THE CONSTRUCTION OF EGALITARIAN MASCULINITIES IN THE MIDLANDS OF KWAZULU-NATAL

BY

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WHY I WRITE

I write to begin a dialogue.

I write to imagine things differently and in imagining things differently perhaps the world will change.

I write to soothe the voices shouting inside me, outside, all round.

Writing Creative non-fiction (ed. Fouche, C. & Gerard P), 2001.

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis, unless specifically indicated to the contrary, is my own original work. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other university.

Charles Sylvester Rankhotha

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1. **Batsoali**: kea leboha Bakoena ka thuto eo le mphileng eona. Ke titimme he, ke qetile sebaka; ke boea le marumo le thebe.

2. **Friends**: I am indebted to you all. Kesavan Kisten; thank you for being my true friend and supporter far away from home; the Tutshana family, the Rev. Eric Gallant's family, the Rt. Rev. Nic Mbhele's family and Moses and Thuli, I consider myself very privileged to be part of your families and to experience so much of your love and care.

3. **My supervisor**: the five years that I was taught and supervised by you have been among the most academically enriching years of my life. Your commitment and dedication to teaching and supervision, as well as your care and love for your students, have truly amazed me. Now I know it takes individuals to change the world!

4. **My respondents**: thank you, my brothers. Learning from your life-histories was truly a humbling experience. I promise to take your struggles further by fighting for gender equality for all.

5. **To myself**: I believe in doing my best and only the best is good for me! May the powers that have carried me and helped me in this task continue to encourage and inspire me in my further struggles, until I have finished the race.

5. **NRF**: thank you once more for funding my studies

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the RANKHOTHA family who never had the privilege of getting higher education. May this first step inspire them to dream more.

MOTIVATION AND OBJECTIVES

I am motivated by the prevalence of violence in South Africa and I want to contribute towards its eradication.

I am motivated by the knowledge that violence is gendered and that it is a weapon used in heterosexual-patriarchal cultures to assert power over women and other men. It is also employed to keep gender differences intact and 'natural'. For that reason, I want to conscientise and mobilise against such 'unnatural' dichotomies.

I am also motivated by the knowledge that violence against women, including sexual and domestic violence, is now widely recognised as a serious political issue. However, in South Africa, many women's lives continue to be brutalised by fear and by the reality of heterosexist violence. In this context, sexual liberation for many women means little more than an increase in the availability of pornography and new forms of exploitation, while the double-standard of sexual morality and hostility to lesbian and gay life-styles continue to restrict their sexual choices.

I am motivated by the awareness that heterosexual men are no longer equated with humanity (i.e. man) and that their gender is visible, meaning that one can analyse economics, politics and personal life from a view-point that recognises the gender-specific nature of male life-patterns and behaviour, rather than seeing them as the norm. This means that gender analysis becomes central to understanding how political elites function in their exclusion of women. With the understanding that when we study politicians, we study masculine identities, we can begin to understand different men's interests and behaviour, and the complex ways in which these interests are related to biological sex and sexual identities. In other words, I am motivated by the knowledge that society is dominated by heterosexual men and that they are part of the problem confronting women. Rather than focussing on the oppression of women, then, I argue that heterosexual men must also focus on themselves and learn new ways of behaviour outside patriarchal masculinity, if gender equality is to be achieved.

ABSTRACT

The political, historical and legal changes, which have taken place in our country since 1994, have challenged men and women to learn anew, to readjust and embrace change. Men and women have been forced to reexamine gender relationships and to embrace a new culture of 'gender equality', which is enshrined in the Constitution.

However, the idea seems to have taken some men by surprise, especially those who are comfortable in their hetero-patriarchal masculinity, which dominates and oppresses women and children. For this reason, these men have not only shown disappointment at this apparent loss of privilege, but they are also becoming confused about their masculine identity. In their attempt to try and hold on to hetero-patriarchal culture and to keep women in their 'rightful' place, they appeal for the restoration of the by-gone traditional values of *ubuntu*, which are largely informed by the same hetero-patriarchal culture. Above all, in their frustration and anger, these men have resorted to violence in which they abuse and rape women and children, whom they apparently blame for their loss of patriarchal masculinity.

However, despite the fact that not all men are heterosexual, men as a group have been blamed for the prevailing violence and the attitudes which foster it. My research conducted for the purpose of resolving gender-based violence and finding an alternative masculinity among black men in the Midlands, KwaZulu-Natal, demonstrates that, despite their collective socialisation in the patriarchal culture of aggression, abuse and violence, some gay men tend to choose different values and forms of masculinity that depart from the 'normal' culture, by embracing values of love, nurturing, and care for others. Unfortunately, South African communities have not always been able to appreciate gay masculinities and their contribution, but instead, they have condemned and ostracised them as un-African and traitors to *ubuntu* values.

Thus, in my analysis of the life-histories of a group of ten black heterosexual and gay men, I highlight the positive contribution of some marginalised gay men, who are forging what I believe is a more egalitarian masculinity, characterised by qualities opposed to the aggressive, dominant and potentially violent nature of patriarchal

masculinities. In brief, I argue that, in striving for gender equality and an end to violence against women and children in South Africa, heterosexual men must be challenged to focus on themselves and learn new ways of behaviour from the kind of egalitarian masculinity constructed by the group of gay men studied.

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INTRODUCTION

Patriarchal masculinity is essentially violent and, depending on historical, political and cultural circumstances, can be expressed in more violent ways than other kinds of masculinity. South Africa is one of those countries in which, under patriarchy, wife battering, rape and family murders, as well as violence in general, have reached alarming proportions, largely due to the kinds of masculinity inherited, and then forged and legitimated under colonialism and apartheid. Thus, this thesis is dedicated to the examination of the nature of patriarchal masculinity and how to find, welcome and strengthen, non-violent, non-oppressive egalitarian forms of masculinity, in an attempt to move beyond the binary divisions of our gendered society.

In Chapter One, I explore theories of masculinity by surveying the essentialist and constructionist debates on the 'nature' of the concept. Accepting that essentialist perspectives have failed to sustain an argument in support of an 'essential' human sexuality or masculine/feminine identity, I agree with scholars who claim that masculinity is socially constructed, thus recognising that constructions of masculinity and femininity will vary across time and within a given society.

For this reason, in Chapter Two, I explore traditional ways of constructing masculinities in Africa. My analysis confirms constructionist scholarship that Africa is home to a myriad of forms of masculinity ranging from those resembling western constructs to those that are entirely different. It would seem therefore that conceiving of one monolithic masculinity is both a Western and African myth advanced to protect patriarchal stakes, politically, economically and culturally.

In Chapter three, I examine the construction of 'other' masculinities in the Zulu tradition. Historical, political and economic conditions have led to the emergence of different and transitional masculinities competing for hegemony in the culture. Although traditional hetero-patriarchal masculinity still commands a great deal of influence mostly in the rural areas, urban (or township) areas are increasingly being dominated by the violent

and politicised masculinities of the youth.

Therefore, in Chapter Four, I look closely at the causes of violence in South Africa, especially against women and children. It seems that colonial displacement of African cultures and apartheid have played a major role in the aetiology of violence. Reacting to what they call 'emasculation' by the colonial and apartheid regime, as well as by post-apartheid challenges to patriarchal masculinity, some African men have resorted to violence against women and children—the only easy target over which they still hold power. It would seem, therefore, that the current forms of patriarchal masculinity are the cause of violence in South Africa.

In Chapter Five, I examine why African gay men internalise patriarchal masculine values and norms. Historically, same-sex relationships were part of some cultures. Although there was no concept of homophobia, however, there were rules that governed sexual and gender behaviour, as well as sanctions imposed when the rules were violated. Similarly, cultures that regarded same-sex relationships as foreign and 'un-masculine' punished those that violated the 'norm'. One way to survive was to deny one's own gay identity publicly and internalise patriarchal masculinity. Notwithstanding, gay men provide an alternative to patriarchal masculinity.

Similarly, in Chapter Six, I argue that, while women fight for liberation, at the same time, they seem to collude in their own oppression by internalising patriarchal femininity. The main problem is that, in different cultural contexts, femininity is intertwined with hegemonic masculinity. In other words, feminine behaviour gets its cue from hegemonic masculinity. For instance, in patriarchal cultures, women are considered feminine, if they defer to male authority and become its objects. Similarly, other factors such as gender role stereotyping, cultural complacency, religion and psychology, do not only confirm, but entrench these cultural beliefs and expectations. Thus, it is no surprise that even when women fight for liberation, some women persist in upholding patriarchal expectations and values, such as virginity testing. However, other women want to fight for and embrace an alternative, egalitarian femininity.

In Chapter Seven, I examine the origin of 'other' masculinities outside patriarchy in Africa, like egalitarian masculinity. Although the latter does not seem to have been known in many African cultures, there were more ways than one of expressing same-sex masculinities, some of which were more equal and non-dominant than others. In this chapter, I also isolate those qualities which characterise egalitarian masculinity.

In Chapter Eight, I explain the methodology employed in the study and record and analyse the life-histories of a selected group of gay and heterosexual black males.

Finally in Chapter Nine, I compare and contrast the findings to demonstrate the kinds of masculinity constructed by both groups, through the engagement of their bodies in social interaction. Then, in the Conclusion and Recommendations, I examine the pitfalls and problems in my research and suggest practical ways in which heterosexual men can change, learning from the kind of masculinity constructed by their gay counterparts.

In the course of this thesis, I shall be using terms such as gay, heterosexual, patriarchy, hetero-patriarchy and heterosexism which I understand as follows:

Definition of terms

Gay

Although the word 'gay' can be used when talking of men and women (Haggerty 2000: 362), the term is used here to refer to black men who have declared themselves sexually attracted to other men and are involved in same-sex relationships. They have also, by their way of life, adopted a political and social stance which often places them on the margins of society.

Heterosexual

In the thesis, 'heterosexual' is used in contradistinction to 'gay', for by this I refer to black men who are sexually attracted to women and who are involved in sexual relations with the opposite sex.

Patriarchy

According to second-wave feminist discourse (Code 2000: 378) which began in the 1970s, patriarchy refers to the hierarchical relationships between women and men manifested in familial and social structures alike in a descending order from an authoritarian male head, which results in dominance in personal, political, cultural and social life, and in patriarchal families where the law of the father prevails.

According to patriarchal assumptions, the female position is constructed as necessary, albeit subordinate to the male. A sexual division of labour and the consequent social division into public and private spheres acquire justification from patriarchal beliefs, namely, that it is right and proper for men to command and for women to obey (2000: 378).

Hetero-patriarchy

Hetero-patriarchy ensures the male right of access to women, women's relations, including personal, professional, social, and economic relations, defined by the ideology that a woman is for a man. Hetero-patriarchy is a system in which men dominate and disempower women in any number of forms, from outright attack, as happens today in South Africa, to paternalistic attitudes and situations in which women themselves devalue women, because of the internalisation of patriarchal values. Thus hetero-patriarchy normalises male dominance, heterosexuality, the nuclear family and the subordination of women (Code 2000: 245).

Heterosexism or heteronormativity

Heterosexism is the irrational belief that heterosexuality is the only 'normal' form of sexual expression and consequently involves discrimination against lesbians and gays. Understanding heterosexism involves understanding how women are defined in terms of men or not at all, and how lesbians and gays are marginalised and condemned as perverts (Code 2000: 246).

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL SURVEY OF THEORIES OF MASCULINITY

Introduction

In this chapter, I investigate theories of masculinity in relation to gender identity. One of the central debates in current studies of masculinity focusses on essentialist and constructionist perspectives on the origins and nature of masculinity. The chapter is divided into two parts, in which Part One explores essentialist theories, while Part Two examines constructionist theories of masculinity. I shall also use the debate to argue further, in the next chapters, that human sexuality and masculine identity are socially constructed and shaped by different historical and cultural contexts.

Part One

According to Szesnat (1997: 270-293), the essentialist perspective maintains that human phenomena have an inherent 'essence' resident in every individual. Conversely, the constructionist perspective argues that human phenomena are constructed socially. In contrast, the essentialist perspective regards human sexuality as a natural given, predetermined by genes and biology and, therefore, unchangeable. As a consequence, biological drives are presumed to underlie human sexuality. This privileging of biology in sexual discourse, according to Szesnat, is based on the belief that the body is the prime mover; the original source of action, knowledge, meaning and experience. It follows, then, that the essentialist perspective regards human sexuality as having its own innate essence which remains fixed, whatever the extent of social conditioning.

In every political context and culture, therefore, the essentialist perspective would argue that human phenomena transcend historical and cultural changes. For instance, writing a history of sexuality, means producing an account of biological givens. Thus,

essentialists would see continuity between cultures and ages as very important. However, under closer scrutiny by scholars, essentialist assumptions and claims do not seem to find much support in any lived experience or human phenomena. In fact, contrary to essentialist claims, human experiences and phenomena seem to be marked by historical, social and political changes affecting cultural contexts in every age. The following scholarly works that I examine bear witness to the fact that an exclusive essentialist theory is almost impossible to find in lived experience.

To achieve that purpose, I shall divide my selection into two parts.[1] The first focuses mainly on biological origins of gender identity and its supposed effects on human behaviour, while the second critiques the philosophical and political ideologies supporting essentialist claims.

Ehrhardt and Meyer-Bahlburg (1981: 1312-1318) focus on the developmental effects of sex hormones on sex differences in human behavior—an argument that has been made from organisational theory.

Ehrhardt and Meyer-Bahlburg (1981: 1313) argue that, although organisational theory has been supported by many experimental approaches from lower species, in primates and humans the evidence is inferential and tentative. For example, in their study, researchers of human behavior attempted to access prenatal androgen effects on females and males, where abnormal levels of progesterone and oestrogen could be linked with postnatal behavior in gender identity, gender role / sex dimorphic behavior, sexual orientation and intelligence, and cognitive sex differences.

Ehrhardt and Meyer-Bahlburg (1981: 1316) assert that there is no conclusive evidence of prenatal hormone effects on the above-mentioned. Effects are evident in animal experimental data on the role of prenatal androgens, progestogens and oestrogens in the expression of sex-dimorphic behavior, but any conclusions drawn, for human

1. Surveying the entire field is impossible. Consequently, I have chosen works which exemplify and critique important features of this paradigm.

research studies, have to remain tentative.

They argue that the development of gender identity seems to depend largely on the sexual attitudes of those involved in the experimentation, as shown in the case of intersexed patients. For instance, the data available on intersexed patients indicate that prenatal hormones do not rigidly determine sexual orientation. They also argue that the effects of prenatal sex hormones on sex-dimorphic cognitive abilities have not been demonstrated in *ad hoc* studies. Thus, there is no conclusive evidence to assert that prenatal hormones affect psychosexual differences, the development of gender, sexual orientation or sex-dimorphic behavior in human beings. However, what seems to receive support is the dependence of gender development on social factors.

Birke and Vines (1987: 555-71) also examine the biological origins of gender identity. They claim that, by suggesting that women's subordination is the direct result of biological directives, led to criticisms which gave rise to an almost total rejection of the role of biology in the construction of gender.

However, they argue that this does not mean that biological processes are not experienced in the lives of women. Otherwise, it would imply that the construction of masculinity and femininity purely from the social domain denies our biological experiences. Rather than maintaining a dichotomy between behavior and biology, then, Birke and Vines (1987: 555-6) emphasise the interaction between an organism and its environment, for one's behavior is part of a continuing and dynamic process, which also affects one's biological processes.

Brettel and Sargent (1993: 1-5) also examine the role of biology in human behavior and whether male-female differences can be explained biologically, culturally or through the interaction of both. They specifically examine whether there is a biological reason for the division of labour among humans.

For Brettel and Sargent (1993: 2), the issue is not the anatomical and hormonal

differences, but the importance of those differences for gender roles. Hence the examination of the laterisation of the brain and the employment of evolutionary theories in explaining those differences. Firstly, psychologists have drawn attention to the importance of the environment in shaping human character development, such as verbal ability and aggression; secondly, according to research, there is no evidence to suggest that the sexual differentiation of the brain has anything to do with the specificity of male-female behavior.

Thirdly, scholars, opposing the evolutionary approach, argue that the use of baboons as models, among others, justifies sexism. Cross-cultural studies have also shown that societies differ culturally in showing aggression and having access to culturally approved expressions of hostility. However, more importantly, they argue that there are no facts to associate women with 'nature' and they suggest that this association has a social meaning and institutional consequence.

In the same way, de Waal (1995: 58-64) and Leibowitz (1993: 5-13) examine the development of the notion of gender by studying the behavior of the bonobo species with the hope that their behavior might shed light on the dimorphic role-playing among humans.

De Waal examines the life of the bonobo species which, according to him, can be characterised as female-centred and egalitarian. What distinguishes this species from the rest of the nonhuman primates is their gentle and peace-loving behavior towards one another, as opposed to the usual aggressive attitudes of the males towards females in others. Sex turns out to be the key to the social life of the bonobo. For example, de Waal reports that during feeding time, the males would develop erections and invite females for sex and vice versa.

Other examples also demonstrate that their quiet and tolerant behavior is perhaps due to their ability to divert attention and diffuse tension. For instance, de Waal observes that if two bonobos approach an object that arouses their interest, they will mount each

other before investigating the object. This would help avert a squabble which would have occurred in other species. Because of their peace-loving and appeasement tendencies, de Waal asserts that sex is not only frequent among the bonobos, but that it occurs in different partner combinations, including between juveniles and adults.

The peculiar bonobo behavior, according to de Waal (1995: 64), might help one to understand not only the role of sex, but also might have serious implications for models of human society. For instance, are there human societies that are egalitarian? If they exist, are they matriarchal? What are the social factors that shape them? In other words, why and how are they different from patriarchal and competition-prone societies of western culture? In the light of the above research, the roles of men and meanings of masculinity shall be the focus in examining such egalitarian societies.

Finally, Leibowitz (1993) examines the development of the notion of gender from sex differences, as these anatomical differences are believed to relate to emotional and physical differences.

Leibowitz focuses on the behavior and social adaptations of several primate species in order to examine whether and how their social role arrangements are related to the presence or absence of sexual dimorphism. The idea is 'to demonstrate that the sex role adaptations of the sexually dimorphic nonhuman primate species do not in fact conform to the models used in current explanations of how and why dimorphism developed among humans' (1993: 7).

According to Leibowitz (1993: 7), social arrangements among primates do not confirm the current popular and academic theories which associate sex-role behavior with physical sex differences. For example, rather than displaying a fixed pattern in their social behavior, what one finds among the dimorphic primates is that sexes play different roles in different circumstances. Furthermore, while it is reported that chimpanzees have a hierarchy of dominance based on who 'gives way' to whom, the larger male around is not necessarily dominant. In fact, chimpanzees show more fluidity

and instability in terms of leadership or direction-setting. Similarly, Leibowitz observes that orangutan males are neither group leaders nor protectors and both females and males display volatile temperaments.

Having observed the behavior of the above-mentioned primates, Leibowitz argues that there is no neat and inevitable tie between sex-role behavior and physical sex differences. It would appear then, that there is a loose correlation between sex-role behavior patterning and physical form among different primates. The question, according to Leibowitz, is, given that sex-role specialisations are weakly demonstrated in these higher primates, how does one account for the existence of such physical sex differences? Her response is conclusive: 'Since sex dimorphism among primates is not clearly associated with or attributable to any particular set of sex-role patterns, we need another hypothesis as to the origins and functions of sexual dimorphism' (1993: 11).

According to Leibowitz, then, what becomes clear is that, explaining sexual dimorphism in terms which postulates that the sexes are each suited to only certain kinds of role behavior, runs contrary to the accumulated evidence. However, until we have an explanation that accounts both for the evolution of physical sex differences and for the existence of role flexibility, the belief that anatomy is destiny will stay on to haunt us.

Briefly, according to essentialist perspectives, human phenomena have an inherent essence, which is a natural given, as is human sexuality and gender identity. Thus, biology plays a pivotal role in the way one relates and interacts socially—making sexual identity a natural given, despite cultural and historical changes. However, examination of the above-mentioned scholars does not seem to confirm these claims, namely, that hormones affect sexual differences, that gender identity has a biological origin, that male-female psychosexual differences can be explained biologically.

At the same time, the fact that research on the same claims was mainly conducted on nonhuman species, makes the claims inferential as far as humans are concerned. Furthermore, cross-cultural studies reveal that there are sexual differences among both

men and women in different cultures, while some primates display egalitarian behavior unknown in Western cultures. From the above examples, then, the essentialist perspective has not been able to support its claim for the centrality of biology in human gender identity or account for the variations and inconsistencies among human phenomena and nonhuman species. In the next section, I examine scholarly criticisms of the philosophical and political theories that support essentialist claims.

Rose, Lewontin and Kamin (1985) criticise biological determinism and its claims to be able to locate the causes of inequalities in western societies in a reductionist theory of human nature.

According to reductionist theory (1985: 5-6), the properties of a human society are no more than the sum of individual behaviours and tendencies of the individual humans of which a particular society is composed. For example, societies are 'aggressive' because the individuals who compose them are 'aggressive'. The second stance is that of biological determinism, which essentially asks, why are individuals as they are? Why do they do what they do? The answer is that human lives and actions are inevitable consequences of their biological makeup. This means that the causes of social phenomena are located in the biology of individual actors in a social scene. Thus, 'biology' is invoked as an expression of what cannot be avoided, for it is 'naturally' given and scientifically endorsed.

Thus, biological determinism has been employed in explaining the observed inequalities of status, wealth and power in modern industrial capitalist societies and of defining human 'universals' of behaviour as natural characteristics of these societies. Consequently, biological determinism has been taken over as a political legitimator by the New Right to justify social inequalities based on biology as inevitable and immutable. It would seem, then, that attempts to remedy social inequalities through social means, goes against nature.

As Rose, Lewontin and Kamin argue, the point is not merely that biological determinants

are somewhat naive political and social philosophers, however, the issue is that,

> [D]espite its frequent claim to be neutral and objective, science is not and cannot be above 'mere' human politics. The complex interaction between the evolution of scientific theory and the evolution of social order means that very often the ways in which scientific research asks its questions of the human and natural worlds it proposes to explain *are deeply coloured by social, cultural, and political biases* [my emphasis] (1985: 8).

Firstly, the politics of biological determinism assert not only that an individual's moral and intellectual qualities are inherited, but that human social phenomena are the direct consequences of inborn physical characteristics. Biological determinism is therefore a reductionist explanation of human life in which the arrows of causality run from genes to humans and from humans to humanity. But above all, determinism is a conservative viewpoint, meaning that if human social organisation, including inequalities of status, wealth and power are a direct consequence of our biologies, then, no practice can make a significant alteration of social structure or of the position of individuals or groups within it. What we are is natural and therefore fixed.

Secondly, while liberal ideology emphasises a cultural determinism, focussing on circumstance and education, biological determinism locates successes and failures of the will and character in an individual's genes. Similarly, it is claimed that the presence of such biological differences between individuals necessarily leads to the creation of hierarchical societies, because it is part of biologically determined human nature.

