gender in organizations, management, masculinities, organizational theory, phallic, psychology, seminal, testicular

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Introduction

The negative systemic effects of patriarchy, both in modern organizations and as a historical characteristic of capitalism itself, are not easily overcome (McNally, 2011: 44–5). Research on experience, practices, and societal statistics tends to be mutually supportive of the existence of continued gender inequalities, despite the fact that gender issues have been formally considered in organization and management research for several decades. Mainstream perspectives began to consider gender in the 1970s and tended to view the issues in terms of ‘women-in-management’, focusing on leveraging the specific advantages women possess and attenuating the disadvantages they experience as part of the workforce (Brewis and Linstead, 2000: 108–117). Critical perspectives, largely dating from the 1980s, shifted the emphasis from organizations as neutral spaces in which gender acted as a variable towards understanding organizations themselves as gendered (Linstead, 2000a). Gender was accordingly imbricated with power relations, with difference having political consequences. Then research assumed a more central place in critical perspectives and remained a more marginal concern for the mainstream (Alvesson and Due Billing, 2009). The dynamics of critical research emphasize on the one hand personal experiences of gender at work, and on the other, specific gendered practices. A smaller set of contributions seeks to translate and establish a conceptual base from broader gender scholarship (Knights, 2014a; Linstead and Pullen, 2006; Phillips et al., 2014). Yet even within critical gender studies of organization, there is little discussion of the important role that ‘root’ metaphors such as the phallic metaphor play in gendering understanding and identity, with few exceptions (Douglas, 1966: 163; Flannigan-Saint-Aubin, 1994a; Haddon, 1988; Hassard et al., 1998; Haste, 1993; Moore, 2007: 19). Based on fantasized versions of real genitalia they provide continuities, and occasionally shifts, in gender construction. Of course the range of socially available corporeal symbolic resources is not restricted to genitalia and encompasses both male and female body parts (cf. Höpfl and Kostera, 2003; Linstead, 2000b). But genitalia can play a particularly powerful role in signification. In this article we concentrate specifically on unravelling testicular and seminal alternatives to masculine identification with the phallus that offer potential for thinking differently and changing behaviour. In doing so we attempt to show masculinity in a different light and ‘use the male body as metaphor without denying or affirming the primacy of the phallus’ (Flannigan-Saint-Aubin, 1994b: 1055).

We acknowledge that even critical understandings of masculinity in organizations literally *write* organization as masculine (Phillips et al., 2014: 313). They use language in a masculine way, focusing explicitly or implicitly on ‘phallic’ concerns with science, mastery and rigour (Ross-Smith and Kornberger, 2004). As such they align themselves with a set of assumptions at the level of the psychoanalytic imaginary that equate a fantasized and sublimated version of male genitalia with power. ‘The phallus’s pretension to power’ (Fotaki and Harding, 2013: 1) has thus inscribed itself into management theory – to the extent that organization theory is dominated by ‘masculine significations and images’. These can and should be disrupted and undermined by ‘subverting language from within’ (Fotaki, 2011: 50) rather than ‘attempting to replace it with another (feminine) orthodoxy’ (Phillips et al., 2014: 314; cf. Linstead and Pullen [2006], Pullen and

Knights [2007] and Knights [2014]). Phillips et al. (2014) hope to add their voices to a series of attempts to open up a 'third' connective and collaborative space beyond the gender binary as well as beyond patriarchy (Butler, 2004; Ettinger, 2006; Linstead and Pullen, 2005, 2006, 2008; Lorber, 2005).

Whether taking a feminist or post-feminist position, this is not easy to achieve, so dramatically contrasted are the bifurcated realities of political economy. Even nuanced fieldworkers and theoreticians may come to think that a binary response to the bifurcated realities of political economy is the only realistic way to confront the needs to achieve distance from the effects of patriarchy (Knights, 2014b). Critical studies of organizational masculinity often make a crucial error in trying to resolve this tension (Fournier and Smith, 2006). This is that such studies implicitly equate patriarchy, paternalism and hegemony – *phallic* masculinity – with masculinity per se. Fournier and Smith demonstrate by discussing several well-known exemplars that even sophisticated analyses that go so far as to acknowledge multiple and shifting masculinities unduly homogenize the *underlying* target of critique in management studies. This tends to occlude the very difference that critique sets out to enunciate.

Rather than homogenizing and rejecting masculinity along with patriarchy and its associated behaviours, however reprehensible, Bourdieu (2001) urged feminism to understand what it was that drove men towards domination of the other, and particularly the feminine (Krais, 1993). Within patriarchy, non-phallic masculine behaviours are categorised as *not*-masculine, and thus tend to fall into the suppressed 'non-category' that also constitutes the (phallic) feminine (Flannigan Saint Aubin, 1994a). Field research has reported the existence of specific male behaviours outwith phallic masculinity, but often as a 'masculine feminine' phenomenon rather than as an alternative form of masculinity (Knights, 2014a).

In this article we explore metaphors of masculinity, the root-metaphorical matrix that sustains it, to destabilise some current assumptions and open up new perspectives on its forms. We consider the relations between its components, and depict these as a shifting dynamic of positive, negative, externally focused and inward-turning effects. This enables us to address two questions:

1. Are there non-phallic masculinities that are *not* overshadowed by the phallic metaphor that might contribute to thinking in a more integrated way about human organization?
2. Can viewing masculinity through different metaphorical lenses facilitate organizational approaches of 'relational co-emergence' that do not effectively reject the masculine by implicitly or explicitly reinscribing it as phallic?

In the next section we discuss in more detail the nature of 'root' metaphors and their presence in organization studies. We then look in more detail at the historical development of male genital metaphors and develop a picture of their customary features and modalities. In addressing our first research question we compare and contrast these metaphors, drawing on anthropology, sociology and psychoanalytic discussions that propose the existence of positive, negative, excessive and inverted modalities of each. We

integrate and reformulate existing work (Baxter and MacLeod, 2005; Figlio, 2000, 2010; Flannigan-Saint-Aubin, 1994a, b; Haddon, 1988; Haste, 1993; Kroker and Kroker, 1991; Moore, 2007) to offer a different conceptual grid of intelligibility to view masculinity in organizations. In addressing our second research question we explore how these modalities may be encountered, and the complex relations between different elements of the specific category of genital metaphors in organizing. We do not, and could not, offer a stepwise model of how these theorized processes work in practice as they are always fluid within a field of interaction. But we do sketch out patterns of dynamic metaphorical relations that operate in the background to shape, and delimit, the organizational possibilities of such interaction.

Root metaphors

With Höpfl (2008: 350), we wish to emphasize that our argument is not essentialist. The use of terms such as masculine and feminine, paternal and maternal or even men and women, is not a *description* of gender or an adumbration of specific *behaviours*, but a collection of ciphers or metaphors for 'styles of behaviour' (including styles of thought and responses to experience), at a deep or root level. The term 'masculinity' is itself metaphorical, operating to relate behaviours and attitudes to an imagined abstract category (Linstead, 1997). This combination of abstraction and imagination generates both direct, live concrete associations and more indirect comparisons that illuminate understanding and may inspire action. Despite their initial novelty, the families of associations generated may become so conventionalized that their metaphorical origin is forgotten and naturalized (Oswick et al., 2002, 2003). The naturalized phallic metaphor may be considered to be part of a nested family of metaphors for social life that contains male genital metaphors, genital metaphors (including the feminine) and corporeal metaphors (Douglas, 1966; Synott, 1993).

