
Voicing Seduction to Silence Leadership

Marta B. Calás, Linda Smircich

'Everything is seduction and nothing but seduction. They wanted us to believe that everything was production. The leitmotif of world transformation, the play of productive forces is to regulate the flow of things. Seduction is merely an immoral, frivolous, superficial, and superfluous process: one within the realm of signs and appearances; one that is devoted to pleasure and to the usufruct of useless bodies. What if everything, contrary to appearances — in fact according to the secret rule of appearances — operated by (the principle of seduction?)'

(J. Baudrillard: 'On Seduction', 1988: 162)

'... If you cannot give something up for something of like value, if you consider it nonsubstitutable, then you do not possess it any more than it possesses you. So the father must not desire the daughter for that threatens to remove him from the homosexual commerce in which women are exchanged between men, in the service of power relations and community for the men.'

(J. Gallop: *The Daughter's Seduction*, 1982: 76)

Abstract

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Using feminist deconstructive strategies, this paper exposes some of the rhetorical and cultural conditions that have sustained the organizational leadership literature as a seductive game. The juxtaposition of 'leadership' and 'seduction' functions as the focus of analysis for understanding the cultural limits of *knowledge* at times when innovations in theory and research are expected, but do not seem to be happening. Through various analytical approaches, the paper creates 'reading effects' that may be unsettling for the community of organizational scholars. This opens different spaces for reflecting upon and arguing against the closure imposed by organizational research and theory on what can be said to be organizational knowledge.

Introduction

Following from the epigraphs above, we want to reflect on the meaning(s) of leadership for our own time and place. Joining other authors (e.g. Acker 1987; Billing and Alvesson 1989; Botti 1988; Burrell 1984; Hearn and Parkin 1984, 1987; Hearn, Sheppard, Tancred-Sheriff, and Burrell 1989; Piva 1988) who observe the pervasiveness of sexuality in organizational life, we propose that the myth of leadership and its associated romantic appeal (Meindl, Ehrlich and Dukerich 1985) creates the most vital sexuality in the organizational literature. These authors, however, discuss organizational practices without reflecting upon the 'seductive effects' of organizational *writings*. Our focus in this paper on *textual analysis* emphasizes the social role played by organizational research and theory (writings) as another form of organizational

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practice: that of the academic community, whose purpose is the creation of *knowledge* for other members of society, (e.g. Calás and Smircich 1988).

In these writings, we argue, leadership feeds on the denial of consummation while constantly playing on the edges of transgression. Rather than suppressing desire — overcoming immoral and illegal acts by heroic denials of instinct — leadership works because it embodies desire, while covering its traces with the sign of truth (e.g. Lewicki 1981). As a form of seduction, there is nothing profound about leadership. It is a game, all there on the surface. Meanwhile we, theorists of leadership, have worked hard — and, of course, in vain — to penetrate its depth and to erase its gaps. We hope to expose, in this paper, some of the rhetoric that has created this seductive game, and at the same time articulate its limitations.

Our analyses are inspired by poststructuralist approaches to cultural analysis (e.g. Calás 1987; Cooper and Burrell 1988). These analytical strategies focus on elements of signification through which specific societies inscribe what they designate as *knowledge*. Poststructuralist analyses are of particular value in understanding the cultural limits of knowledge at times when innovations in theory and research are expected, but do not seem to be happening (e.g., *Academy of Management Review*, October 1989; Webster and Starbuck 1988).

We consider the leadership literature to be a prime example of this condition. While it seems that organizational research and theory keeps on asking for new approaches and innovation, and that reconceptualizing leadership has been a focal point of these endeavours (e.g. International Leadership Symposia, 1971–1985; Standing Conference on Organization Symbolism, 1989; and sessions on leadership at every Academy of Management meeting in the U.S.A.) it also seems that the more things change, the more they remain the same. Thus, in this paper, we are concerned with what is claimed to be knowledge about leadership. What prevents us from saying something different from what can be said as *knowledge* about leadership in our society? What might make it possible to say something different?

In addressing these issues here, we employ three different poststructuralist approaches — Foucault's genealogies, Derrida's deconstruction, and feminist poststructuralism — to re-read four classic texts of the organizational literature: Barnard's *The Functions of the Executive*, McGregor's *The Human Side of Enterprise*, Mintzberg's *The Nature of Managerial Work*, and Peters and Waterman's *In Search of Excellence*. These texts have a common claim of being written more for organizational practitioners than for the scholarly community, but they have been influential in both communities. While written in different time periods, each text offers a definition and a prescription for effective organizational leadership.

We draw from Foucault's archeologies and genealogies (e.g. Foucault 1973, 1979, 1980, 1986, 1988; Davidson 1986) to underscore that, while

on the surface, our cultural discourses of knowledge appear to differ across disciplines and to change over time, they are embedded together in the modern *episteme*. Foucault's work uses historical analyses to underscore that different modalities of power are capable of producing a net-like organization of practices and discourses that society ends up calling *knowledge*. From this point of view, knowledge is produced by heterogeneous practices of power rather than from the discovery of *truth*, the traditional dictum in science and philosophy. In our analyses of organizational writings, we show how each text appears to promote change from prior works regarding what should be considered 'leadership' but each, at the same time, maintains a specific set of practices and discourses in place — the basic power relations network on which 'leadership' has been constituted and re-constituted.

We also draw on Derrida's deconstruction (e.g. Derrida 1976, 1978, 1982, 1986). This approach allows us to re-trace how the rhetorical and linguistic forms used to signify 'knowledge' work under the assumption that they represent a referent which is external to language. Deconstruction helps us to understand how this assumption masks the play of textual signification where words are meaningful, not because of their external referents, which are also linguistically constituted, but because of the existence of an oppositional term over which each apparently 'self-standing' terms stands to differentiate itself from the other, and become meaningful.

Our focus in this paper, on the leadership/seduction opposition, illustrates this point. Leadership, as a theoretical concept which claims to represent 'knowledge' about an external referent, i.e. what leadership in organizations really *is* and what organizational leaders really *do*, is constructed over an opposite concept, 'seduction', which it devalues and tries to make invisible in relation to 'leadership'. Deconstructing 'leadership' helps to analyze the dependency of supposedly opposite concepts on one another and shows how rhetoric and cultural conditions work together to conceal this dependency. Deconstruction, then, is not a way to destroy the concept of leadership. Rather, it is an analytical strategy that permits us to question the limits that may have been imposed upon discourses of *knowledge*, and opens the possibility of enacting other, different, discourses.

Since deconstructive readings may appear unusual to the typical reader of organizational texts, we offer some guidance for following what we are trying to accomplish. First, the deconstructive strategies we use are intended to enhance the doubleness in every discourse. That is, what we do emphasizes that writings and words are polysemous — they have multiple meanings — and that the standard interpretation of those meanings within a particular community of knowledge, e.g. organizational scholars, is just an arbitrary limit imposed upon writings, which does not always succeed in limiting the meanings. For example, using the *Oxford English Dictionary* we start with an etymological analysis to demonstrate how leadership and seduction are alike and also to reveal

the possible, concealed, genderedness (rather than neutrality) of both terms.

Second, and following from the first point, our reading approach in this paper focuses on the sexual meanings of standard organizational writings. We make these other meanings explicit, and show how the apparently covert sexuality of leadership discourses was, in fact, never covert: the term 'leadership' is an almost euphemistic usage. Our readings subvert the positive meaning of leadership versus the negative meaning of seduction by proposing that seduction, rather than leadership, has been the dominant term all along. By so doing, we underscore the importance of ambiguity (rather than preciseness) for any discourse (and for any discourse of *knowledge*) by making the sexuality and seductiveness *already embedded* in the discourses of leadership explicit. That is, leadership is seduction not by what it says but by what it does not say, or by the undecidability of what it may be saying. Once we make it openly sexualized, it loses its (sex) appeal as 'knowledge'.

Third, the form in which we make these arguments is not typical argumentative logic — in fact, *typical argumentative logic* is the discursive form that attempts to cover 'seduction' with 'leadership'. Instead, consistent with the interest of current poststructuralist theorizing in the body, sexuality, gender, and their intersections with representation and rhetoric (Foucault 1980; Hunter 1989a, b; Irigaray 1985a), what we do in this paper, our *reading effects*, is to present leadership discourses in juxtaposition with other discourses about sexuality. Our readings suggest that both types of discourses are actually equivalent, and change together from time to time. To create *reading effects* — rather than *assertive arguments* — we use an array of deconstructive strategies including intertextualizations in parallel and interweaving forms, marginal conversations, iterations, and mimicry, which we will explain further in each section.

These deconstructive strategies displace the taken-for-granted meanings of typical leadership writings and exploit the possibilities of other meanings. They attempt to disseminate, to open to excess, the possibilities of signification in any organizational discourse. Dissemination, more than polysemia, accounts for the impossibility of a final interpretation. It allows us to question the forms by which closure has been imposed over organizational theorizing and the implications of such closure.