According to biological determinists, in dealing with 'facts' about differences between men and women, one deals with natural manifestations of essentially biological sex differences. For example, the current division of labour between the sexes in societies is seen as a reflection of some underlying biological necessity, with society mirroring biology. In the patriarchal rule of western culture, it would seem, society is characterised by difference of status, wealth and power between men and women, in which the former dominate in the more powerful and well-paid jobs, while the latter are in more poorly paid jobs and subordinate roles. For biological determinists, then, division of labour is not only the work of biology, but it is at our human expense if we go against it. Society, they argue, needs both dominant productive men and dependent, reproductive women.

The point, according to Rose, Lewontin and Kamin (1985: 7), is that the real division of labour between men and women which seems to last does not require a biological determinist explanation, based on universal claims arising from the observable phenomena. The fact is that, in both nonhuman and human species, behaviours differ from one species and from one historical context to the other. For example, to argue that in sexual behaviour, the male is the actor and the female passive, is based on Victorian prudery among ethnologists. Similarly, generalisations about the universality of particular patterns of behaviour are made on the basis of data derived from small numbers of observations. Thus, Rose et al. would argue that it does not make sense to predict the inevitability of patriarchy from the cellular structures of our brains, hormones, physiology or sexual organs, as biological determinism does.

In summation, therefore, Rose, Lewontin and Kamin criticise the ideology of biological determinism on the grounds that it attributes the causes of social inequality to biology and the reductionist theory of human nature. In modern times, social inequalities have been perpetuated through The New Right ideology, designed to suppress voices against economic exploitation; through IQ testing designed to prove hereditary privilege; through naturalising biological differences between women and men and by asserting that patriarchy evolved and is, therefore, a natural given. According to Rose, Lewontin and Kamin (1985:), biological determinism is oppressive and is meant to privilege the rich at the expense of the poor. For that reason it needs to be replaced with a liberating social science.

Despite its oppressive use, as Kimmel (2000: 20) argues, biological determinism has a streak of appeal universally, especially concerning gender differences and inequality between males and females. The reason, firstly, he believes, is because biological explanations have the ring of 'true' science in them. Their theories are based on 'objective scientific facts' and, in his opinion, the arguments of natural scientists are extraordinarily persuasive. Secondly, he believes that biological explanations seem to accord with our own observations about the apparent differences between males and females.

Thirdly, when one observes gender differences and social arrangements, there seems to be what Kimmel calls a certain conceptual tidiness, which appears to stem directly and inevitably from those differences between the two sexes. In response, biological determinism reassures us that that is the way things should be and that what is social is in fact natural. We are further told that such differences and existing inequalities have nothing to do with us; we cannot be held responsible for the way we act, for it's biological. Although it is often for different agenda, Kimmel argues that those claims are made by both conservatives and liberals, by feminists and misogynists, and by homophobes and gay activists—making it harder to change the oppressive and subordinate relationships between men and women.

Furthermore, biological determinism, before the nineteenth century, has always been legitimised by theology; for example, according to Judaeo-Christian doctrine, God created a man and a woman for different purposes, and the reproductive differences are decisive. For that reason, some theologians have even warned against women's suffrage, arguing that it would 'reverse the laws of God'. After theologians and the influence of Darwin and evolutionary biology, scientists also made similar 'discoveries', namely that women's normal biological processes made them unfit for the public world of work. In contrast, men's competitiveness, ambition and selfishness seemed to be their natural birthright. Thus, once the biological differences between men and women were established as scientific fact, critics declared all the efforts to challenge social inequality and discrimination against women to be in violation of the 'laws of nature'.

It would seem, then, as Kimmel asserts, that biological arguments for sex differences have historically tended to be politically conservative by suggesting that the social arrangements between men and women, whether socio-economic and political discrimination based on sex, were actually the outcome of nature at work. Consequently, political attempts to legislate changes in the gender order or efforts to gain civil rights for women, or for gay men and lesbians, have always been met with biological essentialism. For instance, social scientists like Goldberg (in Kimmel 2000: 20) argue that, since male domination is ubiquitous and eternal, it simply has to be

based on biological origins. He argues that there is simply too much coincidence for male domination to be social. Thus, according to Goldberg, feminism is at war with nature, because politically, unequal social arrangements are, in the end, ordained by nature.

In summary, it seems that biological essentialism still holds sway in the thinking of many people, which in turn, results in the internalisation of biological explanations. At the same time, the appeal to biological explanations stems from its apparent scientific objectivity. In other words, scientific facts confirm and accord with our own observations of the world, including gender differences. Above all, Christian theology, which has monopolised western thinking for centuries, has confirmed biological essentialism, especially the division of gender roles. Darwin's theory of evolution and scientific discoveries have also contributed to essentialism. Thus, any efforts to challenge gender divisions and inequality, have been met with ridicule and have been regarded as a violation of human nature and divine ordinance.

Star (1991: 237-48) too, in investigating the claims of sex differences in the brain, exposes the philosophy which underpins this research. The vertebrate brain, she points out, is divided into the right and left hemispheres, which have different functions. For instance, the right hemisphere specialises in music, intuition, *Gestalt* and perception, while the left is for verbal and mathematical functions. However, academic research on brain asymmetry relies upon and is popularised by cultural stereotypes about the left and the right brain, mixed with Eastern and Western myths, which in turn, condone and reify many traditional stereotypes of 'masculinity' and 'femininity,' extended into scientific research.

Linking 'femininity' and 'masculinity' to these functions, according to Star, is a false and stereotypic addition, based on faulty methodology and guesswork. Hence her examination of the facts.

According to Star (1991: 241), then, while there are specialisations in each sphere of

the brain, myth and cultural stereotyping shape their different functions. For example, according to some of the myths, the left hemisphere is called the 'major lobe' and the right the 'minor lobe' and passive. The brain lobe asymmetry and other sex differences, according to Star, are part of the patriarchal bias and sexist language used to justify male supremacy. Hence her call for feminists to fight these patriarchal mechanisms.

Similarly, Holden (1991: 959-60) asks the question whether the gender gap is narrowing between males and females. The debate takes place in the context of evidence, accumulated over a long time, that there are differences in cognition and perception between men and women. Generally, tests results have shown dichotomies in the brains of both sexes. For instance, females are better at verbal expressions, while males dominate in certain quantitative and spatial abilities.

Holden wonders if these differences are 'real' and whether it is possible ever to obtain bias-free research, especially in the hostile and politically charged climate surrounding sex differences research. It is not surprising, then, that in this atmosphere, there is a polarity between biologically and socially-oriented researchers. Those who are biologically-inclined assert that biology has an obvious role in cognitive sex differences, while the more socially-oriented investigators disagree and argue that theories of sex differences in the brain have been constructed to account for differences in abilities. Now that the gender gap in test scores is waning, the issue is about questioning the phenomenon the brain theories were established to explain.

According to Holden (1991: 960), a major reason for the discrepancies, as explained by cognitive researchers, is what is called 'greater male variability', meaning that there are always more males than females at both the bottom and the top of score distribution. This greater variability means that, in maths, for example, there are many more extremely talented males than females. This greater variability, it is argued, also has the effect of wiping out female advantage in verbal tasks, at the top ability levels. However, there are those who think the gender gap is mainly a function of social influence. For example, it is argued that in a highly achieving test population, there is

a higher male selection than female, the reason being that males get more encouragement from parents and teachers than females. They are also encouraged to take more advanced courses, and their spatial skills benefit from their greater athletic participation.

While the question of the gender gap in cognition is still disputed, some investigators believe enough data has been collected to start targeting the essence of male-female differences, especially the differences in spatial reasoning that seem to persist over time and across cultures. Despite the belief in intrinsic factors underlying sex differences in cognition, researchers agree that these differences alone are insufficient to make females less suited for scientific careers. Some researchers believe that the reason for lower female achievement results 'much more from psychological factors than from ability differences' (1991: 960).

In order to deal with the causes of the discrepancies, therefore, some researchers suggest doing something about them, such as girl-friendly science classrooms, while others think it's more necessary to do more fine-grained research on cognitive abilities. As Holden demonstrates (1991: 960), although long accumulated evidence justifies the asymmetry in male-female brains, in a politically charged environment, inconsistencies and discrepancies are bound to occur. For instance, data from previous research on male-female difference are inaccessible, mainly because the tools used to measure these are crude and inappropriate, and differences in cognition are subtle, changing according to age and ability. Generalisation has also tended to obscure differences.

Similarly, Oudshoorn and Van Den Wijngaard (1991: 459-71) try to expose modes of thought and structures that accommodate the subordination of women as required by patriarchy and its institutions. Hence their examination of the question of how the dualistic mode of thinking shaped the cognitive development of endocrinology, particularly the study of sex hormones.

They argue that the early development of research on sex hormones was directed by

the underlying assumption of a dualistic concept of sex in which male and female were regarded as mutually dichotomous categories. On this assumption, the original concept of male and female sex hormones was formulated in terms of the assumed dichotomies (1991: 461).

The criticism of the dualistic conception of sex hormones also led to the questioning of the dualistic conception of masculinity and femininity in behavior. This was due to the questioning philosophy of feminism and its interest in rethinking the concepts of masculinity and femininity.

In summation, therefore, the critics of the essentialist perspective recognise that most of its claims have been designed to advance certain political agenda, such as justifying social inequalities. Similarly, the employment of theories of brain asymmetry and male-female differences were employed to justify male supremacy. Hence the questioning philosophy by feminists and their counter-research to challenge male bias, as well as the adoption of the counter perspective, namely, social constructionism, in order to confront theories like patriarchal masculinity and the subordination of women. To that end, I now explore the constructionist theory of masculinity and femininity, as examined by scholars, as well as the criticisms of the concept.

Part Two

According to Segal (1990: x) 'masculinity' is a construct of culture and socialisation, which is divergent, contradictory, inconsistent, and with no fixed and inherent identity or character. She asserts that different masculinities have been constructed in time and history, peculiar to the specific social context. For example, World War II constructed, in the west, a masculinity that shunned femininity and homosexuality in order to instil discipline among men, characterised by aggression. Similarly, modern social scientific studies which Segal cites point to masculine fluidity and contradiction, not based on biology or social stereotypes.

Thus, believing that gender and power are inextricably linked will open the way to understanding problems between the sexes, such as women's lack of economic independence, which prevents then from getting away from violent relationships and fighting for transformation. Above all, to understand sexual harassment and rape, one has to look critically at concepts of gender, and masculinity in particular. With this approach in mind, I now turn to Connell's examination of masculinity.

According to Connell (1995: 71), when examining masculinity, one needs to focus on the processes and relationships through which men and women conduct gender lives. For Connell: 'masculinity' [is] simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practice through which men and women engage that place in gender and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality and culture'.

Like Segal, Connell's approach to gender and its product, masculinity, is historically-based. That automatically makes masculinity discourse not only controversial, but also hard to pin down, except in a specific historical context. It would seem, then that both Connell and Segal would refer to masculinity as an 'active' and dynamic concept, meaning that it is forever being constructed in every context. Hence Connell's methodology is to examine the history and variety of masculinities in the Western context.

The first kind he identifies is hegemonic masculinity which he defines as 'the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees [...] the dominant position of men and the subordination of women' (1995: 77). This happens in a cultural dynamic in which a group claims and sustains a leading position in social life. Hegemony, then, is likely to take place if there is a correspondence between cultural ideal and institutional power. However, as Connell stresses, hegemonic masculinity involves what he calls a 'currently accepted' strategy, meaning that, when conditions for the defence of patriarchy change, its base for dominance is also eroded. Thus, it is the successful claim to authority that is the mark of hegemony.

The second kind is subordinated masculinity. In contemporary Western culture, heterosexual men dominate and subordinate homosexual men through an array of cultural practices such as political and cultural exclusion, cultural abuse, legal violence, street violence, economic discrimination and personal boycotts. Although gay masculinity is the most conspicuous, according to Connell (1995: 79), it is not the only subordinated masculinity; some men, for instance, heterosexual boys, are also expelled from the circle of legitimacy through the language of abuse that symbolically associates them with femininity.

The third kind is complicit masculinity. As not many men meet the normative standards of hegemonic masculinity, many, however, gain from the same hegemony. They benefit from what Connell (1995: 79) calls the 'patriarchal dividend', the advantage men generally gain from the subordination of women. Their connection with hegemonic masculinity, then, is called complicit masculinity—constructed in a way that realises the patriarchal dividend, but without the risks involved in hegemonic masculinity.

The fourth kind is marginal masculinity. According to Connell (1995: 80), the interplay of gender with other structures such as class and race creates further relations between masculinities. For instance, massive unemployment and urban poverty interacts with institutional racism in the shaping of black masculinity. Hence Connell's use of marginal masculinity to refer to the relations between the masculinities in dominant and subordinated classes or ethnic groups.

Commenting on the political and gender relations in South Africa, Morrell (2001: 4) observes that the volatility of gender changes is important because it shows that masculinity is not fixed, but changes historically. Gender changes also reveal that men are different, hence there exist different masculinities. Morrell's theory of masculinity, like that of Segal and Connell, is that masculinity should be considered as fluid, and historically constructed in a contested process between rival understandings of masculinity. Thus, Morrell would argue that, while masculinity is constantly being protected and defended, it is also constantly breaking down and being recreated.

Morrell further argues that masculinity cannot be inherited or acquired, for it is constructed in the context of class, race and age. For example, boys are seen as deficient in their masculine identity in comparison with their adult counter-parts, while they experience anxiety at every stage of their masculine development. According to Morrell, although there is no set procedure for becoming 'a man', the determination to become one, however, is a powerful feature. Similarly, while one cannot automatically acquire masculinity, both boys and men are not always free to choose personal images of masculinity, as they are influenced by gender discourses from birth. Morrell quotes Epstein to clarify his standpoint:

> Human agents cannot stand outside culture and wield power precisely as they wish. Power is always limited and shaped by systems of knowledge which also shape the subjects and objects of power [...] power / knowledge position us as subjects of particular kinds. They put pressure on us to adopt particular identities [...] in this particular sense, power and knowledge as discourse 'constructs' social identities (2001: 8).

In his research, then, Morrell, like Connell, examines changing patterns of masculinity amongst men in Southern Africa in which he demonstrates that socio-political and economic circumstances put pressure on men to adopt certain types of masculinity. For instance, Xaba (2001: 105) demonstrates, how during the liberation struggle, violence was regarded as noble and necessary, while in the New South Africa it is regarded as a crime and destructive. At the same time, the changing position of the liberation elite is reflected in their embrace of new gender values. On the other hand, the changing political values have led young African males to choose crime and violence.

Wood and Jewkes (2001: 317) show that the unavailability of work, an essential part of working-class masculinities around the world, placed greater emphasis on heterosexual activity, confirming gender power inequalities in the process. Gender inequality, in turn, fuelled gender violence—an experience that exacerbated the vulnerability and pain experienced in African townships. At the same time, in the so-called 'white areas', apartheid created white suburbs in which males were assured of jobs, with family homes, stable environments, status and political influence. That is where, according to du Pisani (2001: 157), an Afrikaner hegemonic masculinity emerged.

From social constructionist discourse, one can draw the following inferences: according to Segal, masculinity is a construct of culture and socialisation. For that reason, there cannot be one masculinity, but many masculinities, characterised by diversion, contradiction, with no fixed identity or character. Similarly, according to Connell and Morrell, masculinities are inherently historical and cultural, making their specific discourse hard to understand, except in its historical context.

What emerges from the social constructionists' examination of masculinity, then, is the contradiction of the Western and essentialist approach to masculinity, namely that masculinity is universally the same, despite changing historical and cultural context. The notion of slipperiness and non-fixity as characteristics of masculinity subverts certain ideals and attributes attached to masculinity, such as aggression, independence and dominance. Thus, masculinity can only make sense to a particular people, race, culture or class within the bounds of their historical context.

Having explored Segal, Connell and Morrell's positions, I now move on to examine critics' views on the concept of masculinity.

According to Hearn (1996: 202-17), the concept 'masculinity' can be experienced as both an individual possession, as well as an institutional process. Accordingly, masculinity encompasses both general cultural and specific gender identities, subject to various definitions. Hence the emphasis on changing contextual definitions of masculinity, as well as the extension of the concept from theoretical analyses to include biographical, macrohistorical and global accounts. Despite its different uses, masculinity still glosses over difficult and complex issues. For example, despite its association with men, masculinity does not seem to correspond with its material reality. At the same time, masculinity did not always exist as a concept and the relation between masculinity and an individual is not always clear. For that reason, Hearn wonders if masculinity is an appropriate term for analysing particular social situations.

Unlike Segal and Connell who would refer to gender and masculinity as dynamic and

active in their historical function, Hearn suggests that masculinity does not only fall short in its meanings, but needs to be scrapped for the more appropriate term of 'manhood'. Hence Hearn's three suggestions about the concept of masculinity:

1. That 'masculinity / masculinities' should be used with a specific and particular meaning;
2. that is more appropriate to base analysis on the concept of 'men' and what men do or feel, hence the preferred term 'manhood', which refers to men's assumptions and beliefs;
3. that it would be [more] helpful to think of the concept of masculinity in conjunction with socio-economic, historical context and practices that shape men's behaviour [or how they are 'masculinised'], rather than to speak of some independent substance like 'masculinity'.

Similarly, for MacInnes (1998), masculinity does not exist in an empirical form, but was originally employed to justify patriarchy. The central theme of MacInnes' writing is, therefore, to demonstrate that 'masculinity does not exist as the property, character trait or aspect of identity of individuals' (1998: 2).

MacInnes seems to believe that the 'the self' can never be perfectly socialised because it in part lies beyond the public, for it contains the unconscious and it is partly determined by nature. It would seem, then, that according to MacInnes, the social and the biological essence to self identity cannot be entirely fused. Although there is no evidence given as to how MacInnes arrives at his conclusion, the biological dimension to masculinity / gender and how it shapes the latter remains the dominant feature of his argument.

It would seem, then, according to the critics of the constructionist perspective, that the concept of masculinity falls short, for it is impossible to define—its very slipperiness is its major characteristic. Hence the suggestion by Hearn that 'masculinity' be used with a specific and particular meaning. For example, an alternative like 'manhood'

corresponds with 'men' and what men feel, as opposed to a substance which has no tangible or material existence. In a similar vein, he argues that 'masculinity' could not exist as an aspect of identity that can be entirely socialised (as masculinity would). The self has a biological essence and, therefore, can only partly be socialised.

At the heart of both Hearn's choice of the concept 'manhood' as an alternative and MacInnes' claim that the 'self' is partly biological is the belief in the inherent essence of human identity, whether feminine or masculine.

Following the essentialist perspective, then, human phenomena have an inherent identity, realised in fixed and unchanging biological or natural identity. As indicated in the studies, however, the essentialist claims do not find clear justification in human experiences or academic research. Conversely, constructionist claims find an overwhelming support, both in experience and scholarly research. In other words, constructionist theories seem to be more in tune with human phenomena or 'nature'—what one could call an 'open book' identity, as opposed to the fixed identity of the human person, as essentialists argue.

According to Halperin (1993: 131), constructionist theory is valuable as a guide for future research, for it directs researchers' attention to the salient particularities of one's identity in a given society. The main problem of essentialist claims, he argues, seems to justify certain ideologies and preferences that favour racial, economic and political interests of the few at the expense of others. Hence my choice of the social constructionist perspective in examining the history of gender relations in Africa. At the same time, I would like to adopt the view by Goldstein, who negates the view that biology is an immutable force without diversity:

> To the extent that biology *is* (emphasis maintained) destiny, that destiny is diversity. As [...] biological systems are extremely complex, flexible and varied. Biology and feminism both value and celebrate diversity, both mistrust simplistic theoretical models for that reason, and both struggle against religious fundamentalism [...]. (2001: 131-32).

Thus, mine should be seen not only as an academic, but also as a political and social stance, by means of which I hope to challenge and fight hetero-patriarchy and its fundamentalist claims, its masculine supremacy and other theories that have thus far perpetuated inequalities among different genders and the society at large.

Having examined theories of masculinity, I now explore different constructions of masculinity in Africa.

CHAPTER TWO

TRADITIONAL CONSTRUCTIONS OF MASCULINITY IN AFRICA

Introduction

According to constructionist debate, it seems that human sexuality and gender identity are socially constructed. In concert with constructionist perspective, in this chapter, I demonstrate that there is no monolithic masculinity in Africa. In fact, scholars have shown, to the contrary, that in African cultures there exists a mosaic of different constructions of masculinities that comprise what resemble western homosexual, heterosexual and various 'other' identities.

In an exploration of the history of western sexuality, Parker (2001: 313-62) demonstrates how widely differing systems in cultures, throughout time and the world, have been used to classify people and their sexual acts.

However, the western system divides people into major classes of heterosexuality and homosexuality. As a result, today one assumes that sexuality means the same thing as it did for the Greeks and Romans. This assumption, according to Parker (2001: 313-14), is the principal obstacle that prevents one from an accurate understanding of the sexual lives and values of other people, for one begins the investigation by assuming that one's sexuality is natural, that it is given and the only one of its kind there is.

He argues that we all recognise differences and classifications among different societies, such as race, eye colour and hair colour. However, when it comes to homo-hetero distinctions, there lurks the suspicion that the classifications are somehow more fundamental, more important, more commonsensical and natural than any other binary division. According to Parker (2001: 326), there are two principal reasons for the attitude. The first is the obvious observation that there are only two sexes. Therefore,

an individual has to make a fundamental choice of belonging to one or the other. However, the distinction between homosexuality and heterosexuality does not correspond to the division of sexes, making our (i.e. western) classification the oddest that cuts right across the actual lines of the physical sex itself. The second is the fact that our commonsensical notion is not true even on the most fundamental levels. For instance, biological sex is not binary, as there are intersexed humans and animals, which feature as an important part of many native classification systems.

Among the much-studied examples are the Pokot of Kenya who recognise three sexes, according to Edgerton (in Parker 2001: 238). In that culture, children with genital malformation are either killed or assigned a third biological sex, called *sererr*. Some *sererr* take up male dress, some female. Thus, the assumption that everyone must be either a heterosexual or homosexual makes no sense when some cultures classify more than two sexes.

The other reason for the resistance to the idea that there could be ways of recognising the sexual world other than the split of the hetero-homo is a residual and often unacknowledged Darwinism, which sees reproduction as necessary for the survival of the species. Since homosexuals do not reproduce, heterosexuality must be natural and the norm. Although reproduction is necessary, according to Parker (2001: 330), that has nothing to do with individual choices. For instance, in some cultures, some people remain celibate. Besides, homosexuals also reproduce, that is why we have lesbian mothers and gay fathers. It would seem, therefore, that what counts as reproduction and parenthood are culturally determined. At the same time, according to Parker, it is absurd to claim a gene for 'homosexuality', when the genetic basis for even the obvious examples of hair or eye colour is uncertain and only realised in cultural practice.