Metaphors may be considered to be live, conventional or dead; they may also be primary or complex. In energizing and keeping thought in motion by drawing attention to similarity between phenomena where dissimilarity had been assumed, *live* metaphor is important in processes of cultural formation, organizational change, institutionalization and persuasive strategies, where the communication of attitudes and dispositions towards both control and creativity is critical (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005; Marshak, 1993, 2003; Oswick et al., 2002, 2003; Synott, 1993; Van Wolputte, 2004: 256–257). It instantiates an interactive process that creates similarity, where 'seeing-as' or 'conceiving-as' generates a newly emergent meaning complex (Black, 1962, 1979; Cornelissen, 2006a: 686; Morgan, 1983; Ortony, 1979). A *conventional* metaphor has lost some of its original innovative qualities. It is recognized as a metaphor but is widely overused, in its most tired form being a cliché such as 'captain of industry'. It may even go so far as to become a *dead* metaphor; one that is no longer recognized as a metaphor (McCloskey, 1983: 506). Additionally, a *primary* metaphor relates a target image to a basic and simple element of human sensory, often physical experience, whilst *complex* metaphor builds on and elaborates this basis. For example, 'phallic masculinity' evokes the phallus, a symbol of power derived from a metaphorical association with the real erect penis, conjuring a range of attitudes, behaviours, qualities and experiences associated with the lived and

embodied experience of being identified-as-male (Connell, 1995: 33; Haste, 1993; Strathern, 1978). Men behaving phallically do so, however, without giving their genitals a conscious thought – because the symbolic process involved in ‘doing masculinity’ efficiently conveys meaning without the need for reflection or reconnection to specific corporeal experience. This behaviour comes easily and apparently naturally because it has been laminated into centuries of social structuring, religious ordering, military campaigning, political contestation, the design of work, the outputs of media, and channelled into ceremonial, domestic and institutional architectures.

Phallic masculinity may thus be invoked indirectly, by association with certain attributed qualities (such as control, inflexibility, hardness, discipline, rigidity, persistence, dominance or aggression). Other metaphors relating to these qualities – such as a stern gaze being described as ‘flinty’ – may also be stimulated. In this way the phallic metaphor operates behind the scenes, implicitly, as a ‘root metaphor’ (Pepper, 1942; Morgan, 1986). Root metaphors work best as a form of symbolic capital, or image-schema (Cornelissen 2006a), with more complex or elaborating metaphors acting as symbolic investment or disinvestment in that capital. In organization studies, the tendency for metaphors to ossify and become naturalized, exerting a deadening effect on thought and consequently on change, has led to an emphasis on unearthing root metaphors and their derivatives. Following Morgan (1986, 2006) efforts have been directed towards decreasing the stultifying effect of such metaphors and generating new, more energizing alternatives.

In this article, the primary genital objects of penis, testes and semen underpin the complex ‘phallic’, ‘testicular’ and ‘seminal’ metaphors that in different ways elaborate lived psychological and sociological aspects of being masculine. These metaphors do not *represent* real objects: they merely signify images of unstable concepts that may relate only distantly to those objects (for example, the virtual phallus is nobody’s *actual* penis). Such images suppress difference in the actual variations in the qualities of real penises and the diversity of male experiences of power more broadly. At the same time they also come to logocentrically regulate the play of signifiers operating in, or being ascribed, the role of ‘root’, as we have already noted (Cornelissen and Kafouros, 2008). Changes in the lived experience of being masculine – often quite richly described in recent organizational research – constantly throw up new metaphorical relations that modify or depart from these ‘root’ metaphors, without displacing or diluting their underlying influence.

As Pepper (1942) noted in coining the term, root metaphors always connect to an element of the concrete. Initially, as live metaphor, this association may be overt and conscious (as in early religions). At first very powerfully stimulating, transforming, focusing and controlling social action and organization, it later slips into the background. In so doing, it becomes more difficult to challenge the more it is naturalized. So dominant has the phallic metaphor been that alternative testicular and seminal masculinities have barely been recognized as metaphors as such, although some of their lived features are familiar. Our discussion therefore includes a brief consideration of the historical development of the phallic metaphor, illustrating that it has always co-existed alongside testicular and seminal metaphors. The interplay of these metaphors has brought out different aspects of the masculine, some of which are more conducive to relational and *pro*-creative processes (Figlio, 2000: 151), rather than control and

domination. We do not suggest that creativity itself is either masculine or feminine, but that pro-creative elements of each gender orientation energize creative processes that overrun binary distinctions.

Before we do this, however, we will further develop our picture of recent discussions and critiques of masculinity in organizations and our argument that they are restricted in their considerations of masculine thought, behaviour and experience by an implicit perpetuation of the phallic root metaphor.

Masculinity and organization

Masculinity has recently undergone a transition from being socio-culturally represented as essential, unitary, proprietary and confident in its identity, towards increasing exposure as a contingent field of responses to existence fraught with fragmentation, anxiety and contradiction, rendering assumptions of its continuity problematic (MacInnes, 1998). Yet despite sensitive empirical and analytic attempts to map new modes of being masculine, or 'doing' masculinity (e.g. Ashcraft, 2005, 2013; Connell, 2005; Ely and Meyerson, 2010; Gherardi and Poggio, 2007; Knights and Kerfoot, 1998; McDowell, 2003), awareness and discussion of these transitions has not been prominent in management and organizational literature. As an exemplar, the *Handbook of Gender and Organization* (Jeanes et al., 2011) does not feature masculinity as a topic: *organizational* masculinity features only as inflected by its appearance in discussions of the body (leading bodies, successful bodies, working bodies), the military, organizational politics, career strategies or popular culture. Indeed, while 'feminism', 'feminist', 'motherhood' and 'women' appear in chapter titles, similar signifiers of men and masculinity do not. Even when masculinity is in focus there can be blind spots. A subtle and influential landmark discussion of the tensions between unity and difference in *studying* masculinity by Collinson and Hearn (1994: 153) attempts to recognize plurality and multiplicity without losing sight of structured asymmetries, inequalities and male domination. But Baxter and MacLeod (2005: 630) note that when they turn their attention to multiple masculinities *in management*, their influential typology identifies only varieties, or 'multiples', of *phallic* masculinity (Collinson and Hearn (1994/2001: 156–162). Where other discussions of masculinity have occurred in the literature, they have tended to target the dominance of males, in both senior and middle-management positions, in most types of formal organization. Despite important insights into masculine behaviour and male practices, they have focused exclusively on dynamics of power and control in hegemonic masculinity (Kerfoot, 2004; Kerfoot and Knights, 1993, 1998: 16; Knights and Kerfoot, 2004). For some critical studies, mainstream approaches that identify 'softer' feminine traits as significant for improving organization merely provide a means for already privileged males to enhance their personal skill repertoire or build more effective teams, rather than challenging their basic assumptions about the gendered nature of organization or its power structures (Metcalf and Linstead, 2003). Even males in occupations that are traditionally gendered as feminine become adept in practices that continue to enhance their masculine status: for example, male nurses dominate interaction with predominantly male doctors; male pre-school teachers take over senior administrative roles (Pullen and Simpson, 2009).

Despite the contributions that this focus on practice has made, Fournier and Smith (2006) argue that gender-focused empirical critical management research has nevertheless tended to follow a 'script' in its analyses to reproduce what they term a *masculinity genre*. 'Enduring clichés' establish a set of negative associations of 'maleness' with control and dominance of the other, treat *all* masculinity as hegemonic and install it as 'the embodiment of organization' (p. 144). Schrock and Schwalbe (2009: 81) underline this by stressing the feminist argument that the very act of identifying as 'male' (rather than simply as a man) is an intervention into a power structure that perpetuates the domination of one gender over the other (see also: Johnson, 2005; Walby, 1990):

Whatever other consequences they might have, and regardless of what individual males consciously intend, *manhood* acts [i.e. acts whose main objective is to signify maleness and identify with a masculine group – *authors*] have the effect of reproducing an unequal gender order.