Derrida (1981) contrasts 'polysemia' with 'dissemination' indicating that the former suggests many meanings in one, and the possibility of collecting and recuperating all those meanings. Dissemination, on the other hand, is generative and promotes, endlessly, the possibility of other meanings (e.g. Krupnick 1987). Here we should also emphasize the difference between the poststructuralist approaches we are using in this paper and more typical interpretive approaches (e.g. the organizational symbolism literature). While both interpretive and poststructuralist approaches would consider phenomenological philosophy among their intellectual forebears, interpretivism is more likely to be associated with

polysemia. Interpretive approaches, in general, resort to subjective and intersubjective understandings (e.g. social constructions) to posit both the possibility of multiple meanings but also the possibility of *real, final understandings* located in subjectivity. Since poststructuralist approaches *problematize* the notion of subjectivity (i.e. denying the possibility of a subject located outside of language and, therefore, constituted by the same language whose meanings 's/he' is trying to recover) they make suspect the interpretivists' claims to knowledge. Said differently, from a poststructuralist perspective, the interpretive act of recovering meaning is, in itself, another creation of meaning — and the interpretive 'researcher' is an illusion, a reflection, or his/her/our own inability to observe/name the world outside of endless language — therefore *dissemination*. For more detailed discussions on this point regarding organizational literature we refer the reader to other citations in this paper, particularly Calás (1987) Chapters 1 and 3, Cooper and Burrell (1988), and Martin (1990).

Finally, we also draw from feminist poststructuralism to add other specific political dimensions to our analyses. While Foucauldian genealogies enhance our understanding of how dominant and oppressed groups are accomplices in maintaining the complex network power/knowledge in which we are all embedded, and Derridian deconstruction furthers our understanding of the constitutive role of language beyond any claim of mere representation for 'what is', neither approach focuses on the particular role played by the signifier *gender* in the formation of current conditions of knowledge in modern western society.

Feminist poststructuralism(s), inspired by various forms of poststructuralism (e.g. Cixous and Clement 1986; Diamond and Quinby 1988; Flax 1990; Hunter 1989a; Irigaray 1985a, b; Jardine 1985) posit, in general, the importance of the structure masculinity/femininity in sustaining the durability of practices, discourses, and forms of signification that allow certain activities the claim of *knowledge*, while disallowing others. Organizational analyses based on feminist poststructuralism(s) focus on the intersections between patriarchy and organizational knowledge, and the social/discursive relations which sustain these intersections (e.g. Calás and Smircich 1989; Martin 1990).

Thus, we follow our deconstructive *reading effects* with re-interpretations of each book's meanings based on feminist poststructuralist analyses of Freud's work. Our re-interpretations emphasize that Freud's notion of masculine seduction — the real existence of which, he eventually denied — has never been eliminated, but, rather, has been re-articulated as 'leadership'. Leadership, however, is only capable of articulating a form of seduction which thrives on *sameness*. That is, leadership as leadership seduces only those who are of the same kind — masculine or masculine-identified — and promotes, as 'leadership knowledge' only a homosocial system of organization, i.e. based on the values of masculinity, including masculine definitions of *femininity*.

In the final section, we try to break the narrow circle of masculinist

seduction which seems to be identified as 'leadership knowledge'. What, we might ask, are the implications for organizational knowledge of accepting that leadership is homosocial seduction? What other seductions may be possible, and with what consequences? We cannot tell you at this point. Instead, we ask you to stay with us throughout the text and experience the seduction of leadership. At the end, we hope that you and we can come together and explore some answers.

Before we start, however, a note of caution is in order. While some may (and do) quarrel with us over our 'obscene' distortions of Barnard's, McGregor's, Mintzberg's, and Peters and Waterman's innocent writings, we want to emphasize that we are not commenting upon these authors as persons, nor questioning their good intentions in writing these books. What we are doing here is re-appropriating public documents — their texts — to show the multiplicity of language at work. Embedded in the multiple meanings of discourses — including ours — are already the traces of other plausible interpretations.

How is it that Seduction is Leadership and Leadership is Seduction?

In our typical way of thinking about organizations 'leadership' is something good, something needed. 'What we need around here is some leadership' we say when things are not going right, but rarely (ever?) have we heard a call for some 'seduction'. Why is that? How is it that leadership is good and seduction is bad? An etymological investigation illustrates this point.

From the dictionary

LEAD: to guide on a way, esp. by going in advance; to direct on a course or in a direction, to serve as a channel for, to have charge; to go at the head of; to be first in or among; to have a margin over to begin to play with (— trumps); to aim in front of a moving object (— a duck); to direct (a blow) at an opponent in boxing

syn: see **GUIDE, LEAD, STEER, PILOT, ENGINEER**

GUIDE implies intimate knowledge of the way and of all its difficulties and dangers; **LEAD** implies a going ahead to show the way and often to keep those that follow under control and in order; **STEER** implies an ability to keep to a chosen course and stresses the capacity of manoeuvring correctly;

SEDUCE: [L *seducere* to LEAD away, fr. *se-* apart + *ducere* to lead]: to persuade to disobedience or disloyalty; to lead astray; to entice into unchastity; attract

syn: see **LURE, ENTICE, INVEIGLE, DECOY, TEMPT, SEDUCE**

LURE implies a drawing into danger, evil, or difficulty through attracting and deceiving; **ENTICE** suggests drawing by artful or adroit means; **INVEIGLE** implies enticing by cajoling or flattering; **DECOY** implies a luring into entrapment by artifice; **TEMPT** implies the presenting of an attraction so strong that it overcomes the restraints of conscience or better judgment, **SEDUCE** implies a leading

PILOT suggests guidance over a dangerous, intricate or complicated course; **ENGINEER** implies guidance by one who finds ways to avoid or overcome difficulties in achieving an end or carrying out a plan (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 1989: VIII, 744-747)

astray by persuasion of false promises (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 1989: XIV, 860-862)

Notice the contrasts sustaining the meaningfulness of these terms: lead/seduce; guide/lure; correctly/false; good/bad.

Notice however that seduction includes leadership: Seduction means to lead (astray); to mis-lead [mis: badly, wrongly]. Seduction has a bad reputation. Seduction is leadership gone wrong.

Notice also that leadership includes seduction: To lead is to attract and stimulate, to overcome. Thus, to seduce is to lead wrongly, and it seems that to lead is to seduce rightly.

Why don't we call the leader a seducer? Again, from the dictionary, we learn:

SEDUCER: One who tempts or persuades (another) to desert his allegiance or service. Now rare or obsolete.

SEDUCTOR: Obsolete. A male seducer. [obsolete means no evidence of standard use since 1711].

SEDUCTRESS: fr. L. to **LEAD** away: a female seducer. (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 1989: XIV, 861-862)

One who seduces, lures, induces, entices, presents an attraction so strong that it overcomes restraints. One who seduces is a seductress: a female seducer. Seductors (male seducers) no longer exist. Thus, many can be a 'leader' but only a woman can be a 'seductress'. No need for the term 'seductor' when 'leader' will do.

A Genealogy of Leadership/Seduction

Let's now find what we can learn about seduction, when reading about leadership. By calling this main section of the paper a 'genealogy' — following the Foucauldian usage — we are pointing to the fact that the four organizational 'classics' we are analyzing cover a time period of almost 50 years of organization theorizing without showing development or progress, despite their claim to the contrary. Rather, through our readings we show how these texts trace a circle — *a circle of seduction* — that is quite narrow in what it includes. While practices and discourses of leadership change, together with other discourses and practices of their time, they maintain specific power/knowledge relationships.

What is Leadership? As Answered by: Chester Barnard in *The Functions of the (Seductive) Executive*

Barnard (1938) addressed the question 'What is the essence of leadership?' With the aid of the dictionary, we re-read Barnard's answer:

Barnard

The **CREATIVE** function as a whole is the **ESSENCE** of leadership.

It is the highest test of executive **RESPONSIBILITY**

[note: elsewhere in his text, p. 261, Barnard defines executive responsibility as the tendency to inhibit, control or modify inconsistent immediate desires, impulses, or interests]

because it requires for successful accomplishment that element of 'CONVICTION' that means **IDENTIFICATION** of personal codes and organization codes in the view of the leader.

This is the **COALESCENCE** that **CARRIES 'CONVICTION'** to the personnel of organization, to that informal organization underlying all formal organization that senses nothing more quickly than **INSINCERITY**.

Without it, all organization is dying, because it is the **INDISPENSABLE**

Dictionary

CREATIVE: productive; having the quality of something created rather than imitated.

ESSENCE: the permanent as contrasted with the accidental element of being; the individual, real, ultimate nature of a thing esp. as opposed to its existence.

RESPONSIBILITY: moral, legal accountability

CONVICTION: the act or process of convicting of a crime, esp. in a court of law; the act of convincing a person of error or of compelling the admission of a truth, the state of being convinced of error or compelled to admit the truth, a strong persuasion or belief

IDENTIFICATION: evidence of identity orientation of the self in regard to something (as a person or group) with a resulting feeling of close emotional associations

COALESCENCE: to grow together, to unite into a whole: fuse

CARRY: transport, convey, take, conduct, escort, to influence by mental or emotional appeal, sway, to get possession or control of: capture

CONVICTION: the state of being convinced of error or compelled to admit the truth

INSINCERITY: hypocrisy, playing a part on the stage, feigning to be what one is not, or to believe what one does not; esp. the false assumption of an appearance of virtue or religion

INDISPENSABLE: not subject to

element in creating that **DESIRE** for **ADHERENCE** — for which no **INCENTIVE** is substitute — on the part of those whose efforts **WILLINGLY** contributed constitute organization.' (Barnard 1938: 281, the emphasis on 'conviction' is Barnard's; capitalizations are our emphasis).

being set aside or neglected, absolutely necessary
DESIRE: to long or hope for; to express a wish for;
syn: wish, want, crave, covet — desire, wish, want are often interchangeable though **DESIRE** or wish is often chosen as giving more dignity or a more respectful tone to a request.
DESIRE: conscious impulse toward an object or experience that promises enjoyment or satisfaction in its attainment, longing, craving, sexual attraction or appetite
ADHERENCE: steady or faithful attachment, fidelity, applied chiefly to mental or moral attachment
INCENTIVE: stimulating: something that incites action
WILLING: ready, without reluctance readiness/eagerness to accede to or anticipate the wishes of another
 (*Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, 1988)

What is Barnard saying? Table 1a re-articulates *The Functions of the (Seductive) Executive*. The deconstructive strategy we have used in this case, iteration, explicitly re-moves the 'original text' by displacing its context. Using the multiple meanings available, the re-articulation 'uncovers' another plausible text inscribed in the apparently straightforward and unequivocal descriptions of 'what is leadership'.