Finally, Parker (2001: 337) argues that it is almost impossible in western society to escape the assumption that the only choice of human beings, when it comes to sex, is whether one chooses men or women. However, in everyone's experience, the opposite is demonstrated, for there are many of us who are interested in having sex with all sorts

of men and women. At the same time, not all of us want to have sex with all men or all women. For that reason, our division of hetero versus homo, no matter how vital to our society, remains culturally determined.

In contrast to the western classificatory system, the Pokot of Kenya do not confine one's sexual identity or gender to genital actions alone, but regard one's capacity to function in the larger community as the determining factor. In some cultures, then, other forms of life-styles like celibacy, in which some men and women choose not to marry or have sexual relations, find space and are still useful. Above all, there is no pressure for a male person to be masculine and a female to be feminine, as is the case in many western(nised) cultures.

Other traditional expressions of masculinity and femininity in Africa demonstrate that a person of either sex could be masculine or feminine. For instance, among the Bavenda, women could also take on the masculine role and its privileges.

According to Stuyt (1931:140-143), examining the customs of inheritance among the Bavenda, a woman could play the role of a man, or what is called 'female father', in order to provide an heir to the family. For instance, such a woman could *lobola* wives to establish her own family and, of course, as head of that family, she had to produce her own heir. At her death the eldest son of her first wife would succeed his female father, as he would a male father. However, if the first wife had no son, but had a daughter, the girl would take precedence over any of her brothers from other mothers and become the sole heir to the property.

The woman-woman marriage relationship among the Venda people was not only confined to women who had the means of paying bride wealth. The practice also occurred among women with status, as Stuyt asserts:

> Women in a position of authority, such as petty chiefs or witch-doctors, who have been able to accumulate the necessary wealth, often obtain wives in this way, even though they may be themselves married in the ordinary way. A woman may bring three wives to live with her at her own home, and may allow her husband to have

> sexual relations with them, although he has no rights over them without her permission (1931: 143).[2]

According to Stuyt (1931: 143), the relationship between the 'female husband' and her wives was clearly that of madam and servants, for the wives were obliged to do all menial work and were given to different males for the purpose of bearing children.

The woman-woman marriage, in which a woman paid bride price to acquire the role of a husband to another woman has been documented in other traditional African cultures, including Bantu-speaking groups, in East and West Africa, some of which still exist today, according to Carrier and Murray (1998: 255). It would seem, then, according to Sudarkasa (in Murray and Roscoe 1998: 255), that in African culture, 'masculine' identity was not so much characterised by status or personal standing as wealth. For example, age and lineage overrode gender identity, while in some cultures like the Yoruba, the ideology of senior supremacy overrode that of masculine supremacy.

According to Carrier and Murray (1998: 259), the formal status for female husbands reflects the divergence between masculine identity and sex in traditional African societies. The split is, however, debated. For example, according to Carrier and Murray, Krige (1950) argues that among the Lovedu people, female husbands are neuter, neither male nor female, although she does not suggest a third gender role for them. Thus, it would appear that Krige suggests the 'social male' for women-women marriages, within a system of binary genders that is not in harmony with biological sex.

In brief, the above examples show that in traditional African cultures masculinity was not confined to biological males, but that it was a socially sanctioned role meant to meet certain cultural expectations.

In other cultures, like that of the Basotho in Lesotho, femininity constructed in same-

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2. Similarly, according to Murray and Roscoe (1998), there were also 'social males' in Sudan, where a Shilluk princess and a female shaman could have female lovers but could not marry.

sex relationships was institutionalised.

Gay (1985: 97-116) examines a type of friendship which occurs among adolescent Basotho girls, called mummy-baby relations. Through activities which they call *papali* (a game), girls act out different aspects of adult female roles, through which they are gradually socialised into adulthood and relationships by older women and more experienced girls. Culturally, it is taboo to discuss sexual matters by a woman who has borne children with one who has not. Thus, according to Gay, 'mummy-baby relationships developed as a way in which a fictive mother can provide what a biological mother cannot' (1985: 100), as far as advice concerning matters of sexuality are concerned.

The origin and diffusion of these institutionalised friendships are not clear, according to Gay. However, these relationships seem strongest in the modern school culture and, at the same time, they are rooted in traditional institutions and practices. The use of the English terms of 'mummy' and 'baby' bears testimony to the assertion that the mummy-baby relationship is relatively new and probably first occurred in the 1950s.

According to older informants of Gay (1985: 100), special affective and gift exchange partnerships among girls and women existed in 'the old days' when they were young. At that stage, the relationships were only known by Basotho terms like *ho ratana* (like / love each other), *sethaka* (a relationship between age mates), *lithaka* (refers to girls who have been initiated together) and *mechaufa* (to fall in love / flatter). The last word refers particularly to a love affair between girls.

Other factors that might have influenced the development of mummy-baby relationships, according to Gay, might be female initiation tradition. For example, whenever initiation is practised, small groups of girls spend a long time in the company of age mates, where they are prepared for their adult sexual lives by female teachers who are not their own mothers. During the decline of female initiations, modern female friendships help to fill the vacuum. Another feature of traditional female sexuality, which

has an indirect influence on mummy-baby relationships, is the practice of lengthening the *labia minora*, to enhance female pride and sexual pleasure during intercourse.

Relationships are often initiated voluntarily by a girl who fancies another and asks her to be her mummy or baby, depending on their ages. Newcomers, acquaintances, an attractive girl or a woman from a nearby town are often chosen, mainly to extend one's social relations. The most frequently given reasons for initiating a particular relationship are beautiful looks, clothes or admirable actions.

Once two girls agree to the mummy-baby relationship, the friendship develops through arranged encounters and by material, nurturant and emotional exchanges. The role of the 'mummy' is to give gifts like sweets, cosmetics and other less expensive items. For girls going away to boarding schools, gifts and other material help are much more meaningful. Other important gifts from 'mummies' are in the form of advice and protection concerning sexual encounters with men.

The most important aspect of the mummy-baby relationship, according to Gay, is the exchange of affection and sensual satisfaction:

> Friends may visit, love each other, even give gifts now and then. But between mummies and babies it is like an affair, a romance, and being alone together to hug and kiss each other is always a part of it (1985: 105). [Quoted from field notes, 1976-77].

In short, mummy-baby sexual relationships among adolescent girls in Lesotho are an example of a femininity that is not in harmony with traditional heterosexual femininity. The mummy-baby relationship is an institutionalised same-sex relationship in which older girls or women act as mentors to younger ones and prepare them for their future sexual roles as mothers. At the same time, the relationship fulfills other needs such as affection and sexual desires.

Similarly, there are other expressions of masculine identity in Africa, such as cross-dressing among men, that are not in harmony with traditional gender expectations.

Amory (1998: 68) investigates the social institution of the *mashoga* on the Swahili coast, the male transvestites who are referred to, in the community, as passive homosexuals or men entered by their partners. The active partner is known as *basha* or *haji*. According to Amory (1998: 77), the terms have an identical meaning. For instance, *basha* refers to the king in card playing, while *haji* refers to the powerful man who has completed a pilgrimage to Mecca, therefore, a 'true' and 'real' man. As 'true men', the identity of the *mabasha* (pl.) remains concealed, except at a dance where they are paired with the *mashoga* (pl.) in public. The *mabasha* are powerful men, high-ranking and behaviourally consistent with what a Swahili man is supposed to do: spending time with other men, being sexually 'active' and not significantly contravening his gender position

As Amory (1998: 78) argues, although *mashoga* were often involved in commercial sex, the definition of their sexual identity relied on the gender opposites of *basha* and *shoga*, or the passive and active sex roles that correlated with other gender behaviours. For instance, the *mashoga* were often called by feminine names or nicknames. Amory asserts that their choice of profession, as hair-stylists, beauticians, decorators and sex workers, also carried some gender overtones. It would seem, then, as Amory argues, the spaces that *mashoga* occupied in their particular setting, marked their gender as being significantly different from that of 'real' men and allied more with that of women, but not exactly the same.

For example, *mashoga* tended to spend more time working and socialising in women's space, as well as crossing the strict lines of sexual segregation, in a way that 'real' men could not do. However, these spaces appropriated by the *mashoga* were contested by women. In turn, *mashoga* were able to create alternative spaces where both men and women met and mingled and where gender crossings could take place. Thus, according to Amory (1998: 80), *mashoga* behaviour could confound the dominant ideology in Swahili societies, which demarcates social space in terms of male versus female.

Amory goes on to argue that gender among the *mashoga* is also performed through

clothing and dress, but not necessarily in terms of male versus female clothing. Amory observes that the *mashoga* he studied wore a variety of clothing, both male and female. For example, they wore different clothing from other 'real' men, such as the typical Islamic male tunic, the *kanzu*. For example, a masculine man walking around the edges of a mud puddle would simply grab the bottom edge of the *kanzu* skirt with both hands, haul it up over the knees, and tramp through the mess. As an alternative, a *shoga* would delicately grasp the side of the *kanzu* skirt, draw its edges carefully away from the mess and tiptoe around the edge. Although some *mashoga* wore male clothes and others female, '[T]he point [of *mashoga*] is not to be a woman, or even to be like a woman, but to attract men. [...] It is part of the pleasure of being a *shoga*, an important part of the construction of *shoga* identity, gender, and desire' (1998: 81).

Finally, Amory interviewed two *mashoga* about their life experiences. Their experiences recounted incidents of gender crossing from early childhood, such as playing with girls, being captivated by girls' clothing and chores. They also talked about the experiences of 'being ruined', a term that describes a girl's loss of virginity prior to marriage. However, in the case of *mashoga*, it referred to anal penetration by an older man. According to Amory, because it is only women who can 'be ruined,' it may simply mean getting used to being in a passive, feminine position with older, more powerful men. Thus, it would seem that masculine identity has not so much to do with sexual organs as sexual acts (1998: 82).

What is significant about the *mashoga*, then, as opposed to 'heterosexual' and 'homosexual' constructions of masculinity, is that, their masculine expression fits in with neither. They belong to their own category, as Amory observed: they are different from 'real' men; they are not exactly the same as women. In other words, they confound the local dominant ideology of male-female dichotomies. It would seem, therefore, that masculinity as gender identity is a performance in the case of the *mashoga,* which could be demonstrated in various ways, by wearing specific clothes, or by adopting a particular behaviour, language, or sexual role in a specific space.

Another cultural form of expressing masculine identity differently is that of the '*yan daudu* (sons of Daudu), among the Hausa people of Nigeria, recounted by Gaudio (1998: 115-28). According to Gaudio, '*yan daudu* are men who acknowledge and act upon their sexual attraction to other men. They also identify themselves as men who act 'like women'. Like some gay men, they are drag queens, but their proximity to female prostitutes or *karuwai* makes them attract mainly unidentifiable men, who seek the company of other men without the threat of being found out. Like gays, '*yan daudu* are men who are conscious of themselves as men, who have sex with men, and who are socially distinct from men who do not.

Unlike gay men of North America however, Hausa gay men understand their sexual identity differently. For instance, the Hausa people generally refer to homosexuality as an act rather than a psychological drive. Hence terms like *masu harka* or 'those who do the business'. Consequently, the '*yan duadu's* homosexual practice is culturally understood in terms of gender (or practice) rather than innate feelings.

Gaudio argues that, although '*yan daudu* present themselves as 'womanlike' in the stereotypic feminine fashion, such as in speech and gestures, as well as in their performance of women's work, such as cooking and selling food, they do not, however, sacrifice an essentially male identity. For instance, '*yan daudu* do not usually adopt women's clothing or hair styles and they are frequently addressed as men by others. Thus, it would seem, as Gaudio asserts, '[...] the heterosexual Hausa society usually turns a blind eye to apparent or suspected connections between '*yan daudu's* cross-gender behaviour and their homosexuality' (1998: 119).

According to Gaudio (1998: 120), the *masu harka* or 'those who do the business' as in the rest of the Hausa society, partly reproduce the strict delineation of the male-female realms in their relationships. For example, the '*yan daudu,* who address one another by female names, typically place themselves in the category of 'wife' in relation to their male sexual partners called *miji* or husband. As Gaudio asserts, by employing heterosexual concepts as a characteristic of their own sexual roles, '*yan daudu* and their

masculine-identified partners reproduce some dominant ideologies of gender and power relations, as well as challenging others:

> For, whereas the idea of a man who has a 'husband' and calls himself a 'wife' disrupts mainstream Hausa beliefs about gender and sexual identity as biologically based, the sexual, economic, and other expectations that *'yan daudu* and their boyfriends / husbands bring to their relationships follow mainstream norms governing how women and men should behave in heterosexual relationships (Gaudio 1998: 121).

For example, the masculine-identified partners of the '*yan daudu* are expected to play the insertive role during sex and give the 'wife' presents, such as money and clothing. According to Gaudio, this exploitation of the gender grammatical and semantic structure of their language reveals that the *'yan daudu* are aware of the role of cultural discourse in the construction of gender identity. However, their awareness coexists with their commitment to local sociol-cultural and religious ideologies that view gender as naturally and divinely given. For that reason, *'yan daudu*, like other Hausa men, take their married responsibilities seriously as husbands and fathers.

Conversely, *'yan daudu* downplay their 'feminine' practices by describing them as frivolous and irresponsible and, therefore, not serious, as part of cultural parody, like drag and other gender-bending practices among gay men. However, according to Gaudio (1998: 121), the fact that '*yan daudu* discount the importance of their 'feminine' activities and continue to enjoy many patriarchal privileges, complicates any attempt to cast them as agents of a 'postmodernist strategy for undermining gender dichotomies'.

It would seem, then, as in the *shoga* identity, that *'yan daudu* confound the dominant Western ideology of how gay men construct masculinities, for unlike the latter, *'yan daudu* get married and raise families as their cultural and religious contexts dictate. It is also noteworthy that they are socially addressed as 'men', in spite of their feminine behaviour, because their culture constructs homosexuality as a phenomenon outside of one's sexual identity. Above all, mirroring their cultural sentiments, *'yan daudu* do not really identify themselves with western concepts of gayness.

Generally, the four examples mentioned above, do not conform to the hetero-patriarchal African ways of masculine and feminine expression. They defy gender and sex categorisations, as we know them. In the following examples I intend to examine African cultures that are steeped in masculine supremacy and the subjugation of their female counter-parts. In these cultures, same-sex relationships are treated as 'other' and as features of western decadence.

Examining the traditional Swazi history and gender relations that date from the 16th century, Kuper (1963) asserts that there was no equality between a Swazi husband and wife. This is how he describes the relationship between the two:

> He is the male, superior in strength and law, entitled to beat her and to take other women. She must defer to him and treat him with respect. But a Swazi woman is not an abject and timid creature; she claims her rights as 'a person' as well as 'a wife'. Should her husband maltreat her severely, she has no hesitation in berating him and, if necessary, running off to her people; she may, and very occasionally does, lay a charge against him before the 'white man's court' (1963: 26).

At the same time, if the husband were to beat his wife, her parents would inflict a fine on him. His behaviour was also controlled by the supervision of his kinsmen who were more interested in the security and extension of their lineage. There was pressure as well from his mother, who depended on the services of her daughter-in-law.

The father also had authority over his children, an authority denoted by a term associated with someone both respected and feared. For instance, the headman was the 'father' of the homestead and the king was the 'father' of the country. The most direct and permanent power was wielded by a father over sons who continued to be minors until they established their own separate homesteads. In the patrilineal and patriarchal society, there was even less personal intimacy between a father and his daughters, who were separated by both sex and age.

Similarly, behaviour between siblings was influenced by seniority and sex, with older siblings taking precedence over the younger and males taking precedence over females. These sexual differences were also realised, among others, in economic,

political and legal terms.

In economic life, for instance, cattle tending was exclusively a male occupation from which females were rigidly excluded. Boys and men headed the cattle and milked them. Men also did the heavier horticultural work of removing stones from gardens. They also hunted and made frameworks for huts and leather work. Domestic duties were the exclusive sphere of women in which they provided food for the family and tidied the home. They also tended the children and provided the household utensils.

In the political life of the Swazi people, the queen held a very high position. As a result of this, the laws and customs of the Swazi provided that every homestead would be under the joint control of mother and son. The mother's hut was the chief hut (*indlunkulu*) in every homestead, where all matters of importance were discussed. Although the effective political power in the national councils of the country was in the hands of men (*libandla* and *liqoqo*), the queen mother was there as the only female representing her deceased husband.

According to Marwick (1966: 46), the legal position of women among the Swazi was one of a perpetual minor, needing guardianship until marriage. After marriage she was transferred to the guardianship of her husband. For this reason, women could never buy property in the full sense of the word. Even if a woman acquired property through her own industry, she could not dispose of it without her husband's or father's consent.

The reason for valuing sons more than daughters in the Swazi culture, was because the former were 'the men of the village' and would 'bury their fathers', while the girls would eventually go away to other villages and die there.

The authority of the Swazi male and authority in society was given in recognition of his perceived superior power, as opposed to the 'weaker' female. However, his role as father and the most senior person in the community were not unlimited privileges. For instance, there were rules recognising as well as regulating his behaviour over his wife

and children, such that, if he abused them, certain punitive measures were taken. It is clear, therefore, that the man was given the socially privileged position over the woman because he was entrusted with the role of guardian, replenishing and multiplying his lineage and protecting it—a role whose importance could only be judged by the historical context and cultural values of the time.

From this study of Swazi culture, then, one learns that males were valued more than women because men were regarded as physically stronger—an attribute that was naturalised and which helped to justify dichotomies and different allocations of duties between sexes. Males were also more valued because of their role as keepers of the homestead and family lineage, while women were married off. It would seem, then, that among the Swazi, masculinity was constructed in strict relation to sex and its attributes were strength, continuation of the family name by producing an heir and protecting the family and community. In addition, the role of the queen-mother, as mother of the king and as both a political and spiritual figure in the community, meant that status played a role in the construction of masculinity among the Swazi. Even though she, as a woman, was a powerful figure, she was (and is) masculinised, but femininity for women, not in her position, entailed weakness, submissiveness and leaving one's community on marriage.

Similarly, in Gelfand's study (1965: 10) of the Shona people, he observed that in the Shona family, each member has his/ her own well-defined duties; they know what to do, where and when. The duties are, in turn, laid down by tradition and cannot be changed unless one leaves the environment. The appreciation of the status of everybody leads, in Gelfand's opinion, to a well disciplined unit and ensures that friction is avoided.

The husband and wife each know what is expected of them as does everybody else. The father is the head of each nuclear family and when he dies, his eldest son inherits the title. The husband must provide for his children with food, clothes and bride wealth when they get married. The wife belongs to her husband and when they get divorced he has the right to take over all his children. The payment of bride wealth gives the

husband the right of mastery over his wife and if she does wrong, he may decide to beat her.

Husband and wife cannot own property jointly, for what is theirs is his. Whatever his wife possesses is his, with the exception of the cow she receives when her daughter marries, or any property she might acquire as a *n'anya* (traditional doctor) as the powers of healing were given by her own ancestral spirits.

According to Gelfand (1965: 11), no wife can enter into a contract or incur a debt, for no agreement she makes is binding. Similarly, if the husband dies, she is inherited by one of his brothers who becomes her spokesman. If she refuses to marry again, her father can make any agreement or contract on her behalf.

The wife is responsible for the care of the home: cleaning, collecting water and stamping the grain. She looks after her children and provides washing water for her husband and washes the household clothes. She also tends the fields, stores the crops and cooks food for the family. Whenever she wishes to do something falling outside her duty, she must ask her husband. He is also expected to do the same.

In Shona eyes the male is considered superior in certain aspects. The difference in the position of men and women, he believes, springs from their psychological and physical make-up. For example, the nature and strength of a man results in the desire to protect the woman and her make-up obliges her to seek male protection. That's why she is proud if her man sits outside at the men's meeting place, exposed to possible danger and ready to protect her.

When they walk along a road, a man walks in front of his wife to protect her from possible danger. Another reason given for women to walk behind is that, if they walk in front, the men might be tempted by the swaying of their hips. In addition, it is said that, if a woman should dare walk in front without fear, she is a witch.

In short, in Shona culture, everybody has clearly defined roles laid down by tradition. The husband, like other males members of the family, holds a senior position in the community and his own nuclear family. By virtue of paying bride wealth, the wife belongs to her husband who can punish her whenever she does wrong. In the same way, in the event of divorce, children belong to the husband. In the words of Bourdillon, 'A Shona woman's status as a wife is relatively unimportant [...]' (1976: 47). The male's social position is believed to derive from his assumed psychological and physical superiority; so is the female's inferior one.

In both Swazi and Shona cultures, then, males occupy the most senior positions in society. Their privileges are based on their presumed natural strength. In Swazi culture, a woman is a minor both politically and legally, and her husband seems to have room to do as he pleases in the husband-wife relationship. Similarly, among the Shona, the wife's status in the community is practically non-existent; her husband has mastery over her and the whole household.

Other cultures from farther north in Africa provide more information as to how masculinity is constructed with regard to male-female relations. Hence the examination of the Islamic Berti society of northern Sudan.

As in Swazi and Shona societies, the Berti culture value the male role above that of the female. They express these differences metaphorically in the local language: *rājil giddām, mara wara* or 'the man is in front, the woman behind'. The saying is often used by both men and women, not only to characterise women's position in relation to their male counter-parts, but to justify the fact that men make major decisions socially, politically and economically. The saying is also meant to inform one about the public conduct of both men and women, as Holy demonstrates:

> [W]hen the husband and wife go together to the field, well or market, he walks in front and she follows a few paces behind or, more typically, the man rides a donkey and the woman follows on foot. If a woman is to cross a man's path, she stops and lets him cross in front of her; if a man and a woman are to enter a household, he always goes first through the gate. If a man and a woman ride the same camel, the man sits on the

saddle and the woman sits behind him, on the camel's back (1991: 47).

As Holy argues, the notions of the greater importance of men and the subordination of women are corroborated by certain gender symbols among the Berti. For instance, 'left' and 'right' are used to express the relations between the sexes, with women being associated with the left, while men are associated with the right. The symbols of bones and flesh are also used to express gender relations, with men's pre-eminence being associated with bones and female subordination with flesh. In this case, masculinity is associated with 'hard' bones and femininity with 'soft' flesh. According to the Berti theory of procreation, the bones and sinews of the child are created from the sperm and the child's flesh from the woman's blood. The sinews and the bones do not only provide support for both the outer flesh, but 'they are [also] seen as active and the flesh as the passive part of the body' (1991: 48).

As Holy asserts, this theory of the mechanics of the body is, in turn, projected onto the image of the social order. For instance, the fact that a man walks in front and a woman behind becomes more than a mere social convention, but a 'natural' one.

The greater importance of men and the subordinate role of women is also evident in certain cultural practices following the birth of a child. For instance, only the birth of a boy is celebrated as *gisma kabīr* or a great gift from God, greeted by shouts and possibly with a father firing a shot. The father also celebrates the birth of his first son by slaughtering a goat for neighbours—something he would not do for a daughter.