As a wide range of behaviours can be interpreted to have such masculine identification as their *main* objective, Fournier and Smith (2006: 143) conclude that 'masculinity seems trapped in its "hegemonic" form that aligns it with stereotypical images of control, competitiveness and instrumental rationality'. Organizational masculinity thus manifests as an untrustworthy and discredited gender identity, without any obvious positive possibilities or potential, offering at best seduction and simulation rather than change. Consequently, the potentiality for identifying and utilizing levers of change within masculinity remains underexploited.

Phallic fathers and melancholic mothers

For Höpfl (2008: 350) these 'tired' assumptions about hegemonic masculinity have a long history grounded in patriarchy (Ashcraft and Mumby, 2004: 34–37; Easlea, 1981; Johnson, 2005; Kimmel, 1994: 120–121; Lloyd, 1984; MacInnes, 1998; Ross-Smith and Kornberger, 2004; Whitehead, 2002; Whitehead and Barrett, 2001: 21). The 'father' figure is seen as foundational to and of social life, with the power to dominate, define, order, typologize, taxonomize, measure and regulate, discipline and punish, such that 'what is normal and taken-for-granted is a world which is defined, constructed and maintained by notions of male order' (Höpfl, 2008: 350).

The feminine, in patriarchy, is constructed as that which is lacking – in stability, consistency, specificity or durability, for example – and which consequently escapes the reach, and hence the validation, of such definitions. But ironically this elusive 'feminine' is necessary to maintain the precise intuitive sense of corporeality and sociality that patriarchy (but not necessarily masculinity or men) lacks. Höpfl (2008: 357–358) contrasts the authoritarian character of the patriarch with the caring qualities associated with the maternal character, which is proposed as a better basis for human organization. By venerating the dominating father-figure and a masculine reading of the concept of the matrix (as a grid or set of calculated relations, rather than a nourishing lining), organizations deprive themselves of a mother-figure, and the associated benefits of a nurturing culture. In the process they suppress their sense of humanity, and community. When organizations eventually

become aware of this loss, often as the result of crisis, the patriarchal organization creates its own *artificial* version of the mother figure, or imago (Schwartz, 1992) via 'organizational culture'. Rather than cede the crucial power to define to the maternal function, it makes *simulated* maternal values 'the means of measuring and controlling organizational processes' (Höpfl, 2008: 351). Hence we have seen more than three decades of proliferation of definitions and measurements of 'quality', codes of 'ethics', 'culture' audits, customer or student 'care', 'satisfaction' or 'experience' surveys and 'leadership' potential. Deficiencies, once perceived as potentially subversive, are exalted to become the focus of elevated attention, in order to be defined, measured, contained, effectively inoculated against and cancelled out, as masculine order is restored.

When particular women are elevated to senior roles, even as CEOs, this situation is not reversed. These women can never themselves become father-figures, only simulacra, rendering themselves commodities to be more effectively consumed in a patriarchally regulated 'market' (Ashcraft, 2013; Lefebvre, 1991: 310). They cannot become the leading *member* of the organization without acquiring a '*metaphorical member*', or phallus, as the price of 'membership' (Höpfl, 2003b). Patriarchal organization combines the oppressive phallic social relations of phallogocracy with the dominant rational fantasy of logocentrism in *phallogocentracy* – centralizing logic and power in a marginalizing human structure.

But do phenomena that refuse to fit within the symbolic categories of patriarchal or phallic masculinity all automatically default to the feminine category by virtue of falling outside this defined symbolic order (Flannigan-Saint-Aubin, 1994a: 239)? When confronted by the uncomfortable realities, irrationalities and emotional messiness of getting things done with and through others, does masculinity *inevitably* regress into its calculative shell of symbolic abstraction, the text of the law or the rules of the game? Phallic anxiety, the fearful castration fantasy that loss of power results in a loss of identity that culminates in a passive merging with the other, determines and mobilizes defensive dynamics in order to preserve separation from the other and deny any resolution of the split. These self-centred and narcissistic processes are written into the practice and mindsets of many organizations. But the phallic is only *one* exemplar of its metaphorical category, and alone this metaphor does not capture the range of ontological options available to males. Nor is it necessarily representative of their experience. There are other modalities with the potential for different responses to anxiety. Historical, anthropological and archaeological studies, whilst affirming that the prevalence of the phallic metaphor is not confined to the modern West, have also uncovered the historical and contemporary existence of non-phallic testicular and seminal metaphors shaping masculinity in society. In what follows we critically explore differences and commonalities between these conceptualizations of masculinity and develop a more integrated picture of their modalities.

A brief history of masculine genital metaphors

Although the penis, with the phallus as its erect form, historically emerged to provide a necessary metaphoric and conceptual function for hunter-gatherer societies' corporeal, spiritual and social *power*, its earliest manifestations are more enigmatic and often

symbolize both divine intelligence (abstraction) *and* irrational nature (corporeality), power and fertility. In Greece and Rome, copulation, and the capacity to copulate, became associated with social power – the power to *initiate* the reproduction of the civilization rather than nurture it. For the Greeks, the association with fertility and creativity remained significant but for Imperial Rome, power was more closely associated with domination and machismo, and potency became the *sine qua non* of manhood (Friedman, 2002: 24; Keuls, 1993: 68; Stephens, 2007: 88).

Phallic power split most cleanly into its two modern derivations – pure intellect and raw physicality – with Augustine of Hippo (354–430 AD). In *City of God* (2002a), and *Confessions* (2002b), he elaborated the dichotomy between creative spirit, a conduit of the power of life, and uncontrollable flesh, a distraction from and threat to the divine (Miller, 1995: 8–9). Michel Foucault (1981, 1985, 1997) takes up this issue and reads it into modern institutional thinking in a rarely cited paper that identifies the two key elements of the phallic worldview that shaped later understanding. Although the uncontrollable *corporeal* penis is regarded as the fleshly tool of the devil, the *abstract* phallus emerges as the centre of the obsession with *perfectibility* and *control*. These concerns were then written onto the psycho-social with significant consequences for masculine self-identity and behaviour. On the one hand, the struggle for masculine self-control was seen as internal, the conscience perennially policing itself against inappropriate (devilish rather than divine) motivations, desires and thoughts. At the same time, it was also recognized as external. The scarifying fear of pollution, by anything outside the body, resulted in the strict regulation and disciplined demarcation of relationships with others that might undermine self-control and both corporeal and moral purity. This emerged as two alternative perspectives:

- (a) The problem of *erection*: the social is seen as an outcome of the problematics of individual subjectivity, the reflexive relationship of oneself to oneself, and the struggle between the controlling will and involuntary impulsive assertions (Foucault, 1985; cf. Höpfl, 2002). Subjects need to be constructed, disciplined, controlled and maintained, and not dissipated in inappropriate interactions. Individual-level problems need to be contained at that level, or they will generate social problems. For management, for example, the focal problem and site of flaws would be seen as the manager; the remedy self-help or management learning.
- (b) The problem of (inter) *penetration*: the social is recognized as itself being problematic, its problems resulting from the necessity of forming relationships with other people, the difficulty of controlling these relationships, and their resulting effects on the self. Grosz (1994: 201) extends Foucault's argument in contending that the real problem here is in the defensive understanding of reciprocal relational flow *as* penetration, and hence as a *threat*. Being penetrated (physically, emotionally, intellectually, territorially) and becoming an occupied receptacle rather than an active agent, constitutes failure, loss of power and loss of identity (Linstead, 2000b: 35). For organizational management, even when understood as the simple task of getting things done through others, the understanding and practice of 'done through others' becomes contested terrain, the problem one of politics, the remedies in tension between dominance and dialectics.