As if self-conscious about the sexual themes in his text, Barnard also elaborates a discourse of morality over his discourse of desire. Here, rather than just citing Barnard, we have juxtaposed his words with those of M. J. Exner's in *The Sexual Side of Marriage* (1932), a sex manual

Table 1a
 Leadership is the
 Creation of Desire

Leadership is the absolutely necessary creation of desire, a longing, wishing, craving, — the creation of sexual attraction that promises to be satisfied through faithful attachment. There are no substitutes for gaining the willing contribution of efforts. Leadership/desire is the life force of organizations, without it, organization/the species dies.

How does a leader create desire? First the leader must achieve a state of 'conviction' — an act of self-seduction, where his feelings of separation from the group are totally overcome and he truly believes that he and the group are one. He must truly assume the appearance of virtue and not feign belief.

This is an executive's hardest ordeal for it means inhibiting, controlling, or modifying his own inconsistent impulses and intensifying those which are consistent. The fusion in the leader's mind, of himself and the group, lures, sways, influences mentally or emotionally, and captures, [seduces?] the personnel of the organization, but only if the leader is a true believer, for organization personnel can tell when you're faking it.

This creation, the production of himself-fused-with-personnel, is the real creativity of leadership. No imitations will be accepted. The seduction that is leadership depends on truth. Thus, in order to create and sustain organization — Barnard's leader seduces.

contemporaneous with *The Functions of the Executive*. In this parallel intertextualization, illustrated in Table 1b, we see that leadership is like

Table 1b
The Higher Ends
of Leadership
and Sexuality

The Functions of the Executive

'Leadership, of course, often is wrong, and often fails'. (1938:283)

'... But until that happens — as perhaps it inevitably does in time to all leaders — until that happens the creation of organizational morality is the spirit that overcomes the centrifugal forces of individual motives'. (p. 283)

'Without leadership in this sense the inherent difficulties often cannot be overcome even for short periods ...'. (p. 283)

'... the vitality is lacking, there is not enduring cooperation, without the creation of faith, the catalyst by which the living system of human efforts is enabled to continue its incessant interchanges of energies and satisfactions'. (p. 259)

'Cooperation, not leadership, is the creative process; but leadership is the creative indispensable fulminator of its forces'. (p. 259)

'For the morality that underlies enduring cooperation is multidimensional. It comes from and may expand to all the world; it is rooted deeply in the past, it faces toward the endless future. As it expands, it must become more complex, its conflicts must be more numerous and deeper, its call for abilities must be higher, its failures of ideal attainment must be perhaps more tragic; but the quality of leadership, the persistence of its influence, the durability of its related organizations, the power of the coordination it incites, all express the height of moral aspiration, the breadth of moral foundations.' (p. 284)

'So among those who cooperate the things that are seen are moved by the things unseen. Out of the void comes the spirit that shapes the end of men.' (p. 284)

The Sexual Side of Marriage

'On the purely physical level it (sexual passion) may carry man to the lowest levels of degradation'. (1932:48)

'In an ideal sex relationship we do not set apart in opposition the physical and the psychic ... They become fused in the total experience of love. The physical and the emotional in sexual love at its best all become spiritual together, and irradiate and energize the total life of the partners.' (p. 46)

'As an integral constituent of love it makes for healthy personality; it yields supreme ecstasy; it feeds the soul; and it spurs life to creative endeavour'. (p. 46)

'Human sympathy in all its wide range of affectional and social expression undoubtedly had its starting point in the first spark of sexual sympathy which arose to assure the mating of parents. ... The sympathetic and social qualities and relationships developed in the family gradually extended beyond the family in turn to the nearest of kin, the clan, the tribe, the state, the nation. They underlie our entire social structure. In this social zone of sex are found the higher affectional attractions between male and female — as contrasted to the self-centred physical attraction — including appreciation, companionship, sympathy, love, devotion, protection, service, sacrifice, chivalry, honour, etc. ... these qualities are psychic and social. They are other-seeking, other serving qualities which find their fullest satisfaction in the happiness and service of others.' (pp. 38–39)

'Out of the self-centred physical base of sex there gradually developed the higher psychic, aesthetic and social elements which have so greatly enlarged and enriched human life and made an organized social world possible'. (p. 38)

sexual passion in that it energizes and satisfies. Leadership like sexual passion can have its ups and downs, but organization and our entire social structure rest upon their capacity to arouse and express that which is higher — morality. We recommend that you read the table back and forth, from Barnard to Exner, in order to experience the full effect of this juxtaposition.

The Carnal Pleasures of the Priestly Executive

Now, what was that all about? Interweaving the words from both sides of Table 1b we find that:

'So among those who cooperate' (the mating parents, the family, the clan, the tribe, the state, the nation, our entire social structure) 'the things that are seen' (appreciation, companionship, sympathy, love, devotion, protection, service, sacrifice, chivalry, honour, etc.) 'are moved by' (find their fullest satisfaction in) 'the things unseen' (the self-centred physical attraction).

Both Exner and Barnard speak in dignified tones about the ultimate goodness and morality of sexuality/leadership. Sex yields supreme ecstasy, it is food for the soul, the spur of creative endeavour. Leadership is vitality, the catalyst for organization. The sparks of sexuality ignite sympathy and sociality, the sparks of leadership ignite cooperation, uniting two into coordination; they enable the progressive forms of social structures.

Whereas Exner considers 'mating parents' to be the foundation of social structure, Barnard's world depends on 'binding the wills of men', a form of non-heterosexual reproduction (e.g. Burrell and Hearn 1989; Kanter 1977). He is explicit in this point as he says:

'Executive responsibility, then, is that capacity of leaders by which, reflecting attitudes, ideals, hopes, derived largely from without themselves, they are compelled to bind the wills of men to the accomplishment of purposes beyond their immediate ends, beyond their times.' (1938: 283)

While, earlier, he had said:

'Responsibility is the aspect of individual superiority in determination, persistence, endurance, courage . . . which is most inferred from what is *not* done, from abstention, which commands respect, reverence . . .' (1938: 260, emphasis in the original)

Seduction as seduction is necessarily excluded from both Barnard's and Exner's discussions for it's dangerous to the maintenance of social structure, organization and the succession of leadership. In Barnard, particularly, the language of morality that he uses to describe the leader (faith, sacrifice, abstention, reverence) calls to mind images of a priest (usually called 'Father') — an individual of superior determination, whose endurance and courage is more inferred from what he avoids (*does not* do): succumbing to temptation, and engaging in sexual intercourse. Seduction, as seduction, is inimical to orderly relations of men/human life.

In these concerns, we hear the echo of another famous practitioner-theorist, Sigmund Freud, who, in his paper 'Femininity' reported:

'... an interesting episode in the history of analytic research which caused me many distressing hours. In the period in which the main interest was directed to discovering infantile sexual traumas, almost all my women patients told me that they had been seduced by their father.' (1933: 120)

Freud felt compelled to reject the first version of the seduction theory because of his 'surprise at the fact that in every case the father, not excluding my own, had to be blamed as a pervert' (in Bernheimer and Kahane 1985: 14, quoting Freud 1897). Unable to accept the possibility of so many perverse fathers, Freud ended up proposing an infantile polymorphous perverse sexuality where children were the ones who fantasized seduction by the father (e.g. Gallop 1987; Hunter 1989a, b). However, this different theory of seduction did not focus solely on children. Gallop observes that:

'It has become a commonplace of the history of psychoanalysis to mark as a turning point the moment in the 1890s when Freud stopped believing in a "real" seduction at the origin of hysteria and realized that the source of neurosis is the child's fantasies ... But here in a 1931 text, Freud is talking about "actual seduction". The father cannot be a seducer; that would undercut his upright position as patriarch. Even the mother only seduces unwittingly in the execution of her proper duties. The "actual seduction", intentional seduction, can only be the act of another child (children, not parents, are perverse) or a nurse. The servant, member of a lower class, like a child, is capable of perversion.' (Gallop 1987: 214)¹

This is also the case with Barnard's executive. The executive cannot be a seducer; that would undercut his upright position. So, Barnard makes his leader into a Father/priest, incapable of seduction and close to God, but with the mandate to attract his flock of sinner-seducers (perverse children, nurses, mothers, and other organizational participants) to confession and absolution. Denying that seduction is part of his craft, the leader can take pleasure in voyeuristic activities promoted by his absolute dedication to his responsibilities.

At the same time, the executive must be a seducer ... that's where the desire for adherence comes from. What is Barnard's way out of this? The only way out is to call seduction something else: 'leadership'.