Although women accept men's superior leadership role, they nevertheless employ a different model of gender relations, namely, one that depicts men as dependent on women, through the division of labour. Among the Berti, there are tasks which are customarily performed by only one sex. For example, only men slaughter animals, attend to camels and make leather bags, while women harvest, and winnow the threshed grain. However, it is a shame for a man to be seen winnowing. Thus, there are tasks for whose performance women depend on men and vice versa.

However, according to Holy (1991: 53), the dependence of men and women is not symmetrical. In fact, in their portrayal of men as dependent on them, women argue that a woman can easily live on her own, as they normally do when their husbands are away or when they are widowed. There are also culturally justifiable alternatives which women can resort to in the absence of men. Unlike a woman, a man cannot live alone. He can harvest his own field and winnow his grain, but he cannot brew his own beer. It is unthinkable for a man to do everyday cooking. Above all, there are no culturally justifiable alternatives for men to resort to in the absence of women. Thus, food preparation is one way in which men's dependence on women is manifest.

According to Holy, then, the women's model clearly privileges the domestic domain in which women have power over men. Thus, when a woman refuses to cook for her husband, she does not only inconvenience him, but challenges or defies his authority over her. With this strategy, women build their power, as well as construct their own model of gender relations:

> [M]en may be strong, they may be in front and they may hold authority over women but it is only through their ultimate dependence on women that they are what they are. Women may not be free agents but then neither are men: they have to operate within the limitations set up by women's control over the processing of food (1991: 53).

Holy's point, then, is that despite this assertion of their own model of gender relations, women concede the superiority of the other sex, thus acknowledging that the sexes are mutually dependent on each other.

In summation, therefore, I want to highlight two points made by Holy. Firstly, he argues that, although the Berti social system places men's role in society above that of women's, this does not emphasise inequality between the sexes. In fact the reverse seems to be the case. To ensure equal participation and equal status between men and women among the Berti, division of labour is gender, and men are given the role of overseers.

The second point highlighted by Holy is that division of labour can favour women's

autonomy more than men's, as the latter is bound by the more stringent rules of traditional masculinity. For example, in this society, crossing gender barriers is more of a shame for men than women. Thus, it is only when men generally recognise their dependence on women, that the notion of interdependence is understood and makes sense.

However, it seems to me that Holy is trying to impose the modernist view of equality on a culture which does not recognise equality between males and females. If fact, the idea of gender equality which he sees does not really apply to Berti society, in which males (whether as overseers or not) are still valued above females, as is the case in many other African cultures, like the Swazi and the Shona, as demonstrated above. The male sex cannot be given the role of an overseer over the female and then claim that the two are equal.

The Swazi, Shona and Berti (despite Holy's analysis) seem to represent classical models of what we now know as traditional heterosexual masculinity, constructed in relation to their constructs of femininity. Division of labour, arising in a particular kind of rural economy, seems to have generated gender identities, based on binary sexual divisions.

However, among the people of Namibia, social and economic circumstances seem to have produced what some scholars describe as 'true homosexuals and pseudo-homosexuals' in same-sex relationships, thus complicating the construction of African masculinities and testifying to their variety. According to Falk (1998: 188-96), in Ovamboland, there are *ovashengi* or effeminate men who submit to passive sexual intercourse for commercial reasons. Falk describes them as usually fat, large persons who go about in female clothing and are employed mainly in domestic labour. They wear women's jewellery and attract males through flirting. As the young women do not enjoy sexual freedom among some of these tribes, the *ovashengi* enjoy popularity among young, unmarried men. They also never go out to seek employment outside tribal boundaries.

When the Ovambo men get enlisted by recruiters to work in the mines, they take with them small boys of ten to twelve years. The ostensible idea is to use them in the mines as domestic servants, but they serve mainly as passive pederasts on the journey and in the mines. According to Falk, the boys are usually given to the young men by their wives or betrothed 'to keep them faithful' (1998: 188). Married men or those betrothed engaging in this sort of sexual relationship are 'pseudo-homosexual', according to Falk. However, there are 'true' homosexuals as well. In the case of the boys, they are enforced passive pederasts, while the *ovashengi* are considered as 'born' homosexuals. Anal intercourse is engaged in by the 'pseudo-homosexual' men and 'true' homosexuals use mutual masturbation or *podicatio*.

Unlike the Ovambos, the Ovahimbas or Herero boys ordinarily form an *oupanga* or erotic friendship, which is strictly and jealously guarded by both boys, in case one cheats. However, after marriage, the young men turn to heterosexual sexual intercourse. Conversely, unmarried boys have little success with girls. When adult and married men make long journeys with the ox-wagon and their wives have to stay behind, either the uncircumcised provide sex for the company, or the men bring along a friendly contemporary, with whom they have sexual intercourse on the way, usually being a form of mutual masturbation.

Similarly, Falk's study reveals that, as same-sex sexual relationships occur among the Herero males (Ovahimbas), lesbianism is common among women. They use the same expressions as men to refer to their relationships, such as *epanga*, lover. Their mode of sexual intercourse is either mutual rubbing or mutual manual manipulation. They also use an artificial penis made from the root of a certain tree (1998: 192).

In brief, in Namibia, homosexuality as a feature of masculinity has been constructed to suit historical circumstances, mainly economic, social and political. For example, the *ovashengi* seem to have emerged as a result of lack of female sexual partners. At the same time, when economic changes demand that men leave their girlfriends / wives at home, 'pseudo-homosexuality' or the use of young boys is also introduced to suit the

context. As a result, the construction of masculinity differs from one historical, cultural and sociol-economic context to another, as scholars have shown.

In summation, then, the exploration of the construction of masculinity in Africa has demonstrated that masculinity is a form of behaviour which undergoes changes in different social and cultural contexts. Similarly, as Cornwall (1994: 15) argues, being masculine need not be an exclusive identity, for it can involve self presentations which include behaviour traditionally associated with both masculinity and femininity, as there are male versions of femininity and, equally, female versions of masculinity. What Cornwall wants to demonstrate is that constructs of masculinity vary across cultures and gender categories and that there is a great deal of borrowing within these cultures as well. Feminine behaviour, as one way of constructing masculinity, makes constructs of masculinity generally ambivalent and ambiguous.

For instance, cross-dressing and the same-sex relationship of the *mashoga* and *yan daudu* reveal that masculinity as gender identity, can be more of an outward performance, rather than an essential feature of one's nature, rigidly tied to one's anatomical sex. A similar pattern is revealed among the Namibian societies that construct 'homosexual' masculinity as a response to social and economic changes. In all the above examples, it would seem that traditional African notions of hetero-patriarchal masculinity are both endorsed, as well as challenged.

It is apparent, then, as demonstrated in the examination of African masculinities that there is no monolithic construction of masculinity. Conversely, most categories of masculinity cut across traditional ways of constructing sexual divisions, as seen among the Pokot of Kenya who recognise three sexes, Bavenda female-fathers and the mummy-baby relationships among the Basotho. In the latter two instances, 'traditional' constructions of masculinity are subverted by women.

In chapter three, I examine traditional and hegemonic masculinity among the Zulu-speaking society in the midlands of KwaZulu-Natal and how this form of masculinity

has been challenged by newly emerging 'others' and by the onset of HIV/AIDS.

CHAPTER THREE

TRADITIONAL AND CONTENDING MASCULINITIES AMONG THE ZULU PEOPLE

Introduction

As I demonstrated in the previous chapter, the construction of masculinities in Africa differs from one context to the other. Some masculinities resemble those of western heterosexuality, like the Swazi, the Shona and Berti masculinities. Others resemble western variations of homosexuality, like the *Shoga*, the *'yan daudu* and mummy-baby relationships in Lesotho, while others are totally different, like the Pokot of Kenya and the 'female father' among the Bavenda. In other words, the construction of masculinities seems to be in constant flux, or in competition with one another for cultural recognition and validation.

According to Connell (1995: 77), hegemonic or what one would call dominant masculinity, is one which, at any given time, is culturally exalted. Hegemonic masculinity has to correspond with the established cultural ideal and with institutional power, both collective and individual. For instance, in our context, the top levels of business, the military and the government would be looked up to as providing what Connell calls a convincing 'corporate' display of masculinity. The successful claim to authority is the mark of hegemony; it is successful because it embodies the values and currently working or accepted 'strategy' to ensure their survival. It implies, therefore, that when conditions for the defence of hegemonic masculinity change, the basis for dominance also crumbles.

I begin by examining Zulu hegemonic masculinity, the 'strategies' used in the construction of it, as well as challenges to it, brought about by contending masculinities and the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Rankhotha (1998: 78-83) outlines how traditional, hegemonic masculinity and femininity are constructed in Zulu culture, namely, in opposition to each other. As a result, masculinity and femininity were and still are (in many areas) clearly marked and legitimised by rituals at every step of the way, as a Zulu man and woman progress from childhood to maturity. According to Krige (1950:23-185), each step did not only increase one's privileges, but also brought with it status and responsibilities.

In the traditional pastoral setting, for example, young boys began by learning how to tend calves, goats and sheep. However, the privileges of being a shepherd carried the responsibility of obedience and alertness (Binns 1974: 162). Puberty was also marked by the responsibility of being mat carriers and of accompanying and cooking for the warriors during war. In this way, they shared danger with the warriors; hence the reward of being heroes along with the latter (Maphala 1985: 11).

The next stage was ear-piercing which marked the young men off from childhood. As initiation brought them higher status, they also had the responsibility to obey elders, to work hard and to be men, to be helpful to their fathers, to avoid the company of women and to sit with a ready posture (*qojama*). The food they ate was intended to strengthen them to be future warriors—food, such as beer, meat and cooked mealies. Fathers also doctored their sons with strengthening medicines and presented them with a gift of an assegai as an acknowledgement of their manhood and preparedness for warrior life—certainly the case in the nineteenth century, the subject of Maphala's work.

Marriage was the last stage through which a man was incorporated into full community life along with members of his regiment. Again, courage and strength were instilled as virtues required of a warrior in a king's army. Men had to be loyal, to behave well, honour elders and *indunas* (chiefs), to love work and keep away from women. According to Tedder (1968: 182), once a warrior had reached full maturity and was a fully-fledged member of the king's regiments, he was allowed to get married. It was only then that he could retire from the first line of defense and be called up only as a reserve.

Females were brought up in a similar fashion, with each and every stage of the creation of their femininity clearly marked by appropriate rituals that distinguished them from males. However, according to Krige (1950:184), economic activity, demarcated according to sex in Zulu culture (as is the case, for example with the Berti of the Sudan), was the site in which the construction of masculinity and femininity was clearly visible. For instance, males did all the tasks that required physical stamina, while women did those that demanded continuous attention, like house work, beer-making and gathering wood.

As I argued, Zulu hegemonic and dominant masculinity was constructed in opposition to that which it is not (femininity). Masculinity was constructed as dominance, aggression, authority and power, as opposed to femininity which was constructed as passivity and subordination. To be a man in Zulu culture, it would seem, meant being strong, courageous, hard-working, and ready for war. On the contrary, a typical Zulu woman had to be domesticated and attend to the needs of males. Despite the many socio-economic and political changes, which have affected the Zulu people and their rituals, since the researches of Krige (1950) and Berglund (1976), there is no evidence to suggest that traditional patriarchal ideals of Zulu masculinity and femininity have altered significantly. However, changes are evident in the emergence of other masculinities which now challenge the patriarchal order

According to Morrell (2001: 26-32), there is no one masculinity or group which is likely to carry new values, as the process of gender change is complex and occurs within individuals, groups and institutions. It is thus important to look for signs of change in South African masculinities. Morrell groups the signs of change in South Africa into three categories, namely, *reactive or defensive*, in which men have attempted to turn back changes in order to reassert their power; *accommodating,* in which both traditionalists and progressives attempt to resuscitate non-violent masculinities, and *responsive or progressive*, an emancipatory masculinity, evident in the gay movement. However, Morrell is also aware that the categories are not watertight, as there are always areas of overlap and contradiction. Similarly, in my examination of masculinities

in transition in KwaZulu-Natal, I shall employ the same categorisation, while aware of overlap and contradiction.

Despite the resilience of patriarchal and dominant masculinity in Zulu culture, researchers point to the emergence of new masculinities that pose a challenge to the hegemony of patriarchal masculinity today. Rankhotha (1998) explores the construction of same-sex masculinities in the Pietermaritzburg area, while Carton (2001) examines migrancy and manhood in KwaZulu-Natal.

Among the newly emerging masculinities in KwaZulu-Natal, which I can classify under progressive masculinity, was the construction of same-sex masculinity among Zulu men in the Pietermaritzburg area. It also posed (and continues to pose) a challenge to Zulu hegemonic masculinity.

The Constitution of South Africa has played an important role in allowing gay people, both in South Africa and Pietermaritzburg (where I conducted research), to 'come out' into the open. The 'coming out' takes place despite the disapproval of 'home' communities, as was the case in and around the Pietermaritzburg area. The community saw gay men as 'different', because of their 'feminine' behavior. Their life-style was seen not as only deviating from 'normal' heterosexuality, but above all, they were perceived as having violated the sexual norms by engaging in same-sex relations.

As a result, their choice of lifestyle has incurred communal condemnation, as the following derogatory Zulu names for gay men suggest: *isitabani* (you are sister who?); *ucukumbili* (one with two sets of sexual organs); *inkonkoni* (a wildebeest, for it resembles both a buffalo and a horse), thus suggesting that a gay person is someone with a complex and confused identity.

I conducted the fieldwork in the form of thirty interviews and questionnaires, with questions covering everything from sexual behavior to qualities found attractive in gay men and vice versa, including the vocabulary the community used to address gay men.

Some examples from the responses illustrate the manner in which their alternative masculinity is being constructed.

Concerning the role they played in bed, sixteen of the respondents preferred passive role playing during sex, and fourteen played flexible roles, which meant that partners took turns during sexual intercourse. The first group, then, adopted the beliefs and values of Zulu hegemonic masculinity in sexual practice, in which men are the active, dominant inserters and women, the passive insertees. The second group departed from Zulu patriarchal masculinity by appealing to biological and anatomical sameness between partners as the basis for equal share in bed. They argued that their shared equal and physical enjoyment did not compromise their masculinity, as satisfying each other sexually was more important.

When asked what attracted them in other men, respondents emphasised physical appearance such as tallness, a nice set of teeth, a big bum and a big penis. Other attributes included kindness, caring, understanding and a sense of humour. The majority of the respondents (eighteen men) emphasised the physical attractiveness of other men. When being asked what the community thought of them, respondents had both positive and negative responses. For instance, they replied that they were seen as setting a good example by loving their families; they were not involved in violence and crime and they were caring. They believed that they were seen as a happy lot, never fighting over lovers, unlike their heterosexual counterparts.

On the negative side, they replied that the community did not like their exaggerated 'feminine' behavior, like wearing make-up and being 'sexually loose'. Their femininity was seen as weakness and foreign to Zulu culture. However, their non-aggressive behavior was preferred to the often coarse behavior of the heterosexual men. Their lack of interest in marriage and fathering children were regarded as a threat to society. Some members of the community, especially women, admired their 'feminine' side such as their caring attitude and their refined way of doing things, as if they had an 'extra gene', yet their sexual 'perversion' made them 'ungodly' to others.

Above all, the community despised them for having sex with other men, like 'hermaphrodites'; for being 'different'; for not getting married and fathering children, and for being confused about their masculine identity. In other words, they were condemned for deviating from the traditional masculine ideal, hence the use of derogatory language to refer to gay men and their behavior.

In summation, then, it would seem that of men involved in same-sex relationships in the Pietermaritzburg area, while some endorsed the traditional values of their culture, others challenged them by constructing a masculinity that reacted to the dominant versions of masculinity and femininity. According to Segal, 'constructing masculinity of this sort undermines and subverts the assumed legitimacy of the hegemonic, heterosexual version of masculinity and calls it into question' (1990: 123). Thus, it would seem that in the Pietermaritzburg context, gay masculinity was constructed as both progressive and reactive. At the same time, the forging of an alternative gay masculinity highlights the instability of hegemonic and heterosexual Zulu masculinity (cf. Rankhotha 1998: 49-76).

Political and economic changes have led to the construction of another sort of masculinity that poses a challenge to patriarchal leadership (and hence masculinity) among the rural community of the Thukela valley, as Carton's study (2001) reveals.[3]

Carton highlights the power struggle between migrant labourers and Zulu patriarchs of the Thukela Valley. The late nineteenth century shift in the Thukela valley from subsistence production to labour migrancy, which resulted from gold mining, created conflict between homestead heads and their wage-earning sons. According to Carton, during brief stays at home, the labour migrants would assert their masculinity over existing traditional expectations and customary respect. In response, their elders spoke of their romanticised past, with a mixture of sadness and pleasure. They complained that the white man's intrusion, coupled with the young people's freedom, annoyed

3. Similar analyses of changes in the construction of masculinities among the Zulu people, include those by Hemson (2001), Waetjen and Maré (2001), and Xaba (2001).

them:

> At the start of the twentieth century when labour migrants went home for short visits, resident patriarchs complained of blatant youthful defiance, particularly at public celebrations where the migrants controlled the flow of alcohol and rituals of mock warfare. The homestead heads who tried to contain assertive younger men were sometimes overwhelmed by insubordination. Aggressive displays of manhood, in effect, positioned migrants against older, established patriarchs (2001: 133).

As in the 19th century, many male youths today in the Thukela valley seek greater autonomy from their elders. Although boys would typically labour for their fathers as shepherds, access to schooling gave them the chance to escape from household responsibilities. Teenage men have also greater chances of getting employment as taxi drivers, taxi/bus conductors and sometimes as *dagga* dealers in Durban. However, the patriarchal family largely determines when the boys, in the eyes of the elders, shall become adolescents and young men, up to the stage of labour migrancy. Once they are fully employed and have acquired bride wealth, the young men can then become men, for it is by taking a wife, having children and building a homestead that they can enjoy the privileges and responsibility of being heads of families.

According to Carton, the homestead heads defended generational privilege and spurned the modern customs of the youth, seeing them as a menace. They also thought it was futile to try to contain the rowdy, younger, wage-earning migrant workers. Some patriarchs, who lamented the declining state of *ukuhlonipha* (deference) and appealed for its halt, felt that politics were to blame for the loss of traditional values as well. For example, they regretted the stifled voice of the KwaZulu homeland leaders in the negotiations between the ANC (African National Congress) and the white Nationalist Party. However, they did not agree with the combative and violent style of rural politics devised by the Inkatha Freedom Party.

In addition, the patriarchs were upset by the anti-government protests of the township youth. They feared that their rebellion would further exacerbate the corrosion of family life. According to them, it had become clear that the masculinity of urban youth was volatile and devoid of 'respect' for patriarchal authority.

Briefly, then, the advent of gold mining and economic changes that resulted, forced young and able-bodied men to seek employment in the big cities of South Africa, such as Johannesburg and Durban. However, unchecked by an urban life style of beer drinking parties, the young wage-earners constructed a violent and deviant masculinity, which was at variance with the traditional and patriarchal Zulu masculinity based on respect and public order. On the other hand, loyalty to the family and values of constructing traditional masculinity—such as finding employment, paying bride wealth, getting married, bringing up children and becoming head of a homestead—still held sway over some.

Although the patriarchs called for the halting of cultural erosion, values and privileges, they could no longer contain changes brought about by politics, economics and culture, such as the rowdy behavior of the young men. They also rejected violence as a way of retrieving their cultural values, as advocated by the Inkatha Freedom Party. In other words, the construction of a masculinity, which balances the two extremes, was in the offing. Like Zulu men involved in same-sex relationships, they had to accommodate changes, even as they reacted to them. The patriarchs are challenged by the bleak future of losing family and cultural values, but it would seem, however, to use Morrell's model, that their response is a reactive one, which desires to reclaim past values, as is perhaps demonstrated by the escalating violence in South Africa, particularly against women and children (see below).

In summation, among the Zulu people, hegemonic masculinity is marked by cultural values which make socially acceptable the strategy of constructing masculinity in opposition to femininity, a masculinity that is dominant, aggressive and valued as 'superior' to femininity. However, socio-economic, political and constitutional changes have posed enormous challenges to Zulu traditional masculinity and caused other masculinities to emerge, such as same-sex masculinities, the violent masculinity of rowdy migrant workers, as well as the masculinities of politicised rural and urban youth,

all contending for cultural recognition.[4]

Finally, I would like to examine how the HIV / AIDS virus and its challenges have affected traditional understandings of masculinity in KwaZulu-Natal.

There is a great deal of contemporary research (for example, Webb 1997; Whiteside and Sunter 2000) which demonstrates that HIV / AIDS statistics in South Africa are increasing at an alarming rate and that its devastating effects are beginning to be felt by everyone, especially by the most vulnerable, women and children. According to Whiteside and Sunter, by killing mainly the most economically productive age groups (15-45), the pandemic is creating two highly vulnerable groups of survivors—the elderly and young people, who become orphaned due to the loss of their parents. As a result of being orphaned by AIDS, Webb (1997) believes that the number of street children will rise, creating a subculture among the youth, prone to crime, and susceptible to infection. Above all, family structures and values will be eroded, as children assume roles, responsibilities and tasks, for which they are not equipped.

Apart from the economic disaster, the community in KwaZulu-Natal, as in the rest of the country, is threatened with the loss of cultural values, among which is traditional and hegemonic Zulu masculinity, which faces severe challenges from the young survivors.

However, Lindegger and Durrheim (2001) assert that the onset of the HIV / AIDS pandemic further entrenches male privileges and the subordination of women. They also believe that men's reactive response and desire to hold on to patriarchal masculinity is also realised in the context of AIDS. For instance, besides being the most infected, women bear the largest portion of the burden of AIDS responsibility, such as anxiety about themselves and caring for the dying members of their families. They also bear the responsibility for persuading their male counterparts to practise safe sex.

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4. Xaba (2001: 105-124), in illustrating how 'particular configurations of masculinity forged in one historical moment can become obsolete and dangerous in another', analyses how violent protest masculinities shaped in the apartheid era have become despised in the post-apartheid quest for peace and reconciliation.

In comparison to women, then, men are less affected by AIDS, even as they are largely responsible for its spread, because of the demands and expectations of their masculinity (Foreman 1999: xi). According to Kippax et al., men are generally unwilling to regard AIDS as part of their problem, preferring rather to see it as 'a disease of otherness' (1994: 321). At the same time, Lindegger and Durrheim (2001: 25) argue that, while there is very little research done on intervention programmes for men regarding HIV / AIDS, there is a general privileging of men within AIDS policy, which attempts to protect heterosexual male bodies and to maintain masculine sexual freedom at the expense of women and others.

Furthermore, the research of Lindegger (1994) and Makhaye (1998) has shown that all the major decisions about sexuality are in the hands of men. Consequently, this gender inequality has led to women being the most vulnerable to HIV infection. Rather than take responsibility for spreading the HIV virus, heterosexual men blame women and gays, whom they perceive as the primary source of risk for AIDS / HIV virus (cf. Gorna 1996). Thus, as a result of expectations generated by their masculinity, recommendations, such as the use of condoms, are seen by these men as limitations on the active, penetrating, dominant and virile male body, which must be in sole charge of its destiny (cf. Campbell et al.1998: 52; Marcos 1999: 60).