After Augustine, Foucault (1985: 371) argues, the constant challenge of the erection problem, of self-control, was to identify which of our desires were libidinous, compulsively stemming from involuntary corporeal urges (in pursuit of bodily objectives – such as spontaneous erection) and which were pure and might legitimately act as divine inspiration (in the service of spiritual objectives). In its later secular versions, which persist today, this self-scrutiny became a form of perfectionism in pursuit of an ideal, whether of spirit, mind or body. The phallus, then, came to be symbolically at the heart of ontological questions of truth or illusion – knowledge became power and vice versa. The problem of penetration versus self-control, rather than being seen as a delicate one of relational and even mutual reciprocity, becomes one of domination: a problem of *power over the other* or *the other's power over the subject*. This translates into anxiety about the loss of the ability to exercise this power (and loss of self-control), such socio-political flaccidity resulting in submission to the other's power – or metaphorically being penetrated and polluted rather than penetrating and purifying (Braun and Wilkinson, 2001; Otero, 1996).

This gendering of knowledge extended also to the gendering of capitalism. McNally (2011: 18–36) notes that the anxiety over control of self and other inscribed itself both on human bodies, as an urge to anatomize and dissect (Dale, 2001), and on land, as an urge to divide and enclose. Both of these impulses became endemic to the success of capitalism, and to the ensuing dispossession of women. The body was not mysterious or mystical: its urges could be controlled not simply by faith or self-denial but by breaking the human machine down into its parts and understanding how they worked (McNally, 2011: 44).

This dissection principle extended to the land. Mapping and anatomy became the discursive frame for representing, analysing and cutting up society, but this process was gendered (McNally, 2011: 43). While 'the bourgeois male self was constructed as a possessive individualist . . . The body of the common people was *feminised* and animalised, treated as a deficient type, a leaky vessel inadequately separated, differentiated and defined' (McNally, 2011: 44; emphasis added). Phallic power and control thus remained troubled by the resistance and continual resurgence of feminine discourses, but it also had to contend with testicular and seminal discourses, which it sought to suppress or co-opt.

In antiquity, the testes were associated with powerful and energizing animalistic drives, a vital but dangerous and potentially uncontrollable force that needed to be channelled and (phallically) controlled to be productive. Where the physical and social risks were considered to be too great, the testes (of slaves, prisoners or adulterers) would be removed. Semen was not directly connected as being a product of the bestial testes – for Plato and Aristotle it was a creative outpouring of an active and *spiritual* life-force. Thomas Aquinas' 13th-century attacks on semen's *disordered* emission (Aquinas, 1947; Laqueur, 2003) served to rehabilitate this view for Catholicism under the controlling auspices of the phallic metaphor. This advocacy of conservation of the precious fluid matured in the 18th century into Swiss physician Samuel Tissot's 'spermatic economy' in which loss of semen was seen as weakening both body and mind, to the point of insanity (Friedman, 2002: 58–59; Moore, 2007: 22). Even positive 'spermatic' arguments remained essentially phallic in their view of sperm as the creative force in the individual

that burst out, celebrating *its own fecund power* rather than *exuberating in creative union*. ‘Seminality’, an appreciation of the seminal function as non-phallic, fluid between the poles of abstention and excess, was regarded as a feminine quality (Figlio, 2000).

Contemporary theorizations of masculine genital metaphors

Although the phallic metaphor has been historically dominant, as we have seen, its character has not been unwavering. Alternative emphases have been present, and have occasionally surfaced. The critique of representation in the social sciences has led to explicit attention being given to alternatives to phallicism in a variety of disciplines and in this section we bring these insights together. Whilst critics have shared a common concern, they have constructed their alternatives differently. Both Haddon (1988) and Flannigan-Saint-Aubin (1994a) pursue a *testicular* alternative to the phallic, and both identify what they regard as its positive and negative aspects. Haddon, however, suggests that there are *three* modes of the testicular – wholesome, exaggerated and atrophied – whilst Flannigan-Saint-Aubin equates the wholesome with the positive and collapses the other two categories into the negative, which gives him only *two* categories. Kroker and Kroker (1987, 1991) suggest that Haddon’s categories of the exaggerated and the atrophied can be expressed as excess and implosion (or inversion) following Baudrillard (1983), and that these constitute masculinity’s own version of female ‘hysteria’, which we term phallusteria. Mirandé (2001), in reporting an empirical study of the contemporary understanding of ‘macho’ in Mexico, also identifies clear distinctions being made by his respondents between positive and negative aspects of this surprisingly complex phallic category. Figlio (2000) differs somewhat in not considering the testicular and arguing that it is the *seminal* that counters the phallic – and that not only is the phallic a narcissistic defence against the seminal, it is so for *both* males and females. Hysteria results when the narcissistic defence of the ego becomes manic and inevitably fails rather than being specifically feminine. The theorization of the three metaphors, though sophisticated and grounded in a range of anthropological, psychoanalytic, sociological and cultural evidence, clearly overlaps. But it does not integrate, as none of the authors attempts to connect their work to that of any of the others. In what follows we will endeavour to establish fruitful new connections.

The orientation of phallic supremacy towards the self is narcissistic and effectively recognizes only one gender – male. The feminine is not-male, a spoiled or lacking form of the masculine. The other’s difference, and its distinctive autonomy, is denied by a strategy of reducing a diversity of *specific* differences to a simpler common measure against the familiar; even superior knowledge of the other’s internal state can be claimed by deployment of simple indicators and projective identification (as in personality tests). Figlio argues that this *reduction in dimensionality* – very akin to the arguments of Höpfl (2003a) discussed earlier – is neither characteristically male nor female, being a *fantasy* rather than an engagement with the object-world (Figlio, 2000: 138). Accordingly, human reproduction, in the fantasy of phallic monism that extends at least to Ancient

Greece, is constructed as an omnipotent act, where the active phallus sows a seed that is nurtured in an uncreative receptacle, and the child becomes essentially an extension of the phallic self (Friedman, 2002: 15). The symbolic exaggeration of this function leads to a delusional relationship to external reality, the phallus (power) assuming almost magical properties with the semen (creation) as its extension.

For Figlio (2000, 2010), this seminal function is *the* distinctive masculine function. As he argues, again complementing Höpfl (2008) and Chodorow (1994), dominant phallic masculine behaviour and psychic life enact a defensive posture which is rendered invisible largely because it has aligned itself hegemonically with particular socially ascendant modes of living. These involve the establishment, regulation and often violent preservation of boundaries; the scrutiny and measurement of behaviour and characteristics; and power over the public arena and state affairs (Figlio, 2000: 137–139; Foucault, 1995). This defence, he argues, centres around the repudiation of *seminality*.

When the seminal (or more strictly, spermatic) function is symbolically recognized rather than rejected, the semen can be seen to be an offering, not self-sufficient but a gift *put at risk* and in need of welcoming by the ovum, without which it is wasted. Semen then is *pro-creative* rather than creative – it is humble, incomplete and in need of reciprocity, with sperms produced in generous amounts with prodigious excess. For Figlio (2000: 141) then, ‘the masculine character is seminal, and in its distinctiveness *it is nothing without the female character*’. The penis here, rather than having magical and controlling phallic power, acts more as a medium, a bridge between the male and female, bringing their different creative contributions together (Lorentzen, 2007). But as Freud noted this is frustrated by the anxious phallic defence. Any form of dependence on the feminine can surface oedipal anxieties about reabsorption into the feminine, with loss of potency and indeed, selfhood, and the destabilization of fragile masculine identity. This vulnerability is then defended by repudiating the seminal to maintain phallic integrity. The fact that the male is born from the female and not from the male incorporates a separation of like and like that needs to be psychologically re-bonded and provokes a specifically masculine ontological insecurity, and this awareness did so even in antiquity (Badinter, 1997; Flannigan-Saint-Aubin, 1994a: 243–244; Friedman, 2002: 191; Moore, 2007: 20–24).