Who Can Be a Leader? As Answered by: Douglas McGregor in *The (Seductive) Side of Enterprise*

This book, published in 1960 and still widely cited, inaugurated the emphasis on humanistic psychology discourses within the managerial literature. It is addressed to the top management of American corporations, and it promotes a change in traditionally held assumptions about who can be a leader.

McGregor's approach to leadership seems to be discontinuous from

Barnard's — as McGregor stresses a more egalitarian, relational and situational stance for his leader in contrast with Barnard's moral loneliness in the empty room at the top. Our argument claims that McGregor's approach actually furthers Barnard's seductive homosocial logic (of the Father). In our readings, we argue that the changes in assumptions which McGregor espoused were not only from Theory X (or classical management theory) to Theory Y but a move away from the conventions of X/Y to a desire for YY, i.e. a homosocial order. That is, we propose that this text has a riddle written on its surface which plays on the conventional biological sex notations: female XX; male XY, and tries to eliminate any vestige of X while wondering about the possibility of an all Y world.

This 'wild speculation' on our part may not be so wild after all. Why do the X/Y notations signify theoretical differences? Why not A/Z if the author's interest was to indicate widely divergent viewpoints? An interesting coincidence (?): At the time this book was written, 1959, women were defined as having two X chromosomes, while men were defined as having an X and a Y, according to the adopted scientific notations.

The deconstructive strategies we follow in this section, illustrated in Tables 2a and 2b, intertextualize McGregor's discourse on leadership by emphasizing the *monologic* it shares with a textual cohort. This other text *The American Male* by Myron Brenton (1966), explicitly addressed the social and sexual fears which assaulted the American male population in the early 1960s, and suggested a possible resolution for those fears. Notice how McGregor's arguments about leadership and Brenton's resolution of issues around male sexuality share 'a manner of speaking' and can be reconfigured into a very consistent *monologue*. Our recommendation to the reader is to follow the sequence of our intertextual weavings by reading McGregor's and Brenton's texts as if they were a single text.

Our 'conversation' in the right hand margin may be read after the central text (McGregor's/Brenton's). Or you may dash back and forth, from 'margin to centre', as if the margin were the commentary of someone who, on overhearing the main conversation, wonders about its meaning. Regardless of the way you read it, we have positioned the materiality of this column — its physical form on the page — to illustrate the outsideness and marginality of those others who cannot engage with the *mainstream* discourse: they are left out, invisible, unheard, but still capable of breaking the orderly surface of the central text through a playful *absent presence*. The presence on the page of the typically absent 'other', is a reminder that dominant knowledges pretend to rest on their own essence, or self-identity, while being nothing more than a play of differences over the voices they deny or silence.

The marginal 'conversation' uses specific deconstructive arguments from Derrida (1976) and Irigaray (1985b) to wonder about the (il)logic within the main conversation. It points to the ways in which McGregor's and Brenton's texts betray their main assumptions on issues such as the rela-

tional and egalitarian nature of leadership/sexuality, and about the leadership/sexual roles that 'the diverse' can play in organizational/personal relations.

These arguments unfold from one table to the other, as if there were a riddle which is solved at the end. The solution reveals the phallogocentric order that rules leadership and sexuality. Please, read (and play with) these two tables now (see pp. 582–583). In the next section we will discuss them further.

The (Seductive) Side of Enterprise: The Text as a Sexual Joke

We would like to discuss our readings in Tables 2a and 2b as a particular instance of seduction within the discourses of leadership: leadership as a sexual joke. Gallop's (1988) commentary on Freud's analysis of the sexual joke emphasizes how these jokes — which in theory are smut uttered by a man in order to seduce a woman — would only occur between males and females of the lower social classes. At the higher social level, the sexual joke would not take place between men and women. Rather, it will be a typical scene among *gentlemen*, and will exclude the *ladies*.

Gallop equates the *telling* of sexual jokes with the institution of marriage in that in both cases their purpose is to initiate men into an exchange which strengthens the bonds among them: a male economy. Through their *content* sexual jokes either transform women into objects of circulation or perform, more immediately, in the conservation of a homosocial dominant order. That is, the seductiveness of the sexual joke among men is that it positions women and working-class men as objects of desire of the ruling class. However, women in these jokes perform as 'currency' and maintain their otherness, while 'lesser' men function to reiterate the *sameness* of the ruling order.

More specifically, often the subjects of the sexual jokes analyzed by Freud were male homosexual servants. In these stories, the servant would perform some special service for his master who, in gratitude, would then elevate the servant to become the master's peer. The punch line tells otherwise, because, in fact, the master has used the servant one more time. He has maintained the servant in his humiliated and debased position while fooling him into believing that he has become his equal. In general, homosexual servant jokes play on the multiplicity of those who are the same, while being different. Similar to those where women are the objects, these jokes exploit 'double entendre' and domination, but they perform primarily in the transference of homosexual desires while enhancing the hierarchical order of a homosocial libidinal economy.

McGregor's — and Brenton's — texts could be read as sexual jokes of the 'servant' type. The seduction of these texts hinges on the way in which they appease the ambivalence felt by those in dominant positions — American corporate bosses and American heterosexual males — when

the winds of equality (of women and other non-dominant people) blow too close for comfort. In Table 2a, both books constantly touch upon 'the same' and 'the other' as a way to remark the existence of *differences*. At the same time, they use a logic of *supplementarity* — playing with the notion of opposites needing each other — to make explicit the existence of weaknesses in 'the other' and their need to stay attached (maintain relationship) with the strong/same/dominant group.

The constant talk about egalitarianism, has the doubleness of the homosexual joke. Both texts were written to circulate among men. It is clear from their contents that their intended public was not women, nor just any men, but a certain higher class male population. For example, Table 2b shows that, for McGregor, it is important to acknowledge those others who *manage* in the organization, such as foremen and superintendents, while reminding us of the distance between them and those at the top. Thus, this book is a riddle about the servant who becomes elevated by his master, for the master's pleasure (as his equal, capable of leadership). In the end the master is not humiliated by having descended, and partaken, at such low levels (after all, it all happened only *in the text/joke*). Rather, the remarks serve to maintain everybody *in their proper place*.

Brenton's book may now be easily understood as the intertext in McGregor's work. *The American Male* openly recognizes the fears of homosexuality in the male population during the early 1960s. It is also explicit in indicating the pervasiveness of this fear among the middle class, and the relationship of this fear to 'the many homosexual jokes that keep making the rounds' (p. 182). The central message calls attention to the intolerance of society for male homosexuality as this intolerance ends up disrupting the homosocial order. Male homosexuals separate from this order and create another dominant economy, much to the dismay of heterosexual males who lose their 'servants'. The 'punch line' ends up evoking those situations where male could be with male, or play alternative non-traditional male roles, and still be dominant members of society.

McGregor's/Brenton's discourse is a mouthful of dominant males' desire for the selfsame, who entertain themselves in re-making the hierarchical order that they purport to abolish. Their texts tease the reader to think about the different *positions* that any one member of the organization/society can take — and play on the seduction of this 'double entendre' — but, in every instance, they close off any possible change for the 'servants', convincing them that they will benefit by remaining in their lower position. In the end, the 'central text' accomplishes little more than to make more explicit and well-defined the libidinal economy of the dominant groups.

Table 2a
The Logic of
Supplementary
Defines the
Texts . . .

McGregor	Brenton	Our Conversation
<p>'It is quite unlikely that there is a single basic pattern of abilities and personality traits characteristic of all leaders. The personality characteristics of the leader are not unimportant, but those which are essential differ considerably depending upon the circumstances.' (p. 180)</p>	<p>'Leadership, dominance and dependency — all shift with the particular needs and abilities of the marital partners and with the requirement of the situation'. (p. 215)</p>	<p>IT ALL HINGES ON ABILITIES (ability: capacity fitness or tendency to act or be acted on in a specified way). THUS ANYBODY CAN BE A LEADER! BUT WAIT — DOES THIS MEAN THAT THE SAME CAN BE LIKE THE OTHER? (same: resembling in every relevant aspect). (other: opposite or excluded by something else).</p>
<p>'The same is true of leadership at different organizational levels. A very successful foreman would not make a successful president (or vice-versa!). Yet each may be an effective leader.' (p. 181)</p>	<p>'This doesn't preclude a division of labour and a decision-making, of course. Whenever two persons of the same or opposite sex live together, such a division, based on interest and competence, comes into being.' (p. 215)</p>	<p>(same/other: tendency in Western discourse which privileges masculine 'sameness-unto-itself'). BUT OH! HERE WE GO AGAIN! THAT WONDERFUL LOGIC OF THE SUPPLEMENT. . . ! (supplement: something that completes or makes an addition). TO MAKE US THINK THAT THE WEAK REQUIRES THE POWER OF THE STRONG. . . BUT WHY WOULD THE STRONG REQUIRE THE LACK OF THE WEAK? WHO IS THE ORIGIN? WHO IS THE SUPPLEMENT? Jacques Derrida found out about Rousseau in <i>OF GRAMMATOLOGY</i> but it is all over the logocentric order.</p>
<p>'On the other hand, leaders who differ notably in abilities and traits are sometimes equally successful when they succeed each other in a given situation. Within rather wide limits, weaknesses in certain characteristics can be compensated by strength in others.' (p. 181)</p>	<p>'[I]t allows each of the partners the freedom and the scope to expand, to unfold their personalities, to realize their particular potentials. . . ' (p. 216)</p>	
<p>'This is particularly evident in partnerships and executive teams in which leadership functions are, in fact, shared. The very idea of the team implies different and supplementary patterns of abilities among the members.' (p. 181)</p>	<p>'[I]t affords each partner recognition and acceptance of his or her particular strengths, weaknesses, and needs. . . ' (p. 216)</p>	