Furthermore Lindegger and Durrheim argue that recommendations for 'safe sex' require that men decline the familiar paths of risk which are central components of their masculinity, such as the reduction of alcohol and the use of non-penetrative forms of sex. However, these, obviously, find little acceptance among men who define their masculinity in terms of penetration (2001: 26). In addition to this, Lindegger and Durrheim have shown that even the marketing of condoms has served to reinforce traditional, hegemonic notions of masculinity ('the best sex is with condoms'; 'real men use condoms'), in an attempt to improve the likelihood of condom use (2001: 26)

However, Lindegger and Durrheim argue that these strategies fail to address some of the fundamental issues that are likely to contribute to HIV/AIDS risk behaviour in relation

to the construction of masculinity (2001: 26-7). For instance, the Shosholoza campaign which targets men in soccer in KwaZulu-Natal, is highly commendable. However, Lindegger and Durrheim wonder whether the campaign will aim at and succeed in challenging some of the core constructions of masculinity by these men, or will only aim at the social marketing of safe sex, within the confines of traditional masculinity.

In summation, then, Lindegger and Durrheim believe that the onset of the AIDS pandemic seems to unseat patriarchal masculinity from its place of dominance and privilege, even as it entrenches it. Firstly, as the upholders of hegemonic masculinity fall, killed by the pandemic, the future generation will not know what it means to be a traditional Zulu man. Secondly, due to men's clinging to this form of masculinity, legitimised by cultural beliefs, and blaming women and 'others' for the spread of the disease, as well as the general hetero-patriarchal favouritism in gender policies and AIDS prevention programmes, men are the ones to gain at the expense of others, at least for the time being. However, it is my belief that, as the crisis continues, it is highly likely that the scale will tilt against traditional hetero-patriarchal masculinity in favour of new forms of expressing masculinity and sexuality.

In the fourth chapter, I continue my examination of traditional hegemonic masculinity, by examining the causes of so much violence against women and children in South Africa.

CHAPTER FOUR

RAPE AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN SOUTH AFRICA

Introduction

In chapter three, I examined how the onset of HIV / AIDS and contending masculinities affected traditional, hegemonic Zulu masculinity. As is the case in Africa, it is apparent that traditional masculinities change, depending on socio-economic and political circumstances, with each context producing a dominant masculinity, as well as competing others. In the new South Africa, despite the apparently positive political changes, an increasingly violent and abusive masculinity seems to have emerged, the victims of which are mainly women and children. They are the focus of this chapter.

According to Simpson and Kraak (1998: 1), South Africa presently has the highest levels of violence against women in the world. Although studies have produced controversial and contradictory statistics over the last five years, all, however, reinforce the impression that violence against women is endemic. For instance, some studies suggest that 1 in 4 women is likely to be battered by her male partner in her life time and that every year 1.2 million women are sexually assaulted. That is 3, 079 rapes a day, 128 every hour and 1 every 28 seconds. According to Simpson and Kraak, the incidence of rape in South Africa is twice as high as in any other country for which statistics are available (at the time of writing). They also believe that it is possible that there is even more violence against women than these statistics show, the reason being that researchers and analysts have relied on one or two sources for data: the South African Police Services' records and independent research done by voluntary sectors, with its own limitations.[5]

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5. For the latest available statistics, refer to Appendices.

According to Morrell (2001:28), the appalling rise in incidents of rape in this country (South Africa) can be considered as a 'masculinist response to change'. Some men who have been affected by the political, economic and social changes have taken drastic steps to preserve their fragmented masculinity, namely, by raping women and children, as the following report in *The Sunday Times* demonstrates:

> During July 1994 to November 1995, 38 women were murdered in and around the East Rand, Pretoria and Johannesburg. When Moses Sithole went on trial for murdering these women, some of the attitudes he revealed, as well as the circumstances of the murders, reveals a man who hated women and wanted to punish them. He wrote 'bitch' on the bodies of some of his victims and spoke about 'women running around hurting men', and men then taking 'revenge'. He felt that his activities were 'a good lesson for ladies around this country...' (December 8,1996).

Morrell also refers to the South African Rapist Association which was formed in Gauteng in the early 1990s—an organisation whose objective was to fight being sidelined by 'senior comrades' in the run-up to the 1994 elections. A member's response to an interview is a revelation of the same masculinist reaction to political change and associated hatred for women:

> We rape women who need to be disciplined (those women who behave like snobs), they just don't want to talk to people, they think they know better than most of us and when we struggle, they simply do not want to join us (Morrell 2001: 28) (from Goldblatt and Meintjies).

Statements of this kind can be found in the national press on a daily basis. Another rape story to make the headlines was one that read: ***Outrage as 'virile' rapist gets off lightly: judge calls 15-year old victim 'naughty' because she was not a virgin*** (*Sunday Times,* August 29, 1999). According to the report, the rapist (Maharotsa) abducted the first girl in June 1998, as she was walking back from church in Bolata Station, Qwa-qwa, in the Free State. He told the Bethlehem Regional Court that he had dragged her at gun point to his house. He then locked the girl inside and returned to rape and assault her three times. When Maharotsa was subsequently arrested, he was released on bail.

Two months later, however, he abducted a 15-year old relative of the girl, on her way home from school. According to her, he took out a knife and forced her to go with him to his house. On the way he accused her of spreading rape lies about him, then he raped her twice before she escaped. Similarly, at the age of seventeen, Maharotsa was said to have had another sex offense with a minor.

Like many reports of this nature, this one again highlights how ineffectual the law is in protecting women. It also reveals the masculinist and heterosexist views of some male judges against women. For instance, the presiding judge in the above case was slammed for passing a 'horrific' and inappropriate sentence for the repeated rapes of the girls and for saying that the attacks were the 'result of the virility of the young man'. At the same time, according to the report, Judge Kotze said that the girls had not been virgins and that one of them was *stout* (naughty) and that she had sex two days prior to the rape.

That South Africa has among the highest incidences of rape in the world is not disputed, but, according to Park, Fedler, and Dangor (2000:48), a form of gang-rape ('jackrolling') and the rape of young virgins as a supposed cure for HIV / AIDS are incidences unique to South Africa. The question, then, is why has the alarming problem of violence against women and children become so integral a feature of some South African masculinities?

Park, Fedler and Danghor (2000: 49) argue that, in order to understand violence against women in South Africa, one must have some sense of South Africa's particular colonial and apartheid history and the current transition to democratic government. Apartheid led to notions of racial superiority and separation and to the creation of institutions like migrant and domestic labour. People of South Africa have had to face forced removals, states of emergency, and the creation of the so-called 'homelands'. Racist acts and institutions have, directly or indirectly, resulted in the break-up of traditional African family structures. The effects of urbanisation, the codification of customary laws and modernisation have brought many challenges to men's traditional authority and to patriarchy, as was illustrated in Carton's study of the patriarchs of the Thukela valley

(2001).

Similarly, the apartheid era's militarisation of South Africa, the use of violent repression, along with anti-apartheid decisions about education and armed reaction, have resulted in what Park et al. call the generation of 'lost' and violent young men and a general culture of violence, in which violence is justified and is seen as a legitimate means of resolving conflict. This development of a culture of violence, Park et al. argue, also contributes to the high incidence of acts of violence against women.

The gap created by the transition between old and new may also contribute to increases in crime, generally, and violence against women, in particular. This gap, between the previously existing highly repressive and controlled society, and the elimination of those old structures of control, has resulted in a dangerous period of transition. At the same time, there is tension between the old authoritarian ways (a feature of patriarchal masculinity) and democratic values; between blind obedience to law and leaders, on the one hand, and the development, on the other hand, of the values of a progressive, democratic order, characterised by responsible citizenry and independent thinking.

According to Park, Fedler and Danghor (2000: 57), patriarchal ideology is perhaps the one factor unifying all of South Africa's various cultural and ethnic groups, for it has resulted in women of all colours being treated as second-class citizens. This second-class status, in turn, disadvantages women in almost every sphere of society and denies them many of the opportunities and rights accorded to men.

Gender identity is the next factor. In a multi-cultural South Africa, a range of traditions and histories shape gender identities. According to Park et al., African women in pre-colonial South Africa enjoyed a degree of economic independence and a relatively high personal status. However, their status and power were eroded with the coming of the colonialists and the codification of customary law, which in turn, firmly entrenched the dominance of African men over African women.

As features of the particular kind of patriarchy which emerged in South Africa, masculine and feminine identities have come to dominate in which women are seen as receptive, caring, emotionally passive and submissive. Being wife and mother is therefore seen as a woman's 'proper role', with the role of mother assuming particular importance among African and Afrikaner women. In contrast, as has been demonstrated earlier, men are supposed to be assertive, competitive, rational and aggressive. They are expected to be breadwinners, heads of households and leaders of communities. Thus, the existence of culturally imbedded gender identities has resulted in women being treated like second-class citizens. They have also been largely confined to the private sphere of the home, while men are engaged in the public, world of work, community and public affairs.

Accordingly, then, violence and rape against women and children in South Africa should be interpreted as part of the reaction of traditional masculinity to political, economic and cultural changes. In other words, women and children have become scapegoats for men's political discontentment and frustration; they get blamed for declining morality and family values, as well as insubordination and disrespect for their male counter-parts. The male bias against women is firmly entrenched in legal, political and other social spheres, as a strategy to maintain male superiority and power over women. Rape and violence against women are therefore used as a weapon to keep women in what is assumed to be 'their rightful place'.

It would seem, then, in the sort of patriarchal culture which we have inherited from the intersection of Western and African patriarchies, masculine identities have been forged at the expense of women, especially in spheres in which real power is located: politics and economics. In addition, biological differences have been used to justify male supremacy (often on the basis of religious texts like the Judaeo-Christian Bible and the Islamic Koran) and to create dichotomies between 'men' and 'women' with their supposed inherent attributes imposed by culture. Hence the valuing of masculinity above femininity. Although not inherent, we have learned to internalise thinking in terms of dichotomies, in which 'man,' 'white', 'heterosexual', 'normal', 'black' and 'able-bodied',

not only represents patriarchy, but can also oppress, exploit, dominate and kill that which is perceived as weaker and without value---women and children.

However, as some scholars would argue, neither pathology, apartheid nor colonialism cause masculine violence, even as they largely contribute to the general violence in the country. They claim that while political and economic changes have added to men's frustrations and feelings of emasculation, violence and abuse of women and children is a result of individual choices, which some men make and which, in turn, takes individual choice to change.

According to Breines and Gordon (1983: 28-29), the prevalence of the incidents of abuse, the high numbers of wife-battering and the rapes and the pattern of outside responses, indicate that wife battering is not a case of individual pathology or a private pathology, but it is a behaviour that is chosen, emerging out of the social relations of dominance. For that reason, the high numbers of abuse and violence in any context, including ours, suggest that violence against women erupts as part of social forces and individual choices. As Breins and Gordon explain:

> No act of violence is simply the pitting of one individual against another; each contains deep cultural and psychological meanings. At the same time, no act of violence is merely the expression of a social problem (or culture) such as poverty, unemployment or male domination; each is also the personal act of a unique individual (1983: 29).

According to this approach, then, wife battery or even rape of women and children are likely to occur in social contexts or partnerships, where the male lacks personal power, but lives in a society that expects him to be powerful. In the South African context, gender relations are threatened by the education of women, women's increasing numbers in the labour force, their improved status and the diminishing role of the extended family in resolving marital disharmony—all empower women as well as render them vulnerable to gender violence. Women bear the brunt of the psychological and physical frustration and anger of men, who, in compliance with the exploitative system, take advantage of the petty power given to them by patriarchal culture over women

close to them, instead of helping them resist exploitation and abuse. However, according to Green, because not all men in the same circumstances beat their wives or partners, 'it is necessary to understand wife abuse as existing at the intersection of social forces and individual choices' (1999: 29).

The 'social forces' in our context are easy to discern. For instance, many men are having an increasingly difficult time meeting their family duties, which include responsibility to their nuclear and extended family, especially when resources are scarce. Economic changes can also contribute to the proliferation of wife beating. Breins and Gordon (1983) mention other factors such as militarism, capitalism, and media portrayals of violence and sexism. However, according to a cross-cultural comparative study, Whyte (in Green 1999: 31) suggests that wife beating is not encouraged by populations that have experienced frequent wars, like Somalia. While other female abuses, like genital mutilation, are practised in that country, wife beating is reportedly not allowed and this, Whyte argues, is due to the stigma that is attached to wife battering. According to him, wife beating is grounds for divorce in Somalia and men thus divorced find it very difficult to remarry. Above all, before the war, women's families were known to enforce traditional marriage contracts that stipulated that wives should not be abused.

Thus, while environmental factors do contribute to family problems and wife beating, wife battery is not practised in every family because of such pressures. Besides, studies do little to explain why some men are batterers and others are not and why some rich men batter their wives as opposed to their poor counter-parts. The important question to be asked is why similar stresses or life problems affect different people differently. The issue here is culture and traditional norms with regard to wife beating.

According to Green (1999: 29), where wife beating is accepted as a feature of masculinity, both men and women justify it as a way of maintaining order in the family or preserving order and 'traditional values'. For instance, in South Africa, according to Campbell (1992: 614-628), the men he interviewed emphasised the importance of being

seen to have obedient wives, who are faithful and home-bound. Value systems and cultural attitudes of this kind would be more likely to legitimise the abuse of women than others.

Similarly, Simpson and Kraak's departure point is that, 'apartheid is not the cause of violence against women. It has exacerbated it' (1998: 4). Thus, violence cannot be blamed on apartheid, for if we accept this ready-made, easy 'solution', we then deny the prevalence of violence against women in societies which have not experienced apartheid. Violence against women, it would seem, is a phenomenon in 'third' world and developed countries as well. According to Simpson and Kraak (1998: 5), the history of pre-colonial society was devalued and distorted by apartheid, to the degree that there is an understandable bias of anti-apartheid and nationalist discourse to interpret the pre-colonial era positively. In this respect, one falls into what historians call the danger of cultural relativism by applying the subjective norms of the present to the cultural 'realities' of the past.

To understand violence against women, then, Simpson and Kraak argue, one needs to recognise that it is a feature of the pre-colonial tradition that continues to resonate in the present. According to research, in pre-colonial cultures of Africa, 'which are often romanticised as democratic and having been infused with the values of 'ubuntu —there were high levels of women abuse' (1998: 5). It would seem then that there were patriarchies in Africa, which when fused with the more aggressive western patriarchy, produced the kind of aggressive, hetero-patriarchal masculinity experienced in South Africa today.

Firstly, this point is well illustrated in the political restructuring and a process of state-engineered ethnic intervention in the Ciskei, in the 1950s, which transformed not only public spaces, and redefined the domains of male political authority, but also the uncertainties over patriarchal controls, generated by the apartheid state's configuration of Africans in redefined ethnic terms. According to Mager (1999: 98-9), when the overall administration of this Bantu reserve was taken over by the apartheid regime, African

men depended on white men for administrative and political authority. However, the African's men's anxiety over diminishing resources, such as land and power, led some to seek strengthened domination over women in the private domains in which they were politically confined. The tension of holding onto male power as 'potent, powerful, proud beings, as well as repositories of community's wisdom and experience' often erupted in conflict (Mager 1999: 9). Conversely, women's access to power was even more tenuous, for the possibility of expressing their opinions were tightly regulated. Their exclusion from the arenas of political decision-making continued to be upheld by 'customary law.' For example, their voices were often muted by the observance of *isihlonipha* language rules. At the same time, women could not convince their white governors to get their men to break with old notions of male authority by appointing educated women as leaders.

Secondly, as Simpson and Kraak argue (1998: 6), unlike established research which has linked the movement of people off the land into the urban and waged employment to the destruction of pre-colonial economies through the imposition of poll tax and head-taxes, new research suggests that the impact of colonial intervention was uneven across different communities and occurred at different times. In fact, studies which track significant patterns of female migrancy long before the colonial destruction of peasant economies, suggest that it was a means of escaping from oppressive patriarchal relationships, like marriage, rural labour and the abuse associated with them. It would seem, therefore, that by blaming colonial intervention in displacing people from the land, one tends to lose sight of the intricate oppressive relations which played themselves out in pre-colonial societies.

According to these scholars, then, colonial intervention and the apartheid regime are not the sole cause of gender-related violence in South Africa. Gender violence, they argue, should not be isolated from the violence and conflict which have been and continue to be a feature of the political transition in this country. Other forms of violence such as crime, gangsterism, hostel violence and taxi wars, are also an expression of gender relations and a way of articulating the perceived differences between men and women.

These are also theatres of violence (not so much against women), which should be recognised as ways of asserting destructive hetero-patriarchal masculine identity as well.

According to Simpson and Kraak (1998:7), the majority of juveniles incarcerated demonstrates how central the assertion of a masculine identity is to criminal violence, whether hijacking or 'jackrolling' (gang-rape). The young men experience the social upheavals of apartheid and the transition to democracy as disempowering, marginalising and emasculating, with violence used as a way of reasserting masculine identity, even where women are not the direct target. Simpson and Kraak argue that the sources of men's sense of emasculation are deep-rooted. Patriarchy has accustomed men to an enduring tradition of political, economic and social power and recent changes have left them feeling powerless. Thus, violence has become an important vehicle for reasserting their masculine identity and influence.

Consequently, men are increasingly asserting their perceived authority in the one arena in which they still hold sway, which is the family, where one finds women and children. The latter, in turn, become the victims of a displaced re-assertion of masculine authority.

Simpson and Kraak (1998: 9) remind us, therefore, that when we try to deconstruct patriarchy, we should link it to how we understand and deal with the more general problems of violence in society which, in turn, should be based on a recognition that gender-related violence and other forms of violence in South Africa are not simply a consequence of imbalance of political power or economic impoverishment.[6] However, what we tend to do is to treat the formal democratisation of South Africa as the inherent solution to the problem of violence. Instead, one witnesses various ways in which male aggression is continually misplaced.

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6. According to Mager (1999: 184), the latter is the view of African intellectuals and sympathetic medical practitioners, namely, that sexual violence and abuse is an expression of frustration in the context of, among others, economic hardship, personal insecurity and political emasculation.

Rather than seeing the country as a post-conflict society, then, Simpson and Kraak (1998: 9) assert that one should recognise that the historical consequences of marginalisation and impoverishment which were political in nature, are now manifested in other forms of social conflict and violence outside the political arena.

As Simpson and Kraak argue, formal processes of political change will not necessarily address the causes of violence, neither will the formal processes of reconstruction and development necessarily reduce the levels of violence. Hence the suggestion:

> The lesson we can learn from looking at violence through a gender lens is that it stems not only from political and economic inequality but is an expression of identity and the way in which identity is constructed and reconstructed by members of society (1998: 9).

Changing the ways in which identity is constructed clearly requires social change and reorganization on a massive scale. Simpson and Kraak stress the importance of human development and values education on the most micro-level (1998: 10). In South Africa, where we experience the most violent variants of masculinity, in which women and children are battered, raped and sexually molested more than ever in our history, men are clearly in need of a re-socialization which embraces (and negotiates) different forms of masculinity, which break with the patriarchal masculinity of pre-colonial and colonial societies and its inherited (and non-negotiated) privileges.

Gender-related violence should therefore be seen as part of wider social relations, where all struggle for power and influence. One should therefore be cautious of the simplistic interpretation of the violent acts of men against women as particularly unusual or even 'misogynistic' (cf. Wood and Jewkes 1998; 2001). The challenge is to re-direct destructive and anti-social masculine energy accordingly, as well as learning new ways of expressing human identity. In fact, it becomes clear that, although colonial intervention and the apartheid regime have had a large contribution to gender-related violence in South Africa today, the main cause of violence is patriarchal dominance and its ideology of oppressing the 'un-masculine' other.

With this in mind, I would now like to focus on rape and examine (in more general terms) the effects of gender violence on women and men, as well as its repercussions in human societies.

According to Funk (1993: 27), besides being traumatic for victims, rape is also a political crime that occurs in a social and cultural context. He argues that it is a hate crime and a weapon to maintain men's position of dominance over women. As a result, women have fewer opportunities because men use their fear and the silence surrounding rape to stay in power. Whether all men rape or not, they use rape to maintain control over women. For instance, as a result of fear of rape and sexual harassment, many women are reluctant to run for public office. Similarly, some men claim that they are against rape by using the false dichotomy of the 'bad' men who rape and the 'good' who don't to paint themselves as the 'allies' of women and continue getting themselves elected to office, to maintain access to women's bodies and to continue receiving women's praise.

According to Green (1999: 25), when the abuses occur, they endanger the life or physical and psychological integrity of females, irrespective of age colour and class. This, in turn, has ramifications for a society as a whole, because it limits women's ability to participate in their communities as fully functioning human beings. Similarly, systemic violence affects women, children and men. Above all, given its range and magnitude, gender violence amounts to a major form of human rights abuse, one which has few rivals.

Like torture, wife battery commonly involves some form of threat of violence, emotional violence, forced sex and physical assault. The methods used resemble the common methods of torture, such as beating, biting, spitting, kicking, slashing, stabbing, strangling, scalding and attempted drowning. According to Copelon (in Green 1999: 25), the consequences include physical and mental pain and suffering, disfigurement, temporary and permanent disabilities, miscarriage, maiming and death. This is how one woman described the kind of torture she had to endure:

> My husband has always abused me. He has a drug and alcohol problem. I stayed because I am Catholic and because we have six children, until he kicked me out. He used to tie me to the bed so I couldn't go out. I wasn't allowed to answer the phone. One time, he beat me so bad, he cracked my head and broke one of my fingers. Another time, he burned me with boiling water. Once he put an electric shock through my fingers (in Human Rights Watch 1995a: 60) [Green 1999: 25].

It would seem, therefore, that wife battering is a human rights problem, used in various ways to limit women's capacity to participate socially, economically and politically. According to Green, when wife battery provokes women's fear through threats to kill, mutilate or torture the woman or her children, it is especially serious because, 'not only does domestic violence cause women to fear for their lives, it is a leading cause of death for women world-wide' (1999: 28), and the ramifications are far-reaching. Although not all women are victimised, all are affected, just as the acts of individual men, taken together are an important ingredient in the continued subordination of women. In this way, violence against women keeps patriarchal culture going.

According to the South African *Commission on Gender Equality*, the limitation of women's access to resources and decision-making limits their ability to develop and exercise their full capacities for their own benefit and that of society. Consequently, the Commission argues that development cannot take place if it excludes half of the human race. For this reason, in working towards transformation of gender relations, the rights and responsibilities of women and men at all levels need to be redefined. Hence the vision and mission of the *Commission on Gender Equality*:

> The CGE is committed to creating a society that is free from gender discrimination and any other forms of oppression, and a society where all shall have the opportunity and means to realise their potential regardless of race, class, religion, sexual orientation, disability or geographical location (Internet)

In fact, the guiding principles of gender equality, which can be used to bring about social justice for women and men, are enshrined in our *Bill of Rights*:

> The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture,

language and birth (**Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, *Bill of Rights*, *Act 108 of 1996***, Chapter 2, 9 [3]).