Flannigan-Saint-Aubin (1994a: 245) supports the critique of the phallic defence, arguing that reproductively, femininity is ‘the natural condition of which masculinity is a modification’ (Flannigan-Saint-Aubin, 1994a: 244). The physiological condition of maleness is always a becoming, a risky process rendered insecure by the perennial possibility of its reabsorption into the female state.¹ The ‘male’ always needs to be physically constructed, at a genetic level, as moving away from a female norm. The resulting insecurity can be seen to be both ontological *and* ontic, producing a condition of tension that is carried through intrapsychic, interpersonal and social constructions of masculinity as anxiety. The metaphorical phallic response encapsulates a defensive sealing-up against the possibility of reabsorption, a rigidly disciplined determination of psychological and social (and occasionally physical, philosophical and political) boundaries established against the possibilities of such fluid regression towards its own femininity (see also: Haste, 1993: 84–99). Flannigan-Saint-Aubin (1994a) wishes to identify this anxious reaction *as such* because phallic metaphors have concentrated only on the *effects* of

difference, rather than its sources, and this, he argues has reduced the complexity of the understanding of the masculine relation to the feminine. Following a similar argument to that in Figlio's critique of the 'reduction of dimensionality' in the phallic metaphor, he argues that this can be reversed by restoring a 'masculine feminine' element to the masculine. This can be done by providing additional metaphors for other modes of being masculine that reconnect to both the interior and exterior feminine. Flannigan-Saint-Aubin's (1994a) consequent discussion of testicularity identifies a positive, nurturing side related to paternal phallicism, but also a stubborn, resistant, negative side: *testeria*, which we discuss in more detail below. His objective is a reorientation of the available discourses of masculinity towards ways that enable more balanced and mature approaches to authority to develop, personally, socially and organizationally.

In developing our own categorization of metaphorical modes of masculinity from these sources, we have retained the idea of positive and negative versions of each metaphor that is common to all the theorists we have discussed, but is configured in different ways. We are persuaded, following Haddon and contra both Flannigan-Saint-Aubin and Figlio that both exaggerated and atrophied versions are possible. But we also agree with Kroker and Kroker (1991) that these variants can be applied equally to the phallic as well as the testicular, constituting a third, but dual category – which we call the excessive and inverted forms (Kroker and Kroker, 1987, 1991; Baudrillard, 1983). In our representation of these ideas we extend the resulting tripartite structure, with its doubled third term, to Figlio's account of seminality. This we reproduce in tabular form for clarity (see Table 1) but it must be emphasized that these are snapshots of aspects of masculinity in motion and in relationality. They should not be seen as specific, essential and exclusive forms, archetypes or stereotypes that combine and recombine, but rather as mutable images that constantly leak into each other, whose apparent stability over time merely emerges from ongoing and asymmetrical semiotic struggles in a field of representational turbulence.

Masculine metaphors and modalities

In our formulation we are not attempting simply to replace the phallic metaphor by the seminal or the testicular but to capture a more complex picture of the tensions within masculinity at work socially and organizationally. We draw on existing conceptual and empirical studies that provide historical and contemporary evidence, but space constraints demand that we can only offer a summary and indicative discussion of these sources here. Considering current forms and modalities of the phallic metaphor, we identify the most relatively socially positive as being *benign patriarchy*, a system in which discipline is imposed organizationally with a degree of tolerance, principles being applied rigorously but with emphasis on the need for judgement and responsibility amongst subordinates, which Handy calls subsidiarity (Handy, 1995). In this system, the principle of improvement is honoured, and patriarchs may be kindly, encouraging both initiative and self-sacrifice, but can also by turn be condescending and crushing when control is at issue. Trust is extended but loyalty expected. Anxiety may emerge over the patriarch's continuing abilities ('erection') and how the organization will align itself politically after the founder ('penetration'). Deborah Cadbury's sensitive account of the history of the international chocolate industry, which includes the significant part played

Table 1. Three metaphors of masculinity.

Root metaphor	Positive form	Negative form	Excessive/ inverted form
Phallic <i>Organizational manifestation</i>	<i>Benign patriarchy</i> Benevolent discipline. Values improvement and imposes principles rigorously but emphasizes judgement and responsibility. Can encourage both initiative and self-sacrifice but can be condescending. Problem areas are 'erection' (self-control, power) and 'penetration' (relations with /control over others).	<i>Phallogracy</i> Tight hierarchical control; imposes rules and procedures rather than principles. Displaces judgement. May encourage intense competition between individuals and pursuit of perfection. May be oppressive, violent, cruel and destructive. Zero tolerance of error. At a personal level may involve put-downs and status degradation.	<i>Phallusteria</i> Desperate attempts to extend power and control seek a variety of increasingly bizarre ways to prop up power and authority. May tip over into destructiveness of projects, including others and even the self.
Testicular <i>Organizational manifestation</i>	<i>Supportive affiliation</i> Classic coaching behaviour, developing a capacity in others to 'have the balls' to assert oneself. Supportive of initiative and develops individuality with collaborative limits. Endurance, protectiveness, passive listening, receptiveness, nurturing over time, 'stickability', continuity. Error is corrigible. May degenerate into mere clubbiness, which leads to an easy consensus in decision making.	<i>Competitive affiliation</i> Team is a collection of individuals – works together to compete against external groups or threats, but a high degree of internal competition and rivalry can produce short-term destructive behaviour, cheating, ostensive display, and risk taking. Error comes to be seen as weakness, as in letting the side down. Can become addictive.	<i>Testeria</i> The feeling you get when you try your best but you don't make the team or don't fit in. Feelings of abjection, being vanquished, unworthiness. Depressive, obstructive, stubborn, expresses hopelessness and helplessness. No confidence to initiate new activity, withdraws from belief in existing activity. May convert passive aggression to active opposition to the culture.
Seminal <i>Organizational manifestation</i>	<i>Inspiration</i> Relatively uncommon despite being a widely claimed virtue of leadership. Inspiration sets a seed (inseminates) and energizes it, disseminates and leaves it to grow. May offer advice and support but the autonomy of the recipient is never in question. High tolerance for error as part of the learning and maturation process.	<i>Colonization</i> The tension of planting a seed and leaving it to grow becomes too much – attempts to control the seed by making it a clone. Autonomy and error increasingly less tolerated. Use of a network of 'disciples' for political ends. Manipulative creation of dependencies.	<i>Semineria</i> An almost compulsive expenditure of self in a variety of activities, taking on too much, becoming less influential the more it tries to influence and be recognized. Working harder but not smarter. Squandering and dis-seminating, wastefulness. A negative inversion is where nihilistic destructive rumour, gossip, slander and misinformation are spread regardless of personal consequences.

by her own family, offers several examples of benign patriarchs who struggled ethically with contemporary 19th-century constraints and their own consciences to reconcile spiritual development, commercial expansion and social welfare (Cadbury, 2010).

The negative form of the phallic metaphor is *phallocracy*. Again, here it is important to remember that phallic masculinity is a narcissistic defence against anxiety, and operates by individualizing and dividing its environment. As Höpfl (2001, 2003a, 2008) notes of a series of organizational attempts to incorporate calculative performance measures for caring behaviours, it sets idealistic standards that reduce the dimensionality of what is regarded as missing. Conformance or comportment to standard in these cases never attains the absent ideal because the measured 'objects' are a fantasized defence against reality, being both melancholic and, ultimately, tragic. In the negative form the underlying anxiety emerges as its aggressive opposite, with tight hierarchical controls being imposed. Uncontested rules and procedures rather than principles are applied, with no room for interpretation. Rationality displaces emotion; control displaces judgement; criticism is not welcomed. Management style may become oppressive, bullying and violent. Lower down the phallic organizational order, excessive deference may be shown upwards, but power distance is maintained from those below, often by criticism and condescension. The third form is *phallusteria* which has two subforms: the *excessive*, which can when frustrated collapse into its opposite, or *inverted* form (Kroker and Kroker, 1987; 1991). Here anxiety over power and control reach almost hysterical proportions and often bizarre attempts are made to prop up power and authority. Phallic leaders in this mode are not only unreceptive to criticism or deviation, they will frequently obsessively seek out apparent deviations from their prescriptions for punishment. They may also become fanatical about particular practices, techniques or means for achieving success. This delusional state can implode disastrously in destruction of others; or in conditions where failure is unavoidably acknowledged may rebound equally destructively on the self. As Real (2001: 364) notes, the depressive state that is a consequence of perceived phallic failure is itself seen as yet more evidence of personal lack of worth because 'the disapprobation attached to this disease [depression] is particularly acute for men'.