Table 2b
But It Is the
Homosocial That
Solves the Riddle

McGregor	Brenton	Our Conversation
<p>'An important point with respect to these situational influences on leadership is that they operate selectively. . . to reward conformity with acceptable patterns of behaviour and to punish deviance from these. . . One consequence of this selectivity is the tendency to "weed out" deviant individuals some of whom might nevertheless become effective, perhaps outstanding leaders.' (pp. 183-184)</p>	<p>'[F]ew contemporary cultures are as hostile to homosexuality as America's is. . . It's significant that society is much more tolerant of female than of male homosexuality. . . ' (p. 32)</p> <p>'Such animosity creates a vicious circle in which both homosexual, and heterosexual males become victims. . . This hostility produces defensive reactions in homosexuals, who now feel free enough to become militant, forming their own social and political action groups. . . ' (p. 32)</p>	<p>Luce Irigaray says that the possibility of our social life, or our culture, depends upon a HOM(M)OSEXUAL monopoly because the law that orders our society is the exclusive valorization of men's needs and desires, of exchanges among men. THUS, THE DEVALUATION OF MALE HOMOSEXUALITY CAN UPSET THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ORDER. NOW, HOW SHOULD THE RIDDLE BE SOLVED? Do deviants pose/possess a THREAT?</p> <p><i>(threat: from trudere: to push, thrust)</i></p> <p>IN SPITE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH, THE CHANGES WITH TIME REDUCE PREDICTABILITY IN THE RELATIONSHIP</p> <p><i>(relationship: connection by blood or marriage) WITH RESOURCES</i></p> <p><i>(resource: re- again+soundre- to spring up = something that lies ready for use; supply of something to take care of a need).</i></p> <p>Luce Irigaray says that patriarchal societies might be interpreted as functioning in the mode of 'semblance' or based on an analogy. WHO WOULD BE SELF-FULFILLED?</p> <p><i>(self: identity, of the same kind; fulfillment: to carry out; obey; complete) WHO ARE THE WE?</i></p> <p><i>(we: I and the rest of the group that includes me; I as used by sovereigns).</i></p>
<p>'What is the practical relevance for management of these findings of social science research in the field of leadership? First, if we accept the point of view that leadership consists of a relationship. . . we must recognize that we cannot predict the personal characteristics of the managerial resources that an organization will require a decade or two hence.' (p. 185)</p>	<p>'In such a society the artistically gifted man and the man who is a gifted sportsman would be equally valued in terms of their maleness. . . Why not tap all our societal and temperamental resources to create an atmosphere in which all kinds of ways are possible and in which self-fulfilment becomes more than a pretty word?' (p. 217)</p>	
<p>'Some people in some companies will become outstanding leaders as foremen, or as plant superintendents, or as professional specialists. Many of these would not be effective leaders in top-management positions. . . If we take seriously the implications of the research findings in this field we will place high value on such people. We will seek to enable them to develop to the fullest of their potentialities in the role they can fill best. . . and persuade them that we consider outstanding leadership at any level to be a precious thing.' (pp. 188-189)</p>		

How Is a Manager Also a Leader? As Answered by: Henry Mintzberg in *The (Seductive) Nature of Managerial Work*

Originally published in 1973, and very slightly revised in 1979, Henry Mintzberg's book *The Nature of Managerial Work* claims to describe the actual makings of everyday managerial activities. This text tries to answer the question: As a leader, what does a manager do?

Mintzberg's writings have inscribed a discourse that seduces us into believing 'this is leadership'. Our re-readings of the role of the manager as leader — one of ten managerial roles in the book — re-mark the sexuality in these descriptions:

Mintzberg's: The Manager as Leader

'The organization looks to its formal **HEAD** for guidance and motivation. In his *leader* role, the manager defines the atmosphere in which the organization will work.' (p. 60)

'The tone of the organization is usually **SOUNDED** by its top executive, and the success of the enterprise may well depend on whether he **INFUSES**

the whole hierarchy with energy and vision or whether, through ineptness or **NEGLECT**, he allows the organization to stagnate'. (Harbison and Myers 1959: 15–16, in Mintzberg: p. 60)

'Leadership involves interpersonal **RELATIONSHIPS** between the leader and the led. In the informal group, the leader is usually followed because of his **PHYSICAL**

or **CHARISMATIC** power.

In analyzing the activities that make up the *leader* role, we must note first that leadership **PERMEATES** all activities; its importance would be underestimated if it were judged in terms of the proportion of a manager's activities that are strictly related to leadership. Each time a

Dictionary

HEAD: the upper or principal extremity of various things, esp. when rounded, projecting or of some special shape. The top, summit, upper end (of an eminence, or erection, as a pole, pile, mast, sail, staircase, ladder).

SOUND(ED): to order, signal; an elongated instrument for exploring surgically body cavities.

INFUSES: introduces, insinuates, implies a pouring in of something that gives new life or significance.

NEGLECT: giving insufficient attention to something that has a claim to one's attention.

RELATIONSHIP: dealings, affairs, sexual intercourse.

PHYSICAL: concerned or preoccupied with the body and its needs: carnal, marked by sexuality.

CHARISMATIC: favour, gift.

PERMEATE: to diffuse through or penetrate something — permeable: penetrable.

manager **ENCOURAGES** or criticizes a subordinate he is acting in his **CAPACITY** as *leader*.

... the manager's actions are screened by subordinates searching for leadership clues. In answering a request for authorization, he may **ENCOUNTER** or **INHIBIT** a subordinate,

and even in his form of greeting, messages (perhaps non-existent ones) may be read by **ANXIOUS** subordinates.' (p. 61)

'In addition to these activities, one finds another set in which the manager **PROBES**

(one might say '**MEDDLES**' into the actions of his subordinates'. (p. 61) 'The manager is able to **PROBE** freely because he alone is not constrained by well-defined bounds of authority within his organization. He is the only one in the organization with a very broad mandate — to put this another way, he is the only one who can **MEDDLE** at will — and his activities clearly reflect this.' (p. 62)

'In concluding the discussion of the *leader* role, two points should be noted. First, the key purpose of the *leader* role is to effect an **INTEGRATION** between individual needs and organizational goals. The manager must concentrate his efforts so as to bring subordinate and organizational needs into a common accord in order to promote efficient operations. Second, it is in the *leader* role that managerial power most clearly manifests itself. Formal authority vests the manager with great **POTENTIAL** power; leadership activity determines how much of it will be realized.' (p. 62)

'Thus, through the *leader* role, the manager **WELDS** diverse elements

ENCOURAGE: to spur on; to stimulate to excite to activity or growth; arouse.

CAPACITY: potentiality, a position assigned or assumed.

INHIBIT: a restraining of the function of a bodily organ.

ANXIOUS: ardently or earnestly wishing.

PROBE: a slender surgical instrument for examining a cavity.

MEDDLE: to interfere without right or property — officiously intrusive — to thrust or force in or upon without permission, welcome or fitness

INTEGRATION: to form into a whole, to unite into something.

POTENTIAL: existing in possibility, capable of developing, potent: bridegroom, husband, master, able to copulate as male.

WELD: to unite closely or intimately.

into a cooperative enterprise.' (p. 62)

The Manager as LIAISON

'One of the major findings of the empirical studies of managerial work is the significance of **HORIZONTAL** relationships. While vertical or authority relationships have received much attention in the literature — specifically in terms of the *leader* role — **HORIZONTAL** relationships have been largely ignored.' (p. 63) (Mintzberg 1979)

LIAISON: a close bond or connection, an illicit sexual relationship.

HORIZONTAL: lie, recline, supine.

(*Webster's Ninth Collegiate Dictionary*, 1988)

What is Mintzberg saying? Table 3 re-articulates the *Seductive Nature of Managerial Work* from our readings above. Again, as with Barnard's text, we rely on the strategy of iteration to 'uncover' another plausible text inscribed in the apparently straightforward and unequivocal descriptions of 'the manager as leader'.

The Narcissistic Seduction of Mintzberg's Leader

After the 'true confession' in Table 3 one must ask: What has happened in the few years that have lapsed between the publication of McGregor's (1960) and Mintzberg's (1973) work? How has McGregor's relationship-oriented leader, with all his seductive talk about the equality of inequality, been transformed into Mintzberg's solitary and narcissistic, but omnipotent, leader with no patience for anything but

Table 3
The Manager as
Seducer

The organization looks at the projection of an erection for its guidance and motivation. The *leader* introduces and insinuates by pouring that which gives new life. He will never give insufficient attention to that to which he claims.

He will develop sexual affairs and will be preoccupied with the body and its carnal needs. He will bestow his favours and gift to those placed into his possession.

He will contantly stimulate, excite, arouse and penetrate. He will do so because he is potent in every position. Thus he will never restrain the function of the bodily organs from those who are ardent with earnest wishes.

With his slender instrument he will examine every cavity even if he has to be intrusive, thrusting or forcing in without permission, welcome or fitness.

He will unite and form into a whole, developing that which exists in possibility. Like a bridegroom, husband and master, he will produce pregnancies when using his ability to copulate as a male.