According to the Constitution and the *CGE*, gender equality entails that both men and women should be treated with equal concern and dignity and be entitled to the development of their full human potential. This objective is therefore the key to planning processes, policies and programmes of the *Commission for Gender Equality*.

Above all, these policies and programmes should research and make public what violence actually does to men themselves and the society at large.

According to Kaufman (1987: 3), while many of the characteristics associated with masculinity are valuable human traits like, strength, daring, courage, rationality, intellect and sexual desire, the distortion of these traits in the pursuit of masculine norms and the exclusion of other traits associated with femininity, is oppressive and destructive. He argues that 'the process of stuffing oneself into the tight pants of masculinity is a difficult one for all men, even if it is not consciously experienced as such' (1987: 3). According to Kaufman, although violence has long been institutionalised as an acceptable means of solving conflicts, the vast apparatuses of policing and war-making maintained by many countries in the modern world pose a threat to the future of life itself. 'Civilisation' has been built and shaped through the decimation, containment and exploitation of other people through the extermination of native populations, colonialism and slavery. For this reason, our relationship with the natural environment around us has been described with the metaphor of rape, which is an attitude of conquering, mastering and exploiting for profit. So our daily work in industry, in class structures and gender societies is marked by conquering and mastery, the very features of violence.

Kaufman regards workers as extensions of machines, or brains detached from bodies, exposed to the danger of chemicals, radiation, machinery, speedup and muscle strain. In other words, violence (in Kaufman's vivid imagery) condemns the majority to work to exhaustion for forty to forty-five years and then throws them into society's rubbish bin for the old and used-up. Furthermore, the racism, sexism and heterosexism that have

been institutionalised in our society are socially regulated acts of violence. The big towns and cities that are built around us are not only doing violence to nature, but to the human community and the human relationship with nature. Our cities, social life, our work, our relation with nature and our history are more than a backdrop to the prevalence of violence, they are violence; violence in an institutionalised form encoded into physical structures and sociol-economic relations. Thus, as Kaufman argues:

> Much of the sociological analysis of violence in our societies implies simply that violence is learned by witnessing and experiencing social violence: man kicks boy, boy kicks dog. Such experiences of transmitted violence are a reality, as the analysis of wife battering indicates, for many batterers were themselves abused as children. But more essential is that our personalities and sexuality, our needs and fears, our strengths and weaknesses, ourselves are created—not simply learned—through our lived reality (1987: 6).

The field then in which the cycle of men's violence (and violence against women) is situated in a society grounded in structures of domination and control, which generate and are, in turn, nurtured by violence.

Although the relationship between the structures of control and dominance are complex, it would appear that violence against nature and the drive to dominate and conquer the natural world, is integrally connected with domination among humans. According to Simone de Beauvoir, the ambivalent feelings of men toward nature are carried over onto their feelings toward women, who are seen as embodying nature: 'Now ally, now enemy, she appears as the dark chaos from whence life wells up, as this life itself, and as the over-yonder toward which life tends' (1974 (1949):162). This is the 'dark chaos' which must be conquered (like the 'dark continent'). Jourard (in Kaufman 1987:6) too relates violence against nature, against women, against other men and against oneself, to the lethal aspects of patriarchal masculinity.

In summation, then, it is apparent that the source of violence in South Africa is a masculinist response to change, which must be interpreted within a wider consideration of the violence inherent in patriarchies generally. According to some scholars, the reason why we experience so much violence in South Africa currently is partly blamed

on the masculinities inherited from colonialism, forced on and adopted by the local patriarchies; apartheid and its culture of violence also added to the shaping of masculinity and male behaviours in our context. However, it is the perceived threat to patriarchal culture by the latest social, political, legal and economic changes in the country, in which men feel emasculated and marginalised, which is the reason for gender violence. Masculinity and male supremacy is a paradigm for the world order and any change or interference with that order will not go unchallenged by many men, especially those who are comfortable in the hetero-patriarchal masculinity system.

Patriarchal culture socialises men into being who they are—dominant and aggressive, and anyone or anything which threatens that perception and image is experienced as emasculating and disempowering. Simpson and Kraak (1998: 9) use the image of a tornado which is more destructive in bare and unprotected places; in the same way, in human power relationships, violence gets directed against the weaker and more vulnerable. Thus, in many cultures, as in ours, women and children are the most vulnerable victims of patriarchy. Besides, the home where women and children reside, is the cradle of hetero-patriarchal power. In fact, the perpetuation of patriarchal culture, in the long run, threatens the lives of women, children and, indeed, of men themselves, and, until an alternative to the construction of masculinity is found, patriarchal masculinity, in our context, remains undesirable and dangerously destructive.

The determining power of the past (pre-colonial patriarchies, colonialism, apartheid) may well have constructed the dangerous forms of masculinity currently contending in South Africa. However, violence against women and children (and other men for that matter) does involve personal choice (which may intersect with broader social forces). If the constructed nature of masculinities could be realised (outside the confines of academe), the possibilities of change could be tackled by men wanting to end the kind of inherited masculinity responsible for the cycle of violence. Hence the proposal for an alternative masculinity as a viable choice. However, before I consider what the features of this kind of masculinity could be, I would like to explore one of the major obstacles to its construction: that is, the pervasive power of patriarchal masculinity, which makes gay

men internalise one of its most vicious strategies, namely, homophobia.

CHAPTER FIVE

INTERNALISATION OF PATRIARCHAL MASCULINITY

Introduction

In the quest for an alternative masculinity, I have decided to employ as an example the masculinity of one of the two groups of black men involved in same-sex relationships in the Pietermaritzburg area (Rankhotha 1998).

In the study, half of the respondents mirrored the social attitudes of dominant and patriarchal practices in which there were clear gender roles of a 'man' and a 'woman,' with the 'man' in control of the relationship and its social aspects. Alternative or egalitarian masculinity seemed to be in the process of construction by the other half of the respondents, in which both partners treated each other as 'men' and took turns in penetration. As the purpose is to advance egalitarian masculinity as the alternative, I begin this chapter by examining reasons why some gay men in South Africa ape the dominant patriarchal masculinity, which is often characterised by an internalised homophobia.

In my study, the first group of black men involved in same-sex relationships aped the dominant patriarchal masculinity by practising inflexible role-playing sexually. Their responses revealed that their behaviour was a reflection of the social lives in their communities, where there is a husband and a wife, playing their different roles as dictated by culture. As in the dominant patriarchal culture, the man is in control of the relationship, while the woman is subordinate to him. From the study, it also emerged that because of age discrepancy, the younger man normally played the passive role, a role regarded as determined by an 'inner feeling' and not by personal choice.

Their internalisation of the dominant patriarchal masculinity is reflected in the following

extracts from the responses collected (Rankhotha 1998: 83):

Lihle (17): I am a man and my lover is my wife. We are no different from the society at large.

Siya (21): I like guys who are bigger than me and, therefore, who make me play a passive role.

Thulas (31): I am a 'woman', therefore my place is under the man.

Thulas (31): My man must be a 'real man' - strong, with a big dick, and a woman on the side.

As I strongly believe that these responses reflect an internalised homophobia in our context, I shall begin by examining the meaning of the term homophobia in the light of Fone's study (2000), which examines the term within its historical context from antiquity to modern times. However, for my purpose, I shall confine myself to the definition of the term, giving a few historical examples of how homophobia affects gay life today.

According to Fone, the term 'homophobia' has popularly come to be understood to mean fear and dislike of homosexuality and those who practice it. The term may have been coined between 1961 and 1972. Weinberg (1972: 4) defined it as 'the dread of being in close quarters with homosexuals'. (cf. Friedman (1975: 19) who describes homophobia as an 'extreme rage and fear reaction to homosexuals').

The basis for the fear, it would seem, is the perception that homosexuality and homosexuals disrupt the sexual and gender order which are supposed to be established by natural law. Thus, adverse reactions to homosexuals and homosexuality are founded upon fear and dislike of the sexual difference homosexual individuals are supposed to embody—stereotypic characteristics like effeminacy in gay men and mannishness in lesbians. Another source of homophobia seems to stem from the social conduct of homosexuals, which is seen to disrupt the social, legal, political, ethical, and moral fibre of society, a contention supported by history and affirmed by religious doctrine.

Fone (2000: 5) believes that homophobia has links with sexism, anti-Semitism and prejudice against non-white people. The link with sexism, which involves the denigration of women, is evident in the following: if contempt of women by men is a result of accepting stereotypical notions about women's alleged weakness, irrationality, sexuality and inferiority, men are also contemptuous of gays because they believe that gay men act 'like' women. However, homophobia is not only limited to heterosexuals, but can also be found among homosexuals, for example, repressed homosexuals. According to Fone (2000: 6), like other prejudices, homophobia among homosexuals may result from internalisation of the lessons of a homophobic society.

Fone (2000: 6) also asserts that homophobia can represent multiple prejudices and, for that reason, a more suitable term might be 'homophobias'. According to Young-Bruehl (1996: 36), primary prejudices are sexism, racism, anti-Semitism and homophobia, which in turn, fall into one or a combination of the following three categories:

1. **Obsessional prejudice** which sees its objects as omnipresent conspirators or enemies set on one's destruction who, therefore, must be eliminated.
2. **Hysterical prejudice** which (with a strong component of sexual repression) interprets the hated individual as 'other,' as inferior and as sexually threatening. The best example of hysterical prejudice is racism.
3. **Narcissistic prejudice** which refers to those who cannot tolerate the idea that there exist people who are not like them.

According to Young-Bruehl, homophobia (2000), alone of all the prejudices, fits into all of these categories. She notes that homosexuals 'are all-purpose victims': clannish and dangerous 'like' Jews; sexually obsessed and predatory 'like' people of colour. They are 'like' women and therefore not like real men, or they are women who 'do what men do—they compete for women' (2000: 6).

However, the point made by Fone is that homophobia has taken various forms and has arisen from many sources which have been invented, fostered and supported over time

by different agencies of society, such as religion, law, government and science. For instance, when people imagine a threat to the security of gender roles, of religious doctrine, of state and society and to the sexual safety and health of the individual, homophobia tends to break out with special venom. Thus, according to Fone, '[h]omosexual behaviour became a subject of concern only when its practitioners were seen to have broken certain sexual and social rules, and to have threatened conventional ideas about gender' (2000: 7).

Among the Greeks and Romans, same-sex practices among men and women were common, but as they were practised within clear confines, homophobia did not exist. There were, however, punishments for transgressions of gender codes. In Judaeo-Christian cultures, homosexuality was seen as a sign of Hellenistic decadence and godlessness and, with the support of the Bible, homophobia took root in Western culture. By the mid-20th century, homosexual behaviour was seen as subversive and dangerous. Thus, legal authorities searched out and exposed the so-called 'known homosexuals' in government, who lost their jobs:

> In an America in which homosexuals had become the target of state-sponsored persecution, homophobia was an absolutely acceptable prejudice. By the 1960s, 82 per cent of American men and 58 per cent of American women surveyed believed that only Communists and atheists were more dangerous than homosexuals (2000:10).

However, in resistance to attitudes of this kind, gay liberation began to assert itself. Literature and social activism bear witness to the homosexual revolt, first in the 1950s and then definitively in 1969—the Stonewall riots. Liberation produced a new culture which often took the form of social protest and political activism. However, in the 1970s, gay liberation influenced education, religion, entertainment, the media and culture. However, there was a conservative backlash which continues today. The most recent expressions of homophobia today echo old-age fears about homosexuality, namely, that gays pose a threat to the stability, morality and health of society.

It is within this context that I explore the history of the internalisation of homophobia, first in America, because it has to a large extent influenced gay life in South Africa. I shall

begin with World War II in the USA to see how the American experience of homophobia shaped their lives, developed their identity and consciousness, as well as how that history and experience continues to affect gays and lesbians, who seem to have internalised homophobia in our South African context today.

Comstock, quoting D'Emilio (1991: 6) credits World War II with creating something of a nationwide 'coming out' experience among lesbians and gays in America. It happened when the war changed its location and its context. For example, the US military, by preferring men and women who were young, single or with few dependants, a group likely to include a disproportionate number of gays and lesbians, inadvertently facilitated the forming of same-sex sexual relationships. Released from their cultural homes and placed in sex-segregated environments, self-identified lesbians and gays were better able to meet. Similarly, those who had felt, and not acted upon attractions to people of the same sex, suddenly had the opportunity to do so.

However, post-World War II demobilisation stripped away such opportunities as efficiently as the war had arranged for them. Traditional gender roles were re-established. Women were told to give up their jobs for the returning soldiers by propaganda driven by business and government. Stable heterosexual marriage and motherhood were reaffirmed as the norm. Aggressive post-war searches and purges of lesbians and gay men by the military were put in place. It would seem then that 'tolerance' for gays and lesbians was only intended to satisfy the need for the war effort and not for gays and lesbians *per se.*

Notwithstanding, demobilisation and peacetime could neither undo nor halt the experiences of gays and lesbians during the war years. In response, they chose to remain in the cities through which they had passed going to and from wartime assignments. Cities like Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, New Orleans and Boston would in time emerge as major centres for lesbian and gay communities, later attracting gay men from the rest of the US. When the military purges were stepped up after the war, many gays and lesbians had no choice but to live away from their home

towns, where they created their own institutions and friendship networks---a gay subculture.

In addition, Kinsey's reports on male and female sexual behaviour in 1948 and 1953 strengthened gay efforts and challenged the assumptions and intentions of the heterosexual community (Comstock 1991: 7). Kinsey's findings also led him to dismiss views that homosexuality is abnormal and unnatural. The idea that gays and lesbians could be anywhere and everywhere threatened many Americans who were beginning to settle into their dream of heterosexual marriage and child-rearing. It was the beginning of public verbal assaults and moralising against gays and lesbians, both by public leaders and other homophobic individuals, which quickly became official public policy enforced by legal practices.

Comstock recounts how isolated lesbians and gay men throughout the US, when they heard accounts of the hostility against them, decided to move to places where other gays and lesbians had moved. In turn, as their numbers increased and they became accustomed to the community life they created and experienced, they became less willing to let go of it. Many who were already publicly labelled as homosexuals, by losing their employment at workplace and for not wanting to give up their friendships and sexual contacts, saw no alternative but simply to fight or minimise the dangers.

This further hostility against gays and lesbians tended to clarify their sexual identities and their needs for sexual and social satisfaction. The emergence of lesbian and gay bars illustrated their visibility as well as their vulnerability to attacks. The gay bar grew as a community institution that met the needs of the residents, withstood attacks against it and in the long run became the centre for launching resistance to such attacks. According to Comstock, 'Of all the changes set in motion by the war, the spread of the gay bar contained the greatest potential for reshaping the consciousness of homosexuals and lesbians. Alone among the expressions of gay life, the bar fostered an identity that was both public and collective' (1991: 12).

Comstock asserts that physical injury and death were not a new development in the history of lesbians and gays (1991: 14). Accounts of beatings, burning, torture and assorted forms of execution have been compiled and are ample evidence that within western civilisation the threat and practice of anti-gay and lesbian violence has been continuous. Among the noteworthy examples, because of its comprehensive scheme and proximity to the present, is the Nazi extermination of homosexuals in Germany from 1935 to 1945.

The greater visibility of lesbians and gay men would in turn undergo a dramatic increase and transformation as a result of the Stonewall rebellion in New York City in 1969. According to Comstock (1991: 21), on June 27, 1969, a seemingly insignificant disorder in a Greenwich Village bar symbolised the ushering in of the next stage of homosexual rights. After ejecting the gay patrons from their bar of the Stonewall Inn by the local police, the patrons responded with an unexpected outrage and rioted for at least four nights. They employed hit and run tactics like guerilla warfare, with the police responding with its riot unit. This militancy was adopted by growing numbers of young and dissatisfied members of the gay community, who demanded personal respect and a reorganisation of society.

However, the response to the new, post-Stonewall, militant insistence on being heard everywhere, produced new forms of violence against gays and lesbians. As Comstock argues (1991: 22), a pattern identified in the post-World War II era, was also apparent in the post-Stonewall experiences: greater visibility was followed by hostility and violence. Even the expressed support for and acceptance of lesbians and gays by others in their communities was fragile and vulnerable to hostile responses.

The question, then, as Comstock asks is: 'Can the violence ever be ended? Is the movement by lesbians and gay men a never-ending cycle of gain and defeat kept in place by the threat and practice of anti-gay and lesbian violence?' (1991: 29). It seems that the efforts by gay men and lesbians to gain equality have been consistently matched with and often repelled by physical violence. It seems also that the attempts

to gain footholds at various times with differing strategies overlook a possible larger fact, namely, that the social structure and social order do not allow for the inclusion of lesbians and gays, except as marginal people.

I agree with Comstock that a widening range of perpetrators and expanding category of assaults in anti-gay and lesbian violence may not simply be the response of people who feel and think about homosexuality in a disapproving manner, but an institutionalised rejection of lesbians and gay men. At the same time, if the marginal status of gays and lesbians traditionally serves to clarify the social order, it seems, as Comstock observes, their attempted move as equals into that order would certainly threaten those who base their own social position on the marginal status of others.

Thus, while the movement for equality by lesbians and gays may ignite old biases, it also threatens the established order of power and privilege. Whether the thrust of violence against lesbians and gays comes from prejudice and misinformation is the question that needs to be answered, if the cause of such violence will ever be understood.

In summation, then, it is clear that in any social context where there is violence against gays and lesbians, the same violence reflects social attitudes towards women and children. Hence the social concern for the welfare of both. Although World War II provided an opportunity for gays and lesbians to come out in the US, the post-World War II society took away such opportunities by re-instating and confirming family values. Hence the attempts of the military to try to search and purge their own community of gays and lesbians. But it was too late. In fact, violence against gays and lesbians strengthened their resolve to persist in their struggle for rights and acceptance. Violence further helped form gay sexual identity and reshaped their consciousness. However, more public visibility by gays meant more public violence and disdain.

What is clear is that violence against gays and lesbians will not stop and they will never acquire any status, but a marginal one. The reason is because violence against gays

and lesbians does not only stem from homophobes, but from an institutionalised and deeply-grained rejection of homosexual life-style. Thus, fighting for status and equality by gays and lesbians will only threaten established social order and privilege. However, what is the relationship between masculinity and homophobia?

According to Segal (1990), there is nothing surprising about the co-occurrence of homophobia and the reassertion of traditional masculinity. Men defend the dominant forms of masculinity as enshrined in marriage—a masculinity destined for preserving men's power over women and over men who deviate from masculine ideals. Homophobia, according to Segal, not only keeps all men in line while oppressing gay men, but in its contempt for the 'feminine' in men it simultaneously expresses contempt for women. It would seem, then, as Rubin argues: 'The suppression of the homosexual component of human sexuality, and by corollary the oppression of homosexuals is [...] a product of the same system whose rules and relations oppress women' (in Segal 1990: 158).

It is noteworthy also that the source of the fierce, irrational passion of homophobia in many men is what they see as the 'feminine' in themselves or the enemy within. This is also related to fear, envy and anxiety about sex, which is an activity blatantly flaunted in male gay subculture, and repressed in traditional patriarchies. Segal notes, that, according to Freud, the successful repression and sublimation of homosexual desire in men, formed the basis for the male bonding upon which patriarchy is built (1990: 158). It would make sense, then, as Segal writes, that a volatile tension between homoeroticism and homophobia would appear inevitable when strong and exclusive bonds between men are being encouraged alongside a compulsory heterosexual masculinity. She also notes that openly gay men have little interest in many of the male bonding institutions which arouse passion in other men, like sport.

Compulsory heterosexual masculinity employs the strategy of sexism; Dollimore (1991) reveals that homophobia can intersect with, for instance, misogyny, xenophobia and racism.

The following three examples illustrate the point made by Dollimore:

The first example is of Frederic Mason, a 31-year-old nurse's assistant, who (according to Amnesty International 2001: 21) was arrested in Chicago, USA, July 2000 after an argument with his landlord. According to witnesses, Frederick Mason entered the police station in good health. However, by the time he was released, blood was oozing from his rectum. According to his own testimony, two unidentified police officers took him to the interrogation room where he was handcuffed by the elbows, and pinned to a wall.

The officer who arrested Mason then reportedly pulled Mason's pants down and sprayed a blue cleaning liquid on a billy club before ramming the baton into his rectum. As he sodomised Mason, the officer is alleged to have hurled homophobic insults at him. A second unidentified officer is alleged to have witnessed Mason's pants being pulled down, but walked away during the assault. Mason contends that he was subjected to abuse—including racist and anti-gay insults such as 'nigger fag'—from the moment he was arrested.

The second example is that of a Zimbabwean lesbian girl, who was raped and tortured by orders from her own family in order to 'straighten' her.

> They locked me in a room and brought him everyday to rape me so I would fall pregnant and be forced to marry him. They did this to me until I was pregnant [..] (Amnesty International 2001: 39)

This account of rape, forced pregnancy and torture was not committed in custody or in armed conflict; it happened to a teenage girl at her 'peaceful' family home in Zimbabwe. Those who ordered the rape were not enemy military commanders, but the girl's own parents, who were so determined to 'correct' their daughter's lesbianism that they forced her to be repeatedly raped by an older man.

According to Amnesty International (2001: 39), most of the violence faced by gays and lesbians occurs within the community or in the family. As with torture by state officials,

violence is intentionally used to punish, intimidate and enforce discrimination against gays and lesbians. Such violence can sometimes be fatal and with devastating consequences. At the same time, the extent to which governments share responsibility for 'private' acts of torture or ill-treatment varies from context to context. In some contexts, violence against gays and lesbians is instigated by officials at the highest level, as is the case in Zimbabwe and Namibia.

The third example of homophobia is also reported by Amnesty International (in Dunton and Palmberg 1996: 29), in which the Namibian Deputy Minister of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation was quoted in the *New Era* as saying: 'Homosexuality is like cancer or AIDS and everything should be done to stop its spread in Namibia.' The Minister went on to say that homosexuality was alien to Namibian society, and those who engage in homosexual and lesbian relations should be 'operated on to remove unnatural hormones'.

The reporter had also solicited the opinion of the Finance Minister, who warned that homosexuality had infiltrated Namibian society, and might 'lead to social disorder'. In his view, the practice should be fought through intensified campaigns and political mobilisation.

In a lengthy article which was printed both in the *Namibian and New Era*, The Minister of Finance repeated his attacks and also gave a lecture on the cause and origin of homosexual behaviour. According to him, those who defend gay rights are 'Eurocentrists and their fellow travellers'. He goes on to write:

> [...] homosexuality is an unnatural behavioural disorder which is alien to African culture. It is a product of confused genes and environmental aberration. In Judaeo-Christian culture, it has generally been perceived as sinful (Dunton and Palmberg 1996:29).