In this regard, Cohen (2001) selects organization and career-based exemplary cases to illustrate contemporary 'men in trouble' from internal and external phallic isolation. He draws on Minutaglio's (2001: 387) sensitive and nuanced account of a coach and a player who separately and in different circumstances overcame enormous obstacles to achieve outstanding success. Nevertheless, this was tragically not enough for the 'stringent, unyielding destinations' of their personal missions, and the resulting extreme depression claimed their lives. Cohen also includes in this category Faludi's (2001) account of the consequences of failure for a tragic stock-market day-trader whose implosion of self-loathing also claimed the lives of others. In his occupational isolation the trader became 'the garish distillation of the modern [phallic] male predicament – a Dockers-and-polo-shirted figure seated alone in his suburban home, wired to the Internet . . . like so many men in this telemarketed, outsourced economy' (Faludi, 2001: 388). The cost was his sanity, resulting in a homicidal and suicidal nadir that took both his life and the lives of his family. Whilst few cases are so extreme as to lead to self-immolation,² the tragic complexities of male phallic positioning – men acting *as men* – do not, contra Schrock

and Swalbe (2009), mean that they always participate in a gendered power structure that advantages either themselves or other males.

Turning from this picture of individual males under extreme stress, the testicular metaphor is more socially integrated and collectively oriented. It indicates being able to rise to a challenge, having the courage to go on stage, address a meeting, approach an attractive member of the opposite (or same) sex, confront a colleague, or enter a new arena of activity – even women can speak of ‘having the balls’ to do something (Marsh, 2009). The image is not, as is the phallus, about domination and submission, but about relations with others that may involve contest and risk. These entail the subject making an impression through the dynamics of their personality and influencing others to work with them, but not by controlling them. The contemporary testicular metaphor manifests itself most positively in *supportive affiliation*. Here we find evidence of classic coaching behaviour, developing a capacity in others to have the confidence to assert themselves responsibly, and ethically. Testicular leaders are supportive of initiative within others and develop individuality with limits, tolerating a degree of challenge, but being ready to address differences and working through them. Typical characteristics would be endurance, protectiveness, supporting and nurturing others over time, willingness to stick with a project or direction to ‘see it through’ and maintaining a sense of continuity. Martin’s (2001) qualitative feminist research identifies a range of positive affiliative behaviours including visiting, protecting, supporting and expressing fondness for others that become organizationally negative only when they are gendered – that is, when potentially positive behaviours are directed *only* towards other males. The bonding that ensues in such cases may, however, degenerate into mere clubbiness, which can lead to a too-easy consensus in decision making with differences not being fully explored, or to being ‘bewitched’ by the change process itself (Knights and McCabe, 2000). Martin (2001) gives examples of men prolonging meetings with irrelevant discussion in order to bond or ‘buddy’ as an example of this deterioration. For Flannigan-Saint-Aubin (1994a) this apparent, but superficial, rediscovery of the relational and responsive ‘masculine feminine’ is in these cases being defensively recolonized by the phallic into a new set of power tools. This raises the question of whether this sort of behaviour is inevitably regressively gendered.

Baxter and MacLeod (2005) present research evidence that such behaviours are not necessarily regressive, and argue that male testicular behaviour can in practice be beneficial for females. They undertook an extensive qualitative and quantitative study of 22 European organizations that had been through significant change processes and had subsequently won awards for their quality initiatives. They discovered from their data that in some of these organizations gender emerged as having been a significant factor in change processes. Baxter and Macleod discuss in detail two cases – which they term Telcom and Medicorp – that they draw from their wider sample. What they found in both cases was that quality-driven changes resulted in flattening of hierarchies and restructuring, leading to reductions in managerial posts, which meant that some managers were effectively demoted. On the other hand training and development opportunities opened up that enabled others to move on in unanticipated ways. Many of the beneficiaries in both companies were women: those suffering demotions or plateauing were mainly men. In each company Baxter and Macleod were directed by respondents to key managers who had been at the centre of the changes (‘Brian’ of Telcom and ‘Stephen’ of Medicorp),

who both managed in a newer and more relational, less distant, open, communicative and supportive style. These managers brought people together, where possible, and ‘provided the structures and resources to help incubate the change processes, nurturing the improvement initiatives and staff which developed and yielded considerable dividends’ (Baxter and MacLeod, 2005: 637). Baxter and MacLeod characterized this as positively testicular, rather than feminized.

Data consistent with these findings are also provided by Ely and Meyerson’s (2010) study of two primary cases and 10 secondary empirical cases of safety on dangerous oil rigs. When a shift in management style was introduced, they noted men moving away from the traditional phallic macho culture of the rigs, in which safety equipment was often not used and difficulties and problems not reported. What replaced it – as evidenced in substantial extracts from their qualitative data – they summarized as cultural practices that promote collectivistic goals, promote a learning orientation and align definitions of competence with bona-fide task requirements. The first and third practices are clearly supportive affiliative features, and the second is also present in both supportive testicularity and seminality. Ely and Meyerson (2010) also argue that the men were going as far as *undoing gender* by showing little accountability to conventional gender norms and articulating mutual expressions of vulnerability in the service of work goals, which again is positively testicular.

In negative mode, the metaphor highlights *competitive affiliation*. In this mode, a team is primarily a collection of individuals who may work effectively together to compete against external groups or threats, but display a high degree of internal competition and rivalry. Martin (2001: 598) identifies behaviours associated with such ‘contesting’ that straddle between the collective affiliative form of testicular masculinity and the phallic problem of social ‘penetration’ discussed earlier. This includes the requirement to be ‘gregarious/aggressive/social’, which can produce ‘sucking up’ behaviours when confronted by a more powerful and emphatically phallic male (or customer) and lead to decisions based on ‘liking or disliking’ the other. She also gives examples of men ‘peacocking’ or showing off to impress each other, and shows how easily this affiliative need for a male audience can itself deteriorate into a phallic need to dominate and control the relationship (Martin, 2001: 599). This can also produce a short-term orientation towards destructive behaviour, cheating and risk-taking, which ironically can become addictive. Accounts of the behaviour of traders and to some extent senior management at Enron illustrate this tendency, as do the fictionalized autobiographies of former City of London traders such as Geraint Anderson (*Cityboy*). Although in this regard it has become commonplace to hear aggressive and competitive masculine cultures, such as the financial markets, being referred to as ‘testosterone-fuelled’, whether and how testosterone, alongside its other functions, produces aggressive behaviour in males remains controversial. Sapolsky (1997: 151–152) and Mazur and Booth (1998) suggested that differences in culture that demand specifically competitive and aggressive behaviours can produce different self-perpetuating hormonal effects. Recent research on competitive sport has found that the effects of winning (exuberance) and losing (stress and depression) are the same for both players (Oliveira et al., 2009) and watchers (Van der Meij et al., 2012; Bernhardt et al., 1998) whether male or female. The modalities of the testicular metaphor may therefore have a basis that is *both* cultural and physiological.