He will unite closely and intimately with those that are not the same. However, he would not conceal any longer the illicit sexual relationships he carries on with those who are like him, and with whom he lies down.

the most direct encounter, and who are the followers that sustain these activities?

Some answers are again provided by the intertext of contemporaneous works. In *Footholds: Understanding the Shifting Family and Sexual Tensions in Our Culture* (Slater 1977) the author explores issues of sexuality in America during the 1970s. This text is openly preoccupied with the possible ills that 'narcissism' could bring to the fabric of complex societies. However, this work is very explicit when rescuing narcissism from a totally 'bad press'. The following passages are particularly relevant to our discussion:

'If we view sexual energy, or libido, as being able to expand and contract, then we can throw some light on a familiar process — the withdrawal of energy from larger groups to smaller and more exclusive ones . . . The most extreme form [of libidinal contraction] we will call narcissistic withdrawal . . . Narcissistic withdrawal is often tolerated in people who are expected to be of great benefit to society: leaders, prophets, shamans . . . The basis of this tolerance is perhaps some vague awareness that great enterprises require an abundance of libidinal energy, which must be withdrawn from the usual social objects . . . The person who has stored up energy will attract the energy of others to him, after the physical principle that the greater the mass the greater the attraction. A person of this kind can be a focus for group loyalty.' (pp. 114–121)

Slater informs us about our need for, and acceptance of narcissistic leadership. It is good for us and, as a passing remark, we want to remind the reader of the central position taken by discourses of narcissism during the 1970s in the U.S.A. For example, Lasch's *The Culture of Narcissism* (1979) was a nationwide bestseller which identified narcissism in — among other social activities — corporate and managerial structures. It singled out Maccoby's (1976) view of desirable organizational leadership — 'the gamesman', boyish, playful and seductive who maintains an illusion of limitless options — as a fitting embodiment of narcissistic tendencies.

Ironically, Lasch's strong critique of U.S.A. society at the time brought back to him major proof of the accuracy of his assessment — fame and fortune derived from the ultimate narcissistic object, 'the mirror' — as readers flocked to look at their own images represented in this book. At the same time, this commentary on our part is a remark on a favourite image in postmodernist arguments, where the endless repetition provided by mirror reflections on other mirrors makes it impossible to separate 'originals' and 'copies' — i.e. the contiguity of Lasch's textual representation of society and the social act, seemingly provoked by the text, which reverts back to the textual representation in an endless 'chicken and egg' game. Consider the effects of this form of thinking over our typical notions about organizational knowledge.

Mintzberg's narcissistic leader, then, is a good representative of the discourses of his time, but what does it mean to perform as a leader under narcissistic premises, and how do these changes still maintain the continuity of the homosocial order?

If we accept Slater's interpretation of narcissism (and its seductiveness) as a tenable form of leadership, there is no reason to believe that it will exclude women leaders. Narcissistic tendencies, after all, have been presented in traditional Freudian analysis as plausible stages of infantile sexual development, regardless of gender (e.g. Badcock 1988). However, Karen Horney's reinterpretation of Freud's theory of seduction (Westkott 1986) may shed a different light on this issue.

According to Westkott, Horney argues that narcissistic and seductive activities carry over into adulthood, and are related to each other. However, these activities are qualitatively different in males and females. Horney describes men's sexualizing behaviour from the perspective of the endangered female, who is the object of compulsive masculinity. Through compulsive masculinity — the never-ending pursuit of sexual conquest and seduction — men devalue women as a way of maintaining their own sense of superiority. Men define their self-esteem and affirm their power through this form of domination, reasserting the narcissistic belief about their superior position in society.

At the same time, feminine seductiveness is, in Horney's view, the conversion of fear into desirability. It is a way of promoting a submissive identity informed by sexuality to avoid aggression. The distinction between submission and sexuality allows Horney to show feminine seductiveness — and the apparent female desire and forms of making herself desirable — as the response of women resigned to the inevitability of violence in sexualization. Thus, feminine narcissism — which promotes sexual attractiveness — is interpreted as a form of avoiding mistreatment by getting to be among 'the chosen few' who are perhaps more used, but less abused.

These male/female sexual relations are seen by Horney as an unavoidable condition of Western society where pervasive competitiveness forms a normal pattern of social relations. The predominant values of competition and success foster the cultivation of a grandiose image, of superiority — and generate feelings of hostility and fear — primarily in those most likely to be in the public male eye.

Horney decries that these historically-situated male narcissistic tendencies create very precarious conditions for women's expression of self. Under these conditions, women may be able to express their social sense of self only through the already mentioned submission-seduction, or through an equally undesirable alternative: emulating traditional male values, celebrating risk-taking in violence, and in success over others.

Thus, under these premises, the space for women — and other 'feminized' non-dominant members (e.g. Ferguson 1984) — in the social arrangements of modern Western society is either subordination or emulation of the competitive and glory oriented masculine narcissistic order. In either case, feminine narcissistic activities will maintain — through submission or cloning — the homosocial order.

In this regard, then, Mintzberg's leader — compulsively masculine in its

narcissistic seduction — plays on the conditions of modern Western society. Under Mintzberg's leader, those for whom compulsive masculinity is not a value will still submit to its ruling. Lacking other options within the system, they will perpetuate the conditions they may be wishing to escape. Violence here will always be covered by 'acquiescence'.

**Back to the Future . . . What is Leadership? As Answered by:
Peters and Waterman In (the Seductive) Search of Excellence**

Few texts would serve us better than this one as 'end point' for our genealogical investigations. As we understand it, this work closes the *circle of seduction* which defines both the concept of leadership and the possibility of *modern* organizational theorizing. In the introductory chapter, the authors confess their original intention to discount leadership as an important element of organizational success. They soon correct themselves. Their assumption that leadership was an overrated and reductionist concept that covered up other more important organizational attributes had to be dropped because '. . . what we found was that associated with almost every excellent company was a strong leader (or two) who seemed to have a lot to do with making the company excellent in the first place' (p. 26).

Representative of organizational discourses of the 1980s, the text is self-conscious in using differentially gendered nouns and pronouns in reference to organizational activities. Throughout the book, it is clear that the authors recognize that there is diversity in organizational constituencies, and that women may be occupying positions of organizational leadership.

Has the homosocial order been broken by the inclusion of women into positions of authority? We became uneasy when observing that the first definition of leadership in the text followed Mintzberg's definition very closely. We questioned whether these assumed 'neutral' practices, which Peters and Waterman presented as '. . . the necessary activities of the leader that take up most of *his or her* day' (p. 82, our emphasis) would reveal the compulsive male and the alienated female selves decried by Horney. Our uneasiness was compounded by the fact that the chapter where this discussion occurs is titled 'Man Waiting for Motivation'.

So, we have tried another deconstructive strategy. We questioned whether a different kind of leadership is even possible, one which would be defined by traditional feminine imageries. For this purpose, we follow Luce Irigaray's approach, mimicry, where:

'One must assume the feminine role deliberately. Which means already to convert a form of subordination into an affirmation, and thus to begin to thwart it . . . [it means] for a woman, to try to recover the place of her exploitation by dis-course, without allowing herself to be simply reduced to it. It means to resubmit

herself . . . to "ideas", in particular to ideas about herself, that are elaborated in/ by masculine logic, but as to make it "visible", by an effect of playful repetition, what was supposed to remain invisible: the cover-up of a possible operation of the feminine in language.' (1985b: 76)

For this purpose, we took Peters and Waterman's first definition of leadership and 'fantasized' in Table 4 the subtext that it would have if pronounced — alternatively — by male and female leaders. For the full effect of our *mimicry* read consecutively the similar sentences in each column.

The Seductive Travesty of a Moral Leader

Now, in Table 4 the 'male subtext' seems to reiterate and even reinforce the leadership imagery and its seductiveness. The 'female subtext' creates a 'motherly' feeling. It promotes a solid context but neither an exciting nor a seductive one. It will be difficult to identify either leadership or seduction in a second reading.