According to the Minister,

> It is agreed that homosexuals in their overwhelming majority [lead] anti-social lives. They are abusers of alcohol, drugs, violent crime, child abuse and all type of evils, and are sources of deadly communicable diseases. (Dunton and Palmberg 1996:29).

It seems then that the purpose of homophobia is to serve the interests of patriarchal masculinity—its dominance and privilege over women and other men. Homophobia polices those men and women who deviate from what is seen as the norm in the patriarchal culture. By oppressing gay men, all men will be kept in line. Thus, the oppression of gay men and lesbians, as well as violence against women, is the dominant and patriarchal way of maintaining male supremacy.

Then, what about internalisation of homophobia by gay men in black townships in the South African context? In other words, how does the gay subculture contribute to homophobia as exemplified by the society around them? Does their internalised homophobia serve the same purpose of safe-guarding and maintaining patriarchal masculinity?

To answer the question, I shall begin by briefly examining the history of the gay community in South Africa, through which, I hope to find the reason and purpose for homophobia among township gays.

Gevisser (1994: 18-86) writes the history of the gay community in South Africa from the1950s to the 1990s, in which gay life was marked by homophobia and persecution, mainly from the apartheid government officials and the larger community. Consequently, gays and lesbians in South Africa, who were mostly white, spent many years consolidating their existence as gays, rather than participating in the liberation struggle, until the 1980s. However, between 1982 and 1984, GASA, the Gay Association of South Africa, formed a national organisation that embraced, for the first time, grass-roots movements. However, these roots were within only one sector of South African society, namely, white, apolitical, middle-class men, 'which marginalised the anti-apartheid and black gay movement within South Africa' (Gevisser 1994: 51).

The political conservatism of GASA did not only hamper its ability to act publicly, it was causing dissent among its membership. This rift was exacerbated by Simon Nkoli's joining in 1983, a black man with a background in anti-apartheid liberation politics.

Because GASA did not seem to take black recruitment seriously at all, Nkoli decided to form a black interest group within the organisation. Within a week, Nkoli had formed an organisation of about eighty people. What fascinated Nkoli was how different their language was from that of the white middle-class members of GASA. They wanted to fight for their rights and, for that, they wanted to mobilise. They were ordinary people, mostly in their 20s.

In the words of one of the interviewees, blacks stayed away from GASA precisely because 'to many blacks, a concern by blacks in gay affairs seems frivolous, irrelevant and divisive' (1994: 56). Similarly, senior officials of the African National Congress and the Pan Africanist Congress dismissed gay issues as bourgeois frivolities and irrelevancies. According to Gevisser (1994: 56), these sentiments were also echoed by many black South Africans' growing discontent with GASA's 'apolitical' label. Thus, impelled by Nkoli's involvement in the Delmas Treason Trial and by the President's declaration of a State of Emergency, progressive gays began forming explicitly political organisations in direct opposition to GASA.

According to the founder of 6010 (an anti-apartheid gay organisation in Cape Town) and the director of its counselling services, the single most difficult aspect of coming out as gay since the 1980s was the spectre of AIDS. The representation of AIDS in the media then said much about the perceived role that gays have played in the spread of AIDS. Before 1985, the epidemic was characterised as 'The Gay Plague'. In March of that year, newspapers began reporting black HIV cases in Soweto and the media immediately transformed the 'Gay Plague' into 'The Black Death'. Although there were heterosexuals who had AIDS, gays were blamed for importing the epidemic into the community and spreading it among straight men.

From the 1990s, black gays started meeting and organising parties in the townships. According to Gevisser (1994:69), British Sgxabai, an early member of GASA, began organising Kwa-Thema gays in the early 1980s. However, he died in November 1991, of wounds incurred in a family feud over his sexuality. Despite the relative tolerance,

then, it seemed that being openly gay in the townships could be fatal. However, as gay township activity was publicised, a backlash emerged from the black nationalist tendency within the liberation movements claiming, according to the much-quoted banner used in Winnie Mandela's kidnapping and assault trial in 1991, that 'Homosex is not in black culture' and that it was a decadent white contamination of black society. Gevisser writes:

> This ideology has its roots in the patriarchal notion that colonialism emasculated or feminised the black man, and therefore locates much of Black power, quite bluntly, in the penis: in a remasculation, or reassertion of black virility (1994: 69).

According to *Weekly Mail and Guardian*, on the 29 December 1988, four youths had been abducted from a Methodist Church Manse in Orlando West, Soweto and taken to Diepkloof Extension, Winnie Mandela's home. The motive for the abduction was supposed to rescue the youths from alleged sexual abuse by the Reverend Paul Verryn, who was in charge of the inmates. At the Mandela's house, the youths were allegedly questioned, subjected to a variety of accusations, seriously physically assaulted and then held captive. One of the captives, Stompie Seipei (aged 14), later died from the wounds incurred from the beatings.

According to Gevisser, while it could not be denied that the colonial project was emasculating, the ideology, shaping the belief that homosexuality was a colonial import, has had serious consequences for the politics of gender and sexuality in South African liberation movements. He argues that the ideology 'not only finds homosexuality untenable but it also tends to negate the possibilities of female resistance and liberation, relegating women to the roles of mothers and wives of comrades rather than allowing them to be comrades themselves' (1994: 70). Other members of liberation movements in the ANC and AZAPO were to echo Winnie Mandela's sentiments that gay life was un-African.

Notwithstanding, the ideology of liberationist lesbian and gay politics is best expressed by a manifesto, drafted by GLOW for the annual Pride March (Gevisser 1994: 70) The

manifesto calls upon all South Africans who are committed to a 'Non-Racist, Non-Sexist, Non-Discriminatory Democratic Future' to *unite* in the fight for basic rights for all South Africans; to *mobilise* against discrimination; to *assert* the role of lesbians and gay men in the current process of political change; to *confront* South Africa with the presence of its lesbian and gay community and to *dispel myths* nurtured by years of discrimination and stereotyping (emphasis retained).

The new agenda calls for legal reform and the dispelling of myths. It also confronts the current process of political change head-on by calling on lesbians and gays to 'assert their role' in the process and challenge it to take cognisance of gay and lesbian rights. Thus, by challenging the liberation movement directly to 'embrace the struggle for gays and lesbian liberation', the new movement sets itself up in direct dialogue with organisations like the ANC, in a way which was untenable for the white organisations in the 1980s. The approach paid off, when the African National Congress included gay rights in its pantheon of gay rights, in that way bringing the call for gay liberation into the mainstream of political activity in South Africa.

In the light of Gevisser's study, it appears that South African Gay history, as in the US, was born out of homophobic oppression, and the need to advance white, Calvinist and supremacist beliefs. At the same time, gay subcultures reflected the interests of the white community by excluding the interests of blacks and lesbians. Consequently, black liberation movements, as well as some gays became homophobic and treated the gay subculture as irrelevant and frivolous. Some black nationalists also saw gay life as a western importation. This further exacerbated fears among blacks who wanted to come out as gays. Today, internalised homophobia still exists among black gays in township and urban sub-cultures.

As Isaacs and MacKendrick (1992: 68) demonstrate, a sub-culture is an extension of the main culture. This means that gay male sub-cultures will reflect patriarchal masculinity as they try to negotiate their own identities. According to McLean and Ngcobo , resisting and surviving patriarchal rule 'results in homosexual organisational

forms both copied and different from institutionalised heterosexuality' (1994: 159). The fact that gay subculture has to confront oppression means that gay identity, depending on the context, is often bound up with issues of survival, which entail negating the gay identity, sometimes, as a way of coping with patriarchal masculinity.

To avoid confrontation with the powerful and dangerous forces of hetero-patriarchal culture, gay sub-cultures, through which gays acquire identity and participate, become institutionalised; venturing outside these means wearing a different *persona*, precisely as a way of avoiding conflict and violence. These institutions also separate and set the gay community apart as 'other'. As sexuality is the sole reason for the existence of the subculture, other gay issues like political rights, have nothing to do with gay membership. According to Isaacs and MacKendrick (1992: 70-2), this can be a cause for crisis, for isolation and otherness of gays from the patriarchal culture is emphasised.

Another cause of crisis and homophobia is caused by cultural diversity in the gay subculture, for in some cultures, revealing same-sex attraction is easily associated with betraying one's cultural roots and background. Hence the fear of coming out as gay. Thus, the desperation to belong and the fear of being exposed, creates deep-seated ambivalence, which in turn, leads to further crisis and homophobic feelings.

It would seem, then, that among gay people, internalised homophobia is mainly employed as a way to survive and avoid confrontation with hetero-patriarchal masculinity. Thus, while internalised homophobia may be seen as a sign of precariousness and instability in sexual identity, in a homophobic culture, it may be seen as empowering to those who are victims of heterosexism. For example, in the South African context, in which black gay men are ridiculed, seen as 'sissy' or as pandering to foreign colonial vices, the only way to survive the persistent intimidation and the pressure to conform, is to internalise homophobia by acting straight and, occasionally and tragically, by becoming gay bashers themselves.

In summation, this chapter addresses homophobia and, in particular, internalised

homophobia, as relevant to the lives of black gay men in the townships of South Africa. At the heart of homophobia is the supposed security of gender roles in hetero-patriarchal culture, as well as the policing and punishment of those that subvert these roles. The development of gay life and its suppression (in the USA and elsewhere) points to the fact that homophobia is intended to serve the interests of the hegemonic patriarchal culture and its versions of masculinity. Similarly, the history of black gay life in South Africa reveals homophobic attitudes and oppression both by the state, black liberation organisations and by some individual gays themselves. Inflexible African nationalist attitudes, which saw gay life as un-African and condemned it as such, incited more homophobia among the wider African population, who blamed gays for AIDS and child-molestation.

In panic, then, black gays, would not only not want to 'come out', but would also not want to be associated with gay sub-cultures either. In other words, they had to learn to internalise homophobia, partly, as a sign of being disillusioned with gay sub-cultures (for racist or other reasons), but mostly as a survival mechanism in a hetero-patriarchal and homophobic culture. Internalised homophobia has become a feature of the masculinity of some gay black men, precisely because gay masculinities are always constructed in relation and reaction to hegemonic forms of masculinity. As masculinity too cannot be understood without reference to femininity, I propose to explore patriarchal femininity and its internalisation in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

INTERNALISATION OF PATRIARCHAL FEMININITY

Introduction

As is the case with many black men in South Africa, many women seem to be trapped in patriarchal culture; in fact, they seem to want to restore and maintain patriarchy, rather than fight for the full realisation of liberty and equality with their male counter-parts. Firstly, I explore why many women internalise patriarchal femininity by taking part in enforcing gender hierarchies and, secondly, I examine how some women defeat hetero-patriarchal culture in an attempt to forge an alternative femininity.

According to Van Leeuwen (1993: 254), the femininity of a particular group in society can only be understood in relation to hegemonic masculinity. Whatever behaviour or role is considered appropriate for a woman is determined by the prevailing dominant masculinity. For instance, because patriarchal masculinity requires men to exert dominance over women, women are considered feminine, if they are acquiescent in relation to men. Similarly, if masculinity is associated with being a family provider, then, femininity will be associated with earning less than the husband or not working for pay at all. Thus, the definition of femininity depends on the meaning and value given to hegemonic masculinity in a certain culture and a given period.

In the same way, Connell (in Van Leeuven 1993: 254) asserts that the dominant form of femininity, or 'emphasised' femininity, is a femininity performed especially for men. For this reason, it is constructed around compliance with and adaptation to male power. However, Van Leeuwen (1993: 255) emphasises that other factors, besides gender relations, are more important to the dominant form of femininity—such as class, race and other social relations that play an important role in how a given femininity is constructed in relation to masculinity and to other femininities. For example, in North

America, white, middle-to-upper class women construct a femininity that becomes the standard for all women, a standard she calls 'privileged' femininity.

According to Van Leeuwen (1993: 255), 'privileged' femininity is constructed to accommodate the interests and desires of hegemonic masculinity. For this reason, its central feature is attractiveness to men, which includes physical appearance, sociability, ego-stroking, management of emotions, and accepting certain 'ideals' both within marriage and within male-female relations on the job. However, Van Leeuwen argues that, as with men and hegemonic masculinity, what women support as 'privileged' femininity is not what characterises most of them. Many women only use privileged females, whose behaviour they adopt as ideal, as their reference group. Otherwise, they only pay lip service to one creed, while they live by another.

Like men, therefore, women may endorse one type of femininity, marginalise those who do not comply, and yet at the same time, not live up to it themselves. Van Leeuwen goes on to argue that homophobia also plays a role in keeping women from contesting privileged femininity. For instance, women, who through actions and appearance do not seem to endorse privileged femininity, are often labelled 'lesbians'—the label frequently used to classify and disempower those who visibly contest male dominance, like feminists, women athletes, single women, fat and physically challenged women. This would partially explain why some women shy away from calling themselves 'feminists'.

Furthermore, Van Leeuwen asserts that human agency plays a part in the construction of femininity, as in the construction of masculinity. For this reason, a woman's choice to enact or endorse behaviours that are part of a privileged femininity will depend on a combination of personal, political, economic, religious and social factors, affecting the extent to which she may endorse or practise privileged femininity.

In summary, patriarchal masculinity, in a particular social context, constructs 'femininity' for women and what is 'normal' behaviour for them. In other words, a compliant femininity—privileged femininity, in this case, constructs the standard femininity for all

women, in which those who do not comply get marginalised. Homophobia is another away of policing possible threats to patriarchal femininity. It is one of the reasons why some women shy away from opposing oppressive and violent masculinity.

Van Leeuwen has mentioned the factors which contribute to women in general remaining trapped in or internalising hetero-patriarchal femininity. In our South African context, I would like to choose the example of virginity-testing in Kwa-Zulu Natal to illustrate how gender role stereotyping, religion, tradition, and culture contribute to this.

In Chapter Three, I examined how traditional patriarchal Zulu masculinity was constructed in relation to its opposite, femininity. If the dominant form of masculinity is characterised by aggression, dominance, assertiveness and control, the 'privileged' form of Zulu femininity is characterised by compliance, passivity, submissiveness and powerlessness. Traditional rituals and culturally-sanctioned and religious beliefs about gender roles combine to produce a powerful version of patriarchal femininity, internalised by many women as the very basis of their identities.

Prescribed gender roles, which reinforce the above kind of femininity in the media and elsewhere, result, according to Park, Fedler and Danghor (2000: 28), in domestic confinement to the home and a culture of compulsory heterosexuality, in which women have no role outside that of a wife and mother. The role of a housewife, which is unpaid and unvalued also results in women being unable to compete with men on an equal footing. Thus, these prescribed roles create female dependency and helplessness: this could, for instance, obstruct a woman's escape route from an abusive, violent relationship. The failure of the legal system to prosecute alleged rapists and batterers and to secure convictions gives the impression to men that their violence is acceptable. On the other hand, the message that women internalise is that their lives and safety are not worthy of protection. Consequently, many of the abuses women suffer remain invisible and unknown in the mainstream legal culture.

As demonstrated in chapter four, violence against women derives from an aggressive,

dominant masculinity, and as most institutionalised religions are structured along patriarchal lines, they replicate the gender role stereotype of women as passive homemakers, and men as 'heads' of the household and breadwinners. Some religions even endorse chastisement of a wife who does not know her rightful 'place'. Others, like Christianity and Islam, have 'modesty codes' which require segregation of women, which results in women being confined to the home, acting modestly and adhering to a restrictive dress code.

Gender-role stereotyping and religion are amongst many factors leading to women's internalisation of patriarchal femininity and the violence which this often bears. Because women's identities become so inextricably bound up with patriarchy (patriarchy would not have survived as long as it has, without the support of women), the example of virginity-testing in KwaZulu-Natal is one way in which some women could be said to collude actively with patriarchal masculinity (and 'privileged' femininity) against other women and children.

Before exploring the motive for virginity testing among the Zulu people, I shall briefly examine the origin and nature of virginity.

According to Sommers and Sommers (2000), the word 'virgin' (in English) first appeared in the 13th century and mostly referred to young women who had never known a man. Virginity, which can be associated with heterosexual men, gays and lesbians, is mainly associated with heterosexual girls for two reasons:

- traditionally, virginity is viewed from the hetero-patriarchal perspective, and a girl is considered to have lost her virginity only when a penis has penetrated her;
- on penetration, a girl's hymen is ruptured, which normally causes bleeding and this has long been considered a proof of intercourse.

The virginity of Mary, within the Christian tradition, is of key importance because, with the spread of Christianity throughout the Northern hemisphere, both Mary and virginity

came to be thought of as sacred. The impact of two thousand years of Christianity has left its mark on contemporary Western and African cultures. For this reason, even today, in many cultures influenced by Christianity, a great symbolic importance is placed on a girl's virginity.

In many cultures it is a serious crime for an unmarried woman to be found with a ruptured hymen. For instance, among some Australian tribes, an older woman punctures a young bride's hymen one week before her marriage. If the hymen is already broken, the woman is humiliated, tortured and even killed. According to Sommers and Sommers (2000), the practice is a tragic one considering that the hymen can be broken for reasons that have nothing to do with sex, such as inserting a tampon, masturbating or by strenuous exercise and stretching of the body.

Similar importance has been attached to virginity in traditional Zulu culture. The history and purpose of virginity-testing amongst the Zulu has recently been explored by Khuzwayo (2000).

Virginity-testing in the urban areas of KwaZulu-Natal began in the 1960s among the inhabitants of Kwa-Mashu, who were migrants from Cato Manor. They were women who used to visit their husbands working in industry and had knowledge of virginity-testing which they used to examine girls at home, as well as those girls who had followed parents to town for purposes of schooling. The mothers were scared, according to Khuzwayo, that the girls might lose their virginity in township life.

In those days, virginity testing did not only concentrate on the genitals, but also included certain parts of the girl's body. For instance, the body had to be firm, and this included stretch marks behind the knees. If she lost her virginity, her stretch marks looked bad and her cheeks lost their 'boldness'. The stomach of a virgin was tight, her buttocks not flabby and her breasts firm and taut. Khuzwayo adds that 'through *ukushikila* (pulling up the skirts and shaking the buttocks) old ladies could easily see whether a girl was a virgin or not' (2000: 44). The touching of genitals to check whether the hymen was still

intact, was a secondary option then.

Maintaining virginity until marriage was highly regarded, according to Khuzwayo, as part of the socially regulated norm. The motive behind virginity testing was to ensure that the girls' parents received the required head of cattle as *lobola* when the daughter married. It was also to make sure that the groom (and his parents) were satisfied with a virgin bride. For this reason, even on a wedding eve, virginity testing was performed to make sure the groom was not losing his cattle. Thus, a girl who was not found to be a virgin, brought shame to her family name, which in turn could easily lead to familial tensions and strife, because of such a dishonour.

In the light of this, it made sense then that girls' genitals were referred to as *inkomo kamama, ingquthu* or *umqholiso* (the eleventh cow). According to Khuzwayo, this further proved that maintaining virginity was not only about honouring the girl concerned, her family and the community, but the motive was for her parents to qualify for the eleventh cow. If the girl was deflowered, her parents would not get the eleventh cow. Here economic motives reinforce patriarchal attitudes.

Khuzwayo calls the period between 1979-1996, 'the period of silence', because virginity-testing lost its focus, and few individual girls were tested in Kwa-Mashu or in their rural areas during visits. Political activity, the liberation struggle, and severe economic pressures seemed to have led to the decline in virginity-testing. Poverty became a reality, because people could no longer plant crops, as land shrunk in the townships. As a result, many women were forced to seek employment and to augment their families' income. All these factors resulted in virginity-testing losing its importance. However, from 1997 onwards, there has been a resurgence of virginity testing, with changes and modifications, in response to time and context.

Forty years ago, it seems the motive for *ukuhlolwa kwezintombi* or virginity-testing was *lobolo* and the status that afforded the family. Today, according to Khuzwayo, the practice claims to guard against HIV / AIDS, as well as to gauge sexual abuses and

teenage pregnancies.

The person, who revived the practice of *ukuhlolwa kwezintombi* in 1997, under the regimental name of *Isivivane Samasiko*, was Andile Gumede, who believed that the revival of a Zulu custom, like virginity-testing, was a practical way of reclaiming a cultural practice, which could help solve modern problems. Gumede herself knew the practice from her grandmother who used to test her. According to Khuzwayo, while Gumede was working in the Magistrate Court in rural KwaZulu-Natal in 1993, she discovered that most teenagers, who came for identity documents, did not have fathers, but only mothers. That was her motive for the revival of the practice.

For Gumede, then, virginity-testing is meant *to praise* (my emphasis) the girl who is found to be a virgin, who will then be encouraged to keep her virginity. Thus, a certificate is given as a tangible sign of praise. Gumede also revived the practice under the banner of resurrected rituals, held in honour of Nomkhubulwane (the goddess of rain and fertility). During the festival, Nomkhubulwane was and is asked to show favour in the form of good crops, a bountiful harvest and more children, all signs of traditional Zulu wealth. The goddess is looked upon as a virgin and, as such, is closely related to young marriageable girls, as well as the fertility of humankind.

The revival of long-dormant rituals and virginity-testing associated with them is seen, especially by African intellectuals, as a feature of the African Renaissance, which broadly refers to the philosophy of reawakening and developing all that is essentially African. The African renaissance, according to Khuzwayo, has been especially associated with the current presidency of Mr Mbeki. Virginity-testing must therefore be viewed within the context of the current revival of black consciousness. According to testers, *ukuhlolwa kwezintombi* is one of those cultural practices which need to be revived in order to demonstrate one's commitment to one's cultural roots.

A further motive for virginity testing is to prevent rape and child sexual abuse. In South Africa, statistics show that child abuse is increasing and KwaZulu Natal is worst hit of

all provinces. Kwa-Mashu, the focus of Khuzwayo's study, is no exception to the problem and, as in other places, children seem to keep quiet about the rapes. For this reason, testers believe that *ukuhlolwa* or testing helps to reveal if the child had been raped. They can also note down the date of rape, in order to record the rape, while testing the victim.

Another motive for virginity-testing, according to Khuzwayo, is to prevent the spread of diseases like HIV/AIDS. Again, when it comes to the rate of HIV/AIDS infection, KwaZulu-Natal ranks very highly. Accordingly, testers believe that virginity testing protects the girls from both the contraction of HIV/AIDS and other diseases. Khuzwayo's informants are positive that virginity-testing is a culturally appropriate way of combatting social problems like teenage pregnancy. Due to the vast number of these pregnancies and of AIDS victims, it is believed that virginity-testing will restore what are viewed as lost cultural values, such as chastity before marriage.

Virginity-testing has became a very controversial subject among South Africans. I now explore some of the debates surrounding the subject: from academics, gender activists and ordinary people, involved in virginity-testing.

Some of the most valuable research on attitudes towards virginity-testing can be found in the (unpublished) Nomkhubulwane papers in the Alan Paton Centre at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg. Among the interviewees of Ngwane and Ndimande (1996), at Nomkhubulwane's festival near Mpendle were chiefs, the MEC for Environmental and Traditional Affairs, some male and female students and *sangomas*. Both the politician and the traditional chief were interviewed by Ngwane on the subject of virginity and virginity-testing:

1. To chief Gerald Sikhakhane of Bhilda area, 52 years old:

   What is your attitude towards female virginity?