The excessive and inverted forms accelerate these tendencies in *testeria*, a more depressive form of male hysteria. This is analogous to the dejected feeling of having tried one's best but failed to make the team or get the promotion. It is associated with feelings of abjection, of being vanquished, or unworthiness. In its excessive form we find hyper-compensatory engagement in obsessive but socially dysfunctional behaviours, such as the aggressive and obsessive pursuit of money, status or products. This can be seen as a manifestation of a homosocial desire for the symbolically invested capitalist phallus. Rather than being a desire for the *object itself* (for example, financial capital, organizational position, or specific products) it is more a desire for identification with that group or body (for example, a new senior management group) that commonly *holds power over the object* (Flannigan-Saint-Aubin, 1994b). Typically inverted behaviours are depressive, obstructive and stubborn, expressing hopelessness and helplessness in the face of an intransigent reality. Flannigan-Saint-Aubin (1994a: 250) characterizes *testeria* as being stagnant, intractable, petulant, temperamental, insolent, fretful and morose – literally *testy*. Here incubation, stability and steadfastness lead to an inability to let go, a holding on to the past in the face of change and development, inertia and lack of direction. Baxter and MacLeod (2005) discuss two cases of change managers, as noted earlier, who because they had a principled commitment to not making anyone redundant, had to work with a legacy of sullen and disaffected managers who displayed *testeria*. In Telecom, senior manager Brian had a subordinate manager who was openly and visibly 'morose and fretful', whilst in Medicorp senior manager Stephen had a finance director who was 'petulant, stagnant and intractable' and who refused to open the curtains of his office, working in complete isolation from the rest of the company (Baxter and MacLeod, 2005: 637, 635). Such *testeria* is nostalgic: an outsider's envious view of an in-group. *Testerics* who perceive themselves as an out-group have no confidence in initiating new activity and withdraw from belief in, and commitment to, existing activity. They may under pressure convert passive aggression to active resistance. This may enable some positive development, as it allows the negative behaviour to be confronted and worked through, but more often such resistance is violently destructive.

The seminal metaphor presents a different picture. The positive form of seminality is *inspiration*. Its occurrence is relatively uncommon, despite being customarily attributed to 'transformational' leadership, virtue ethics and 'phronetic' or wisdom-based approaches to organizing, largely because most organizations have levels of anxiety that readily provoke a phallic defence. Inspiration sets a seed (in-seminates) and energizes it, dis-seminates (by distribution) and leaves it to grow. Sometimes this might seem like benign neglect, and not all seeds will germinate. Seminal leadership would display humility and an ability to constructively question self-motivation, encouraging the same capacity in others whilst retaining sufficient confidence to continue to act. Advice and support are offered but the autonomy of the recipient is not in question, the leader always being open to influence. A high tolerance for error is necessary as part of the learning and maturation process, its occurrence being often, but not solely, in highly creative contexts such as those of 'idea work', described in detail by Carlsen et al. (2012).

The negative version of seminality is *colonization*. This form is closest to phallicism but differs in its anxieties being about vulnerabilities arising from letting go, rather than control. The ambiguous tension of leaving a planted seed to grow becomes too much to

bear, the colonizer attempting to control the seed by making it a clone. Autonomy and error are increasingly less tolerated in favour of the mimetic homunculus, and meddling colonizers may *appear* to let go but constantly intervene and interfere. Absent colonizers may seek to maintain control at a distance, and may accordingly create and make use of a network of ‘disciples’ for political ends through the manipulative creation of dependencies. Examples of this can be found in Badham and Buchanan’s (2008) discussion of Machiavellian management, and in discussions of the operational processes of the Mafia and organized crime (Gond et al., 2007; Parker, 2012).

The troublesome excessive/inverted form of seminality is *semineria*. Here the inability to control the self, and the pathological need to see oneself reflected in the other and their actions, results in a compulsive expenditure of self in diverse activities, taking on too much, becoming less and less influential the more it tries to influence. The overall effect is squandering and *dis*-seminating on inappropriate ground, or well-meaning ineffectuality. Whitehead (2004) recognizes this in his attention-seeking character the ‘Zebedee’, who seems to be everywhere and involved in everything but achieves little, and accordingly fails to get the attention they crave. A more nihilistic inverted variant is one that spreads the seeds of destruction – rumour, gossip, doubt, disinformation, lying and undermining others – but with no intent to gain personal advantage, simply driven to damage others (Noon and Delbridge, 1993; Van Iterson and Clegg, 2008).

Within each metaphor four key psycho-social dimensions stand out: the question of *authority and leadership* (symbolic fatherhood); the question of the *relation to the other* (expressed through the symbolic role of the penis); the assumed *nature of life activity*; and the underlying approach to *conflict and its resolution*. For phallicism, authority is a matter of rule-giving, putting things and people in their place, control and discipline, and boundary-setting: protection in its gentlest mode, punishment in its most aggressive. For testicularity, authority resembles leadership as a matter of earned respect, mentoring, role modelling and coaching – although this can itself become mimetic and constricting. In seminality, authority is closer to ‘authoring’ – the leader/founder is primarily procreative, as progenitor, resource and counsellor, an initiator and enabler of the conditions for future growth and creation. It may exhibit a light and often humble touch.

Phallic relationality symbolically invests most heavily in the penis in its fantasized erect state. As radical feminists argue, it operates as a kind of battering ram: a means of imposing the will, subduing others and beating down or beating through others’ discursive defences against all opposition. The relationally symbolized testicular penis is a means, or tool, for achieving an end, whether that be pleasure or personal self-interest (and regardless of whether others also experience pleasure or benefit from the process). Relations are purposeful. In contradistinction, the gregarious seminal symbolic ‘penis’ acts as a *bridge*, reaching towards and shared with the other, bringing both self and other into two-way, rather than one-way contact. Relations are for themselves, open to what they may become (Lorentzen, 2007).

Phallic life is a form of competition or even war, a matter of survival in conditions of opposition and hostility, where the other is always potentially a threat to order, law and regulation. Testicular life is seen as a more sportingly competitive game, both individual and team-based, requiring sustained effort and application and not to be taken lightly.

Seminal life is constructed as a shared journey, one that cannot be undertaken meaningfully alone, with others being necessary for creative problem-solving and expression.

Phallic conflict is finally a battle to be won, with scores to be settled, not an invitation to establish shared consensus. Where discussion is allowed it tends to be factual. If debate emerges (French *débattre*, to beat down) it is over means rather than ends, and is intended to be decisive, concluding on one side or the other. Testicular conflict is enframed as a matter of ordinary interaction, the positive form being something recognized, worked with and resolved over time rather than being suppressed, or interpreted as an invitation to obliterate the other. In the negative form outward attributions and projections towards a common enemy or rival group are typical; internal attributions of blame may become divisive and political. Seminal conflict is usually anticipated and defused, being prevented by mutual reflection wherever feasible. It is recognized as resulting from the autonomous complementarities of difference, and engaged in as a form of (dialectical) communication, worked through or resolved through co-operation and dialogue (Ashcraft and Mumby, 2004).

Whilst we have emphasized the differences between the metaphors, in practice there is often overlap, and just as everyday speech frequently displays the mixing of metaphor so might everyday gendered action. The three metaphors co-exist and intersect, with modalities that may combine or conflict, rather than being separate segments that replace and displace each other. Time, context, situation and mood may contribute to how any individual shifts their symbolic investment, although given the subliminal and subconscious nature of root metaphors this is not always easy to discern, even reflexively. The framework presented here, though grounded in the theoretical, archive and field research of others, is inevitably synthetic and is offered as a tool for use in more detailed analysis of other gendered data from field, organizational or cultural sources that will enable richer pictures of masculinity in action or representation to be drawn.