Table 4
Leadership as
Seductive
Travesty

Peters and Waterman with a [Male Subtext]	Peters and Waterman with a [Female Subtext]
Leadership is many things. It is patient, usually boring coalition building <i>[or the game of courting your prey]</i> .	Leadership is many things. It is patient, usually boring coalition building <i>[or the careful sewing of a family quilt]</i> .
It is the purposeful seeding of cabals that one hopes will result in the appropriate ferment in the bowels of the organization <i>[to impregnate for the moment of production/reproduction]</i> .	It is the purposeful seeding of cabals that one hopes will result in the appropriate ferment in the bowels of the organization <i>[to mother the beauty of a bountiful field of flowers and grain]</i> .
It is meticulously shifting the attention of the institution through the mundane language of management systems <i>[to cover the doubleness of your intentions]</i> .	It is meticulously shifting the attention of the institution through the mundane language of management systems <i>[to keep alive hope in the moments of despair]</i> .
It is altering agendas so that new priorities get enough attention <i>[you know, that cute one in the typing pool]</i> .	It is altering agendas so that new priorities get enough attention <i>[to change one's career/ mind for the sake of your children]</i> .
It is being visible when things are going awry, and invisible when they are working well <i>[you only press in your advances if she doesn't fall for your words]</i> .	It is being visible when things are going awry, and invisible when they are working well <i>[but you still know I am here, to give you a hand or dry your tears]</i> .
It's building a loyal team at the top that speaks more or less with one voice <i>[so that she, at the bottom, can be kept silent in her pain]</i> .	It's building a loyal team at the top that speaks more or less with one voice <i>[full of cacophonies, and always sustained by cries and laughter]</i> .
It's listening carefully much of the time, frequently speaking with encouragement, and reinforcing words with believable action <i>[yes, I'll say 'I love you' every time I possess you]</i> .	It's listening carefully much of the time, frequently speaking with encouragement, and reinforcing words with believable action <i>[yes, I love you and do come back if you need my help]</i> .
It's being tough when necessary, and it's the occasional naked use of power <i>[you pitiful thing, daring to oppose me, feel all the weight of my rage. . .]</i>	It's being tough when necessary, and it's the occasional naked use of power <i>[you won't snatch my children away from me. Don't even come close, I'll kill you first. . .]</i>

It is important to notice, however, that we have deployed both those columns with our subtexts to show that they are nothing more than diverse views *from within the phallic order*, i.e. a masculinist view of 'the feminine' including 'the stoic mother' and 'the fickle male'. They bespeak of 'the old dream of symmetry' (Irigaray 1985a) where parallel, but different, male and female forms of leadership may be possible (e.g. Loden 1985; Rosener 1990), but which doesn't question whose idea is the notion of 'symmetry'. Whose concept of the world would symmetrically 'gendered' leadership represent and reproduce? Wouldn't 'feminine leadership' be an oxymoron? — not because of 'feminine' but because of 'leadership'? (e.g. Calás 1988).

Even if we promoted the view that both male and female forms of leadership are possible (which we do not), it would be difficult to find these arguments within Peters and Waterman's text. In subsequent paragraphs, the authors promptly inform us that the activities described by their words in Table 4 are what Burns (1978) calls 'transactional leadership'. The authors go on to indicate that these are just the everyday necessary activities of the leader, that he/she must not fail to perform. However, the authors' real interest in leadership is centred on Burns' 'transforming leadership', that occurs less frequently and 'builds on man's (*sic*) need for meaning, leadership that creates institutional purpose . . .' (p. 82).

Soon the authors recite the marvels of this personage as follows:

'The transforming leader is concerned with minutiae, as well. But he is concerned with a different kind of minutiae; he is concerned with the tricks of the pedagogue, the mentor, the linguist — the more successfully to become the value shaper, the exemplar, the maker of meanings . . . No opportunity is too small, no forum too insignificant, no audience too junior.' (p. 82–83)

How naive of us to think that Peters and Waterman's discourse would provide us with an opening for arguing *against* the fiction of 'female leadership' and the old dream of symmetry! There is no way to enter the sign 'woman' in this discourse, not even in an essentialist symmetric manner. Suddenly, we remember Gallop's (1982) commentary on Luce Irigaray's readings of Freud, which remarks that there is a certain pederasty implicit in pedagogy (. . . the mentor? . . . the linguist?) because a greater man penetrates a lesser man with his knowledge. This (male) homosexuality in the structures of society includes everybody. It is the male standard of knowledge — the apparently sexually indifferent logos, science, logic — which measures all members of the structure along a predefined agreement over what knowledge is. That is all there is to know about 'leadership'.

Thus, to experience the full force of this knowledge here, we have the 'Transformational [travestite?] Leader', in all his socratic exhibitionism, when Peters and Waterman quote directly from Burns:

'Transforming leadership occurs when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality. Their purposes, which might have started out separate

but related, in the case of transactional leadership, became fused . . . Various names are used for such leadership: elevating, mobilizing, inspiring, exalting, uplifting, exhorting, evangelizing [pederastic?]. The relationship can be moralistic, of course. But transforming leadership ultimately becomes moral in that it raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspirations of both the leader and the led, and thus has a transforming effect on both . . .' (Burns 1978: 20, quoted in Peters and Waterman: 83. Our comment in [])

We noticed, as did Peters and Waterman, the familiarity of that discourse, but, different from Peters and Waterman, who exalted the *truthfulness* in these 'universal words' as first uttered by Chester Barnard, we felt how these words closed the homosocial *circle of seduction* for organizational leadership.

The supposedly innovative text of Peters and Waterman, and its celebrated *transcendent leader*, could do nothing more than repeat one more time the old signifiers. Under the guise of 'newness', the authors could do no more than articulate some empty discourses for the 80s, while returning to the beginning of the circle. There is no other possibility for the paragraph than its capacity to transport us back, in a flash, through the parlours and gymnasiums permeated by sexual/homosexual jokes, and then to make us repent and pray 'in-the-Name-of-the-Father', kneeling in front (in whatever way) of 'Barnard-the-priest'. We also sensed, if ever so slightly, the sadness of an exhausted old satyr inside those words.

Summary

What have we achieved as a result of these re-readings of classic commentaries on leadership? In them we see three images of leadership. Barnard's leader is a superior person, a priest/saint whose concerns for morality bring him close to God, but, as a man, he is still tied to his carnal needs. The minute human flesh is put onto leadership we have a man trying to perform like God, but who constantly commits seduction of his adoring flock.

McGregor gives up the image of godly leadership. Theocracy is exchanged for democracy, and the rule of God becomes the rule of the people. The shrewd Douglas is able to recognize the joke implicit in both cases. Neither God nor the people can rule, but the privileged class can make the populace, the flock, believe and follow their apparent representatives. Both the flock and the populace need to give their 'selves' to the leader in order to feel that they are somebody. McGregor is ready to produce an egalitarian trickster/leader holding out a promise of a new value system — but it is only a seductive joke!

With Mintzberg, there is no longer any pretence. At the dawn of the sexual revolution, emerging from the promiscuous discourses of the 60s, anything goes! The oversexed, narcissistic leader is a permissible figure, under the illusion that others are equally empowered to counteract his

advances: Would they do it if they didn't want to? The thought that seduction may be happening out of fear is discounted.

Finally, we can repeat our previous lines about Peters and Waterman and close the *circle of seduction*. However, if we want to do justice to this text, one more commentary is in order. Rather than propose *In Search of Excellence* as a poor contribution to the tradition of leadership literature — which could not do anything new and had to go back to Barnard — we want to call attention to a very important way in which it differs from that tradition: the difference between modern and postmodern organizational writings. As a postmodern text this book falls under that variety which Jameson (1983) calls *pastiche* and he defines as parody without humour.

Parody, as critique, mimics with humour and irony some serious subject. Parody, as a modern genre, is supposed to make us smile/laugh when we notice the absurdity in the comparison between the serious subject and its parodic double. When the serious subject no longer exists, the humour behind the parody gets lost. Unable to laugh/critique, what remains with us in pastiche is our inability to stop thinking about that non-existent subject and to get it out of our cultural space. In pastiche — as post-modern genre — repetition becomes the only mode of engagement, as we become unable to separate 'the original' from 'the copy'.

Peters and Waterman's return to Barnard via Burns illustrates this point well. The recycling of old discourses is not a re-discovery of 'eternal verities'. Rather, it is a reflection of how the organizational field, in its quest for *knowledge*, has impoverished what can be said as organizational research and theory. Because we have ignored the petty institutional game — the homosocial libidinal economy of competitiveness and glory — that has provoked this condition, we keep repeating 'the copy' as if it were 'truth'.

We argue that, at this point in time, leadership research/literature — as we know it — cannot be other than pastiche. Perhaps the only reality left in the homosocial libidinal economy represented in these writings is in the text, in 'the copy'. What *seductiveness* does 'leadership' hold for those who *dominate* the *writing scene*, that they must keep on repeating its name in a constant recycling of a masculine self-image? We posit that it is in this *act of repetition* that 'the original' and 'the copy' become juxtaposed. Researchers and theorists of leadership may be *saying/doing* about leadership very different things from what actual managers are *saying/doing* about it, but one and the other constantly reproduce strong manifestations of the homosocial order by repeating seduction as truth.

In the meantime, we ask, is this homosocial, elitist, monologic leadership the desired seduction for the organized life of the present — an organizational life of companies without offices (e.g. Marshall 1984) behind the screen of PCs and VTRs and of 'telecommuting' activities (e.g. Zuboff 1988; Perin 1990)? Is it desired by people connected through telemarketing, electronic mail and computer networks, and whose lives have taken

on the mark of 'global technologies'? Is leadership a desirable seduction for a post-Fordist, postindustrial society and an increasingly female labour force? Are other seductions possible?

Different Pleasures

To summarize what we have been trying to show so far with this text, at first we set up the opposition between the signifier 'leadership' and the signifier 'seduction'. We noted that organizational writers have valued 'leadership' over 'seduction'. Leadership is upright, but seduction has gone astray. Leadership has come to be associated with the maintenance of orderly relations among men, beyond the bounds of time. Leadership is socially acceptable, but seduction is not. It seems that seduction is a problem that could bring about the downfall of men.

Through our re-readings of 'the classics' we noticed that the 'problem' has been there all along. Without seduction, the leadership literature wouldn't have been possible, it would have lost its (sex) appeal. However, we also noticed that leadership writings in the organizational disciplines have so far been limited to forms of seduction associated with homosocial *domination* and *servitude*.