Discussion and implications

We began by recognizing that studies of gender within and in relation to organization have a recent history of less than four decades; specific studies of masculinity much less. Nevertheless there is a substantial and sophisticated body of theoretical and empirical studies that have applied critical lenses to a topic the mainstream has often ignored, neglected or marginalized. However, studies have observed that even critical contributions to organization studies may display an unacknowledged metaphorical identification of masculinity with *phallic* masculinity. This can implicate masculinity as a whole as antonymic to 'maternal' organization: a more positive, relational and compassionate way of organizing human activity that emerges as an alternative to hegemonic norms. Other approaches critical of perpetuating binary or dualistic conceptualizations aspire to a third, de- or undegendered space. Both these moves leave masculinity as identified with a set of constraints from which they seek relief, rather than being a potential contributor to any alternatives envisaged. We suggested that in moving organization closer to a maternal model, or beyond gender models based on dualistic distinctions (which are not necessarily simplistic), a closer preliminary look at non-phallic possibilities for the 'masculine feminine' could be productive.

Accordingly, we explored a range of anthropological and historical sources demonstrating that alternative metaphors to the phallic have always been available, and have shifted over time in relation both to each other, and to the feminine. Although versions of the phallic have been dominant-hegemonic for centuries, they have never been absolute, nor have they been uncontested. We examined recent formulations of these metaphors in psychoanalysis, cultural studies, queer theory, organization and management studies and noted divergences and differences in perspectives that separately engaged parts of the relevant terrain, with none covering it all. We then integrated these approaches identifying three modalities of each metaphor, and discussed some examples illustrating our analysis.

We do not imagine this to be the final word in elaborating these metaphors. Cornelissen (2006a: 689) cautions us of the differences between ‘metaphorical images that exist in a pre-conceptual, non-propositional form’ and ‘models, constructs and propositions that are derived from them and that figure in extended theorizing and research’. We have not produced an abstract, reductive, conventionalized or even authoritative explication of these metaphors, nor a mechanism of how they work. Because of the multi-layered and polysemous interpretive variability of metaphor, such a textual strategy would itself be phallic. Instead, we have argued that phallic, testicular and seminal image-schema have been identified across different disciplines, where they have been elaborated along different lines and with differing levels of analysis and degrees of rigour. Our first contribution then has been to integrate these diverse treatments, shed new light on the phallic metaphor in particular, and make the other metaphors available for use in future research and analysis, for further debate and refinement. In providing a framework of modalities for our metaphors we do not suggest that their meaning is a source of derivative literal models, but that it may surface fresh dynamics, and perhaps help to shape and form other models, constructs or narratives, both everyday and theoretical (Cornelissen, 2004, 2005, 2006a, 2006b).

Masculinity, as a construction, is inherently unstable and emergent. This recognition provokes defensive responses, of which patriarchy is the most elaborately developed system, complementing capitalism as a form of political economy (Johnson 2011; McNally 2005). Even critical understandings of masculinity are vulnerable to making assumptions about its nature that rest on a long and often unacknowledged history of the normalization of phallic concerns as being definitive or typical of masculinity itself. However entrenched these normalizations may become, masculinity simultaneously contains the seeds of its own change. These need to be identified if change is to be effected.

We have set the context for the development of these metaphors as root metaphors historically, as they act to influence thought, action and institutions at an ontological level. This lies beyond the level of everyday discourse available for analysis in conversation, media outputs or research interviews – although these remain important sources. We have also drawn upon and integrated others’ conceptual, clinical, analytic, critical, historical and field research to identify different modalities of how these metaphors can operate. We further indicated the potential significance of this for understanding masculinity in organizations, specifically in relation to organizational change processes. We have accomplished the substantial preparation of the ground for future empirical work and have made available new conceptual tools to facilitate research design and data

analysis. We have also provided new materials for understanding processes that may be at work in considering the gendered dynamics of organizational change. So pervasive and significant are these metaphors that focusing on them offers new directions for integrating existing work on identity in change, identity practices, gendered control and resistance, and change processes in organizations. Baxter and MacLeod (2005) in the study we have discussed above found phallic men who were so cut adrift by organizational change that even the presence of considerate testicularity in change managers was insufficient to bring them around. But other individuals were able to change their behaviour and adapt, with appropriate help. New opportunities for women too were created. Ely and Meyerson (2010) noted moves towards ungendering in examples of managerial and organizational change from one of the toughest and most traditionally masculinist industries of all. Nevertheless, it remains true that identity change can come hard to both organizational and individual levels, and when it is embedded in a powerful root metaphor it can prove almost impossible to dislodge in a non-therapeutic environment, as Figlio (2000) also demonstrates. There is demonstrable potential for change within masculinity, but whilst there remains much to be done there is so far scant empirical work that focuses on these metaphorical considerations.

What then do we suggest? We need further qualitative research on how root metaphorical processes unfold in everyday practice, coupled with more extensive investigation of the ways in which root metaphorical modalities intersect and realign in relation to each other. The ultimate value of our necessarily schematic outline will lie in how it relates to fine-grained field data obtained by a full range of qualitative methodologies with regard to discursive formations, behaviours, practices, reflections, events and affects, informed by a careful interrogation of transdisciplinary concepts. The future work required is not purely inductive, and it may also be facilitated by abductive reanalysis of existing 'raw' qualitative data. Critical analysis should pursue the disruption of processes of unreflective ossification or freezing of metaphorical modalities, with attention to their implications for control, domination, conflict and resistance, organizational politics and gender relations. Specifically managerial issues such as leadership, culture 'management', motivation and performance, career development, team and collaborative working, responsibility and governance, organizational change and development, learning and the construction and use of knowledge and information are all fields that are likely to benefit from reconfiguration in the light of a root-metaphorical approach. Finally we need further organizational research addressing concerns with the development of strategies for curating the procreative aspects of masculinity in leaders and others.

The critical task is better to valorize the qualities of the dimension, rather than the 'nature' of the masculinity. If movement beyond the constrictions of existing perceived gender boundaries is to become a reality, it is most likely to succeed if a route can be found from within those existing treatments of masculinity that bring to the surface its interior otherness and its capacity to provide resources that will contribute to the process of change. Existing critical analyses have themselves provided evidence that not all men conform to the phallic archetype at all times, and that when they do, it can have disastrous consequences for them. It is important therefore to recognize the conditions and consequences of masculinity, identify common existing assumptions, images and practices, and explore new ones that will acknowledge and encourage the expression of

different and more positive, critical and reflexive styles of masculinity. For example, with an increase in attention to seminal masculinity we are likely to find a greater recognition of its procreative and inspiring characteristics, and its fundamental relationality, along with an awareness of its own fragility and inadequacies, without the need to dominate, demonstrate heroism or divide and conquer found in the phallic forms.

Appreciating more fully the metaphorical richness of possible constructions of masculinity, and how they may be implicitly at work, is an essential step in enabling positive steps towards change (Haste, 1993). Rorty (2005: 7) suggests that ‘speaking differently, rather than . . . arguing well, is the chief instrument of cultural change’ and we hope we have made a modest contribution to a new vocabulary.

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Notes

- 1 Flannigan-Saint-Aubin (1994a) argues that the root of psychological anxiety lies at the chromosomal level, which might seem both biologically determinist and speculative. But his argument is simply that becoming male involves differentiation from, but not separation from, the female. Tensions arising from the discursive recognition of separation/independence and the threat of reassimilation/dependence to identity stimulate anxiety regardless of its physiological origins. Feminist psychoanalyst Nancy Chodorow (1994) similarly proposes that male early development is a negative movement, towards the ‘not-female’ or unlike the mother, where early female development is identified positively as like-mother. But, as she puts it, because of male power and hegemony in society, these experiences are transformed and reversed – ‘both in everyday life and in theoretical and intellectual formulations, men have come to define maleness as that which is basically human, and to define women as not-men’ (Chodorow 1994: 47), a denial of their own partly feminine core. Easlea (1981) and Figlio (2001) both also note that the hubris of this normative reversal extends in masculinist science back to the search for understanding and mastery of the origin of humanity – or life itself – in the ultimate displacement of the mother.
- 2 Although men in the UK are 3.5 times as likely to commit suicide as women, an increase from 1.6 times in 1981 (Office of National Statistics, 2014; Siddique, 2014).

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