Still, in our introduction, we said we wanted to explore different models of seduction . . . perhaps to let the seductress define organizational life and change that life beyond what has been possible with 'leadership'. This is proving difficult. As we performed our analyses we realized that, similar to 'leadership', our images of 'seduction' also emanated from a male dominated culture. When we thought of 'seduction' and seduction 'scenes' we got a very limited set of images: perverse children and lower class people; homosexual servants; 'Lolitas' and sirens on the cliffs . . . images of corruption rather than morality, as practiced by 'the lesser ones'.

How then does one go further than the limited, univocal leadership-seduction? Is there a more open signifier for describing human desire? We decided that the signifier we were after was 'pleasure'. Pleasures beyond leadership-seduction may provide the bases for other types of social relations and newer forms of organizational knowledge. What different pleasures can we imagine? Since we have criticized the masculine orientation of the leadership-seduction literature, we must consider sources that try to free themselves from the phallogocentric influence. For inspiration, we turned to Utopias imagined by feminist authors.

Utopia One

In *Herland* (Gilman 1915/1979) we find a world pervaded by the pleasures of community, the pleasures of friendship, the pleasures of motherhood, and the pleasures of work. Herland is a world of only women. When the males of their civilization were killed in a series of wars and when, due to a natural disaster, their country was sealed off from the rest of the continent, one woman developed the capacity for parthenogenesis. She

gave birth to five daughters who inherited her power. Herland was repopulated from this First Mother. The country is a genuine community where notions of individuality and the limitations of a wholly personal life were inconceivable.

In this book, Herland is described by a male narrator from the U.S.A. who, with two buddies, has managed to invade the country and ends up staying there for a year. This narrator just happens to be a sociologist and so we — the readers — expect him to give us a good participant observer account. He does. For example:

'We had expected a dull submissive monotony, and found a daring social inventiveness far beyond our own, and a mechanical and scientific development fully equal to ours.

We had expected pettiness, and found a social consciousness besides which our nations looked like quarrelling children — feeble-minded ones at that.

We had expected jealousy, and found a broad sisterly affection, a fair-minded intelligence, to which we could produce no parallel.

We had expected hysteria, and found a standard of health and vigour, a calmness of temper, to which the habit of profanity, for instance, was impossible to explain — we tried it.' (p. 81)

Despite all his words of admiration for this society — and after many months in Herland — the narrator reflects upon his own culture:

'You see, with us, women are kept as different as possible and as feminine as possible. We men have our own world, with only men in it; we get tired of our ultra-maleness and turn gladly to the ultra-femaleness. Also in keeping our women as feminine as possible, we see to it that when we turn to them we find the thing we want always in evidence. Well, the atmosphere of this place was anything but seductive. The very number of these human women, always in human relation, made them anything but alluring.' (pp. 129–130)

Does *Herland* represent an alternative model to be emulated? To us it does not; rather, it illustrates the illusion of 'alternative worlds' when they are placed in opposition to a dominant one. All that *Herland* accomplishes is to repeat the notion of pleasure along patriarchal lines, since all that is admirable in the society (first quote) and all that is undesirable (second quote) is defined under masculine standards.

It reminds us of some women-in-management literature, where women's differences/no differences in organizational behaviour are assessed under standards assumed to be neutral. It is seldom mentioned that the 'standards' were defined by the original 'inhabitants' of managerial and academic positions . . . who were not women.

Utopia Two

Another Utopia is seen in *Women on the Edge of Time* (Piercy 1976) when a modern day woman, Connie Ramos, is transported into a community in Massachusetts in the year 2137. In the future the category *gender* has lost significance. A single pronoun, 'per', has replaced her/his and he/she. The categories of *race* and *class* are also gone. Babies are

produced technologically in special brooders, and all people can be mothers.

Connie — who, in her own time, is a mental patient with a personal history of abuse and penury — questions the social arrangements of the future:

'How can men be mothers! How can some kid who isn't related to you be your child? . . .

It was part of women's long revolution. When we were breaking up all the old hierarchies. Finally there was the one thing we had to give up too, the only power we ever had, in return for no more power for anyone. The original production: the power to give birth. Cause as long as we were biologically enchained, we'd never be equal. And males never would be humanized to be loving and tender. So we all became mothers. Every child has three. To break the nuclear bonding.' (p. 105)

In spite of her marginal position in her own society, Connie cannot accept the 'loss of motherhood' as a social improvement. Upon her discovery that men could also breastfeed:

'She felt angry. Yes, how dare any man share that pleasure. These women thought they had won, but they had abandoned to men the last refuge of women. What was special about being a woman here? They had given it all up, they had let men steal from them the last remnants of ancient power, those sealed in blood and milk.' (p. 135)

Now, while the first Utopia illustrated the limits of alternative views under oppositional premises, the very different alternative offered by this second Utopia doesn't fare much better. In this case, rather than an alternative female-dominated world, the text provides a world beyond androgyny, which works against every possible known structure of domination. It does so by collapsing for the readers many of these known structures and reconverting them into unknown ones. For example, motherhood is such a valuable condition for the society that it is offered to everyone, but is also taken away from everyone (i.e. brooders).

This is an ambiguous world where our typical concept of 'progress' breaks down because our notions past/present/future become unintelligible, and that is the main impediment for understanding this world as an alternative. Under our current notions of *knowledge*, we are likely to react like Connie Ramos, who couldn't accept a world without oppression because it didn't look like what she — the oppressed — expected the future to be.

Like Connie Ramos, our modern (mono)logic already has a known blueprint (an evaluation standard) for the 'unknown' — what we can say/think as 'the progress of knowledge' — which, paradoxically, would make us oppose different knowledges, even when we may be clamouring for them.

Utopia Three

In trying to articulate here, in our text, different pleasurable practices of organizing, we have engaged in another utopia. Utopia three is our

dream that Utopias one and two would have solved our problem, and they do not. Can we learn anything from having tried? Is there anything which can help us turn leadership-seduction into other pleasures of organization?

By voicing this third Utopia as our own fiction — in having written this whole paper *as if* we were going to be able to articulate an alternative for the dilemma leadership/seduction — we can tell you now that finding an alternative was never our purpose. Our purpose, rather, was *the very action of writing this improbable paper*.

Throughout the paper we were calling attention to another pleasure, the 'pleasure of the text' (Barthes 1975) and what can be done with it. Similar to other writers, we writers of organizational matters can 'do' with texts. How can we make some different pleasures out of this 'doing'? Unless we spend some time meditating on this point we risk staying caught in our impoverished and repetitious organizational research and theory . . . unable to say *differently* in our writings.

To clarify, our utopias serve to emphasize how naive it is to try to propose 'alternative organizations' without questioning the logic, the metaphysical assumptions, which inform our current thinking and writing about organizations. Before any real alternative becomes possible — outside the current monologic — it is necessary to question the limits of what we have taken for granted so far. 'Analytical strategies' like the ones deployed in this paper, in their own experimental form and farfetchedness, are attempts to reflect upon the limits of the *normal* logic.

For us, deconstructing 'leadership' has been an occasion for arguing against closure over what we — organizational scholars — could think and say as organizational theory and research, in this case represented by the discourses of 'leadership'. Deconstructing 'leadership' dislodges the *masculinist monologic* in which we have encased our organizational signifiers because it allows for *absurdity* to appear. Through *textual exercises* of this nature we might be able to observe, eventually, the absurdity of other currently acceptable organizational theorizing and understand how rhetorical-cultural structures perpetuate discourse under the rubric of 'research/theory/knowledge'.

Our recourse to *gender* in this questioning is in recognition of the role of patriarchy in our current structures of knowledge. The 'women's voice' that we have enacted here as our 'outside' from where to question, is only a temporary site for noticing the limits of modern knowledge. Perhaps by having been outside the dominant academic order, some women's writing and thinking has been more adventurous, as they didn't have to conform to the modern tradition of knowledge. In this paper we have been particularly inspired by Irigaray's more recent writings where:

'To be sure, such writing is deliberately unstable, rejecting the necessity for a solid ground beneath its own slipperiness. Like Derrida, Irigaray refuses the demand for fixed philosophical positions in what can only be described as a highly performative kind of writing. Such writing can also be said to be seductive, if by this word one understands a certain deliberative reversibility. Readers may

respond with fascination, bafflement, or anger, depending upon their willingness to be led astray . . . The appeal of such writing derives, in large part, from its transgressive nature and its promise of forbidden pleasures . . .' (Burke 1989: 236)

Thus, as we revert here to a playful discourse and imagine worlds of possibilities otherwise forbidden, we hope to open spaces for others to enact different worlds in ambivalent spaces which are not yet inside or outside the organizational texts. As we make available these spaces as another form of discourse about organizations, we deny to them any claim of solid ground or final word. Instead, we use them as an occasion to mark, in organizational theorizing, *the need to accept the temporality of our knowledge and the need to write and re-write organizations and organizational theory as we move along in an ever changing world.*

Rather than *fixing* ourselves in the text (the typical imagery of 'universal truth-knowledge' in modern metaphysics) we prefer the imagery of a transient subject, never to be captured, always on the move, as so many points of pleasure on a woman's body. As we write these words we recognize that this is all that we (Calás and Smircich) have been doing so far, but, at the same time, this form of writing ourselves into the organizational text has provided us with the pleasures of resistance and activism (Diamond and Quinby 1988) while maintaining an awareness — so often forgotten in the dominant order — of the limits of human agency.

What other pleasures for the 'organizational text' can our friends and colleagues inscribe . . . ? What is your pleasure?

Note

1. The 1933 paper 'Femininity' was partially based on the paper 'Female Sexuality' published in 1931.

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