   Female virginity is a good thing. It should be preserved. It is the preservation of virginity that will renew the importance of marriage. Now you can see, everyone

can get to sleep with anyone they like, without having to pay *lobola* and get married. If girls preserve their virginity, their male friends will be encouraged to marry them.

Male virginity, what do you say?

Obviously, when you have females or girls, who are virgins, you automatically have boys who are virgins.

2. To His Excellency Nyanga Ngubane, The MEC for Environmental and Traditional Affairs, KwaZulu-Natal:

Do you think the celebration of Nomkhubulwane would restore the value of male and female virginity?

Yes, besides that it would help boost the esteem of our people, particularly when it comes to their cultures and other indigenous ways of life. You see, if you happen to mention a return to our traditional ways of life, people just 'howl' at you. I surely hope that people, Christians and priests / pastors in particular, will witness this and change their attitude towards it, and begin to preach such practices and values.

What is your attitude towards male virginity?

As I pointed out earlier on, this has come to restore our culture; the restoration of female virginity will automatically mean the restoration of male virginity. When there are no female virgins, there will be no male virgins. Young women should first be vigilant and defend their virginity. As you know, a man is penial [sic] temptation to women. Therefore women have to be vigilant all the time.

3. Zethu Sosiba, female student, 22 years of age.

Sosiba wished that Nomkhubulwane's festival could be performed every year, as the festival would encourage males to marry girls with confidence, knowing that they have not been touched by men sexually. Sosiba felt good about the test and she is prepared to stay a virgin, until she gets married. She wanted her parents and her (future) husband to be proud of her, especially her mother who would benefit from her being a virgin—a

special cow will be directed straight at her mother, as a reward for a virgin daughter. Sosiba did not see any need for boys to be virgins 'because boys won't fall pregnant, so the discipline is with the girls, not boys'. (cf. Some of the positive responses to virginity-testing in Khuzwayo 2000).

4. Thembile Sosiba, female student, 13 years of age.

She just followed her friends to the festival, as her mother has never told her anything about Nomkhubulwane. She was also tested and found to be a virgin. She said she was shocked when she was told to lie down and lift up her legs and open her thighs so that they could check her vagina. She said that she did not gain anything and that next time she would not attend.

5. Kwenza Mazibuko, male student, 17 years of age.

He heard about the festival from the radio and that there would be people present,who would give counselling to boys and girls about how to make love before marriage. A young gentleman called them and told them about *ukusoma* (intercrural sex between the thighs). No one forced him to attend, but he thought he could benefit because his father is not open to him about sexual matters. He said he learned many things at the festival, especially about how to treat a girl-friend and how girls should behave in order to become good mothers. He wished the festival could be performed every year, so that he could also get a chance of marrying a virgin. He does not know how the community feels, but he feels good and believes that the festival will reduce the number of unwanted street kids.

6. Kwazikwakhe Memela, *sangoma*, 39 years of age.

She believed that the festival was good because it encouraged both boys and girls to look after their bodies, especially girls who simply get pregnant. Boys need a great deal of counselling, in order not to bully girls and sexually harass them. To her the ritual restores humanity.

According to the above interviewees, then, the restoration of virginity will renew the

value of marriage—the supreme patriarchal institution; it will boost the Zulu cultural image, as well as honouring one's parents and future spouses. Some interviewees also felt good about the test, as they claim it teaches boys and girls to look after their bodies. However, it seems that girls are the main focus of virginity testing and thus have to bear the burden of becoming virgins and learning how to be sexually disciplined, for the following reasons: men are a perpetual source of temptation to them, they are the ones that fall pregnant, virginity-testing helps curb unwanted pregnancies, and males will be encouraged to get married, if females are virgins.

According to Maharaj (1999: 93), the practice of virginity-testing of girls by teachers in KwaZulu-Natal is seen as a way of delaying the sexual debut of youth and the spread of HIV/AIDS. In turn, members of the KwaZulu-Natal Youth Council have welcomed the practice as a way of combatting AIDS and teaching youth responsibility, adding that the practice should not be conducted in such a way as to discriminate against women. However, the practice has raised concerns among gender activists, especially in reaction to press reports which depicted girls and boys being pressured into taking part in virginity-tests.

In response, the Gender Commission hosted a workshop in Durban, in order to facilitate discussions around the issue and to engage the Province in open discussion on the 'prevalent phenomenon' of virginity testing. Some gender activists, like Nise Malange (in Maharaj 1999), who has been doing research in rural areas, argues that the commercialisation of African culture has taken virginity-testing out of the private sphere, where it belongs, and publicised it. She also complains that girls tested and found to be virgins are exposed to abuse by men in the community, who believe that having sex with a virgin will cure them of AIDS. Women who aren't virgins are ostracised by the community and are referred to as *izeqamgwaqo* or prostitutes. Ostracised women are eventually forced into prostitution.

According to Malange, her conversation with women in Hlabisa suggests that the daughters of single mothers and widows are more prone to abuse and continual rape.

She thought it was important to investigate why a young girl was not a virgin, along with issues of rape, sexual abuse and incest. Rejecting virginity-testing, Malange also believed that older women, as custodians of traditions, can be used in more productive ways, such as training young girls how to preserve their virginity, and how to deal with sexual trauma and prostitution.

Further negative reactions to virginity-testing have been reported in the popular press. In the *City Press*, 2nd September 2000, under the heading ***Virginity tests in AIDS war***, University of Natal anthropologist, Leclerc-Madlala, has pointed out that the tests are gaining public support as an AIDS prevention strategy, especially in KwaZulu-Natal.

At the same time, virginity testing is said to promote abstinence from sex before marriage, unlike condom use. For that reason, it is promoted by many as a traditional African solution to the AIDS pandemic. However, Leclerc-Madlala has reacted negatively by saying that, 'in a country that bears the dubious distinction of having the world's highest statistics for rape, virginity testing is nonsensical as an AIDS prevention technique'. She adds that virginity-testing overlooks one half of the heterosexual equation and places sole responsibility for sexual behaviour on women (as the Nomkhubulwane responses above indicate), in a society where women have little control over their own bodies.

Leclerc-Madlala believes that virginity-testing is consistent with patriarchy's peculiar, but popular and consistent, way of dealing with problems in South Africa, which is to start by blaming the victim. In response, Andile Gumede (*City Press*), who has been a tester for twenty-five years, believes virginity-testing helps to prevent child abuse and the spread of AIDS. Another response comes from Beatrice Ngcobo, Commissioner for Gender Equality in KwaZulu-Natal (cf. *City Press*). According to her, virginity testing is a form of discrimination against women and a violation of their rights.

Instead of preventing the spread of HIV, virginity-testing, according to Leclerc-Madlala, exacerbates the spread of the disease because it entrenches gender inequality. Ngcobo

also agrees that virginity-testing reinforces gender inequality, because it reflects the attitude that women don't have ownership or control of their own bodies.

Similarly, among Khuzwayo's respondents (2000), there are those who welcome the practice as an aspect of Zulu of culture, while others believe it perpetuates gender inequality, precisely because it targets women as the bearers of moral responsibility and seems to ignore men, who are free to have extra-marital or multiple sexual partners. As far as HIV/AIDS is concerned, women are seen as the natural incubators of the disease and are blamed for its spread. Thus, virginity-testing reinforces an interlocking web of patriarchal attitudes which locate women's sexuality at the centre of blame for the AIDS epidemic. Furthermore, virginity tests are simply unreliable and unhygienic. Young and inexperienced testers simply do not command respect and authority among the community because they sometimes are bribed or coerced into 'passing' girls, who are not virgins, to make their parents happy.

Like many of those who condemn virginity testing as violating women's rights and bodily integrity, I believe the practice is part of the old patriarchal Zulu way of asserting male supremacy and control over women. According to Leclerc-Madlala (in Maharaj 1999), as a practice, virginity-testing remains emotionally and deeply ingrained in the thought pattern of Zulu patriarchy, which also directs the debate on tradition in this era of 'renaissance.' For this reason, in the name of 'culture', one can expect to hear a great deal of confused and convoluted arguments put forth to cloud our thinking, as we face the defenders of patriarchy. Instead of virginity-testing, Leclerc-Madlala urges that we need to work on conditions that make women's virginity a near impossibility in South Africa today—such as men's role in the problems related to sexuality and oppression of women.

As I have tried to show above, the hegemonic masculinity embedded in Zulu patriarchy determines which norms are to be followed in any social context. Femininity depends on masculinity for its existence. Because hegemonic masculinity is the dominant kind of masculinity, the dominant or privileged femininity internalises masculine expectations

and strategies, and practices them, while in turn, it polices other femininities to act according to patriarchal orders (as hegemonic masculinity polices other masculinities). It is not surprising then that, in socio-political and cultural contexts where hegemonic masculinity is challenged, there will be attempts by patriarchy to restore or reclaim the old values (sometimes in the name of *ubuntu*) by using 'privileged' femininity.

It would seem, then, that privileged femininity (represented by some educated and respected Zulu women), has internalised patriarchal masculinity to such an extent that the underlying and real reason for virginity testing—control of women's bodies and sexual reproduction by men—is thereby endorsed by women. The fact that virginity testing targets women and blames them for unwanted pregnancies, prostitution, STDs and ultimately, HIV/AIDS, reveals a centuries-old patriarchal bias and pharisaical attitude, which men still manage to get away with, precisely because this attitude is legitimised by some of the strongest supporters of patriarchy: women.

However, through virginity-testing, women continue to be the scapegoats for patriarchal sexual irresponsibility, while their role remains utterly minimised, when it comes to taking responsibility for their own lives, reproductive capacity and their bodies. In fact, in my opinion, virginity-testing is a form of (mental) rape of women, performed under the pretext of female 'consent', from the victims of centuries of hetero-patriarchal propaganda, demonstrated by their inaction and silence, or participation in their own oppression.

However, many black South African women have made real strides in fighting patriarchal culture, which has dominated and oppressed them for so long (e.g. see Forest 1998: 80). Battering and rape of women have become weapons men use to enforce patriarchal masculinity. Fortunately, some women have learned to turn their 'weakness' into courage and to fight for their sexual rights, as well as to expose male violent behaviour and double standards.

A powerful example of this is the Port Alfred Women's Organization (PAWO), who

organised a stay-away protesting against the fact that the police had failed to charge a man who had raped one of them. In reaction to this challenge to patriarchal masculinity and its 'passive' version of femininity, one of the outspoken members of PAWO was arrested, resulting in massive community support for her. As she herself said,

> A raped woman is trusted. If she says she was raped we support her. It does not matter who she is—even if she is a drunkard and she gets raped, the rape is still a crime against her. [...]. We do not blame a woman for rape. We do not say that the rape was the woman's fault. So women can talk about sexual harassment openly and they will get community support (Forest 1998: 81).

Confronted thus with this kind of patriarchal masculinity in which women are battered and raped, the women in the Eastern Cape decided to take matters into their own hands, by organising and protesting against the resultant injustices. They helped the community face the problem of rape by creating supportive structures for victims and for other needs in the community. In other words, POWA teaches women to be in control of their own bodies and lives (in contrast to virginity-testing). The organisation also helps restore women's self-esteem, thus helping to construct an alternative femininity, not characterised by silence and quiet acceptance of prevailing masculine codes, but by direct challenge of that which is at the very heart of hegemonic masculinity: control over women's bodies. Reclaiming the body from the virginity-testers, reclaiming the body from the rapists and abusers: such struggles indicate that cracks in the structures of patriarchal femininity have begun to appear. If that is so, they can appear in the dominant form of masculinity as well. The challenge has come from women and gay men: hence my examination of egalitarian masculinity in the following chapter.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE CONSTRUCTION OF EGALITARIAN MASCULINITY

Introduction

The examination of egalitarian masculinity in this chapter is a reaction to patriarchal masculinity and its version of femininity which, as shown in previous chapters, is expressed in violent ways in South Africa, especially against women and children. I am also influenced by scholars like Nimmons (2002) who argue that, unlike in patriarchy, gay men have developed a culture in which public violence is almost non-existent, which is notable when considering that violence is almost an exclusively male heterosexual phenomenon in South Africa. In this context, then, the egalitarian masculinity of gay men would seem to be more preferable to the dominant, hegemonic, patriarchal masculinity. Thus, the chapter examines the nature of egalitarian masculinity and what influence it can have on the former. I hope to clarify whether egalitarian masculinity ever existed in African social reality, or whether it is merely a creation of anti-patriarchal, modern feminist discourse.

In my previous research on same-sex relationships, half of the respondents mirrored the social attitudes of dominant and patriarchal practices in which there were clear gender roles of a 'man' and a 'woman,' with the man in control of the relationship and its social aspects (Rankhotha 1998). Egalitarian masculinity was a feature of the sexual life of other half of the respondents, in which both partners treated each other as 'men' and took turns in penetration. Although my focus is Africa, at this stage any examples from past historical situations and contexts that will shed light on egalitarian masculinity will be used, to find out why egalitarian masculinity emerged and what can be learned in South Africa today from equal sexual practices, which seem to underpin it. I shall first begin by distinguishing egalitarian masculinity from other forms.

In the context of homosexual relations in kinship-structured societies, Greenberg (1988: 25) distinguished three types of homosexuality, the transgenerational, the transgenderal and the egalitarian.

In the first type, partners are of disparate ages and the older partner plays a role defined as active or masculine, while the younger adopts a passive or feminine role. Often the relationships are believed to transfer a special charisma to the younger partner. For example, in Morocco, a saintly person can transmit his holiness or virtues to his sexual partner, as well as skills.

The mode of sexual intercourse, such as oral, anal, mutual masturbation and semen smearing, varies from tribe to tribe. In addition, the prescribed relationship between older and younger partners is invariably asymmetrical, with the older inseminating the younger and never the reverse. In his life time, each male can serve in both capacities, with the younger becoming a donor when he reaches the appropriate age. Both partners retain the features of masculine gender, as age is the main determinant in the sexual relationship.

Why one partner has to be younger is tackled differently by anthropologists. One explanation, among the Moroccans, is that pederasty can be linked to individual aspirations for status and achievement. In this case, cultural emphasis on growth is speculated to arise with 'big-man' type politics, in which one acquires status through achievement and individual effort. However, observations of other cultures do not confirm this view. For instance, Greenberg (1998:27) argues that there is little competition in New Guinea 'homosexual' cultures, where no one claims that his semen is superior to another man's. Similarly, among the Sambians, boys are encouraged to obtain semen from a number of different men, as the rituals strengthen men collectively, and therefore competition is not involved.

Other explanations link social structures with the social psychology of gender identity. According to anthropologists, male-initiation rites detach boys from their mothers. The

need for such a process seems to be vital among many tribes in New Guinea. For that purpose, husbands and wives do not sleep together, so as to be able to respond to neighbouring raids. Because marriage is clan-exogamous, wives come from 'enemy villages', where chronic warfare abounds due to territorial disputes or theft of livestock. As a result, men fear that, in event of a night-time raid, their wives will betray them by supporting their own relatives.

In the same vein, as women take care of small children, the arrangement reduces the chances of contact between father and son. Post-partum taboos reduce the contact even further. Among the Sambians, the husband and wife will not resume sexual intercourse, until about twenty months after the birth of a child. Wife avoidance means also avoiding the child, for practical reasons. As a result, fathers never see much of their sons even after that, as children mostly stay with their mothers. This identification provides the basis for gender identity later in life. Because of the sharpness of the sexual division of labour and male participation in war, boys' tendency to identify with their mothers poses a threat to the gender system.

Additionally, the threat is enhanced by marriage and residence patterns. For military purposes, men normally live patrilocally to strengthen solidarity among the fighting forces and keep boys together. Because women come from potentially hostile neighbouring villages, a boy's identification with his mother is regarded as identifying with a potential enemy which could weaken the village's defense. Thus, it is vital that boys be separated from their mothers and learn to identify with their fathers.

Accordingly, homosexual practices help accomplish this by establishing a lengthy and intense association with an older man, which is invested with erotic energy. The sexual ideology also lends support to the separation, as boys are taught that women are dangerously polluting, that heterosexual intercourse is harmful to men and that they should avoid women and minimise their sexual contact with them. In no way are traditional gender boundaries transgressed, for as Greenberg asserts, 'The belief that implanted semen secures their masculinity reassures them that they are in no danger

of relapsing toward femininity when they finally marry' (1988: 39).

In transgenderal homosexuality, partners are of different genders, meaning that one of the partners relinquishes the gender associated with his anatomical sex and adopts the gender associated with the opposite sex. Thus, the homosexual relationship is modelled on a heterosexual pattern. The best studied example is of the *berdache* Indians of North America.

In Africa as well, religious transgenderal homosexuality is reported for a number of tribes. For instance, among the Meru of Kenya, the *mugawe* is a powerful religious leader, who is regarded as a complement to male political leaders and must therefore exemplify feminine qualities by wearing women's clothes and by adopting their hair styles. Sometimes he marries another man. Similarly, among the Kwayama, a tribe of Angolan Bantu cultivators and herders, many diviners, augurers and diagnosers of illness wear women's clothing, do women's work and become second spouses to men whose other wives are female. Similarly, in Lesotho, Gay (1985), writes of the custom in girls' boarding schools of forming same-sex couples composed of a 'dominant' partner, called 'Mummy', and a 'passive' one, called a 'Baby'.

According to Greenberg (1988: 40), there are two reasons for the acceptance of the *berdaches* among the Indians and their homosexual involvement with other men. In comparison with men in New Guinean 'homosexual' cultures, whose masculinity is insecure because of exogamy, Indian male identities do not appear to have been so insecure. Even though fathers are sometimes away, hunting, fishing or raiding, they are sufficiently present to serve as a secure source of identification for most male children.

This therefore means that a man, who is identified as feminine, is not psychologically threatening to other men. This again contrasts with New Guinean men, who attempt to eliminate any sign of femininity in male rituals, implying that they would find a *berdache* too anxiety-provoking to tolerate. As Greenberg asserts: 'He would remind them of those layers of identity that they strive to suppress' (1988: 54).

In Greenberg's third example, egalitarian homosexuality, partners are socially similar; roles do not exist, are unstable or have no relevance to the partners' social traits. One partner can be active on one occasion and passive the next. At the same time, partners are likely to be of the same gender and age. However, even if they are not the same age, the difference does not determine sexual roles and within the relationship, partners treat each other as social equals.

According to Greenberg (1998:66), egalitarian homosexual relationships can begin at adulthood. For instance, Nandi women of Kenya have lesbian affairs for the first time as adults. Among the Akan women of the Gold Coast (Ghana), lesbian affairs are virtually universal and sometimes continue after marriage. At the same time, relationships of this sort take place among children and adolescents as well.

As observed, the relationships are casual and involve exploration, 'experimentation' or play, even though sometimes participants may take them seriously. Participating in the relationship also does not necessarily imply an exclusive homosexual orientation later in life. For example, shepherd boys of the Qement (Jewish peasants of Ethiopia) engage in anal and intercrural intercourse and stop when they get married.

Briefly, egalitarian homosexual relationships are sometimes found among adults and are not usually institutionalised. Where they exist, they are not publicly recognised, but they go on, individually, covertly, on a temporary basis and do not exclude heterosexual relationships or marriage. Neither do they have any implication for gender identity or for a social identity based on sexual orientation.

It would seem, then, depending on circumstances, sexual relationships amongst men did not always entail domination, hence the possibility of egalitarian masculinity emerging. Similarly, Greenberg observes that where lesbian relationships are not repressed in kinship structured societies and do not entail gender transformation, they tend more often to be egalitarian, the reason being that women are not socialised to compete or dominate for status.

Summarising the three types of homosexuality, then, it seems that transgenerational homosexuality is constructed on the basis of inequality between partners. The reasons leading to this sort of relationship are various: possibly, to ensure asymmetry in every way between partners in a culture where status and competition among men is culturally encouraged. Other reasons include social and psychological structures of gender identity through which boys are taught to identify with their fathers.

In transgenderal homosexuality, one partner transcends the gender associated with his physical anatomy and acquires that of the opposite sex. In that way, the relationship mirrors that of heterosexuals. This type takes place in cultures where masculine identity is not insecure. Thus, transgenderal homosexuality among the Indians of North America can be constructed and thrive on the basis of individualism and voluntary masculine identity—all of which feature in a non-stratified society in which it is easier to choose one's sexual identity.

Finally, in egalitarian homosexual relationships, partners are socially similar, their sexual roles overlap, and treat each other as equals. The relationship can begin at various levels of sexual need and maturity, during childhood, adolescence and adulthood. As the relationship is constructed on the basis of mutual agreement and need, partners are not exclusively homosexual. Similarly, egalitarian homosexuality is not publicly recognised, as it happens individually, on a temporary basis and does not imply any specific gender identification.

I shall employ the same egalitarian attributes like social similarity, sexual role overlap, and equal treatment of each other, in my exploration of African 'egalitarian' masculinity, bearing in mind that the concept has not always been known (if at all), that the characteristics applied are not watertight and that there will be variations in egalitarian relationships, which shall depend on different cultures and circumstances. At the same time, I shall be arguing for public recognition of the alternative masculinity generated in and by these relationships, in which hetero-patriarchal constructs of gender have very little significance.

Murray's work (1997:33) on homosexualities in Islamic cultures highlights role versatility in North African sexual practice, but these practices seem to reflect Greenberg's transgenerational and transgenderal categories, and seem to mirror hetero-patriarchal gender norms. However, Murray and Roscoe's (1998: 41-65) account of the Kenyan Kamau is interesting, as it seems to suggest the emergence of a more egalitarian masculinity. The account is worth relating in detail

According to Murray and Roscoe(1998: 41), Kamau, a twenty-five year old Kikuyu started watching men when he was eleven and, whenever he went to a public toilet, he would be interested in looking at their groins. When he was fourteen, he went to a government school, where he share beds with friends to keep warm in the cold nights. That's when he started being interested in men.

The first time they had sex, his friend, Momaui, came down to him so that they could keep warm, holding each other. Whilst in bed, Momaui would touch him sexually and Kamau liked it. That went on for sometime, until they both actively got involved as partners. However, even though Kamau had a girlfriend, he would not tell her that he was attracted more to men than women. Kamau also picked up other like-minded men who enjoyed sex with other men at 'cottages' in town, most of whom were married. One of the men, who was his neighbour, has become his secret sexual partner ever since.

In bed, 'he wanted to fuck me', according to Kamau. But Kamau declined. 'I'd never taken it. I'd always given it,' was the reply. Then the man sat on him and they both enjoyed sex. With other friends as well, Kamau had sexual relationships, in which they sucked and gave each other blow jobs. It was when he met a Ugandan man training to become a priest that he 'fell in love with a man for the first time' (1998: 51). However, the experience of falling in love with a priest shocked him and he went through a crisis. He asked the priest what he thought about what they were doing. The priest responded that

> it's only natural, because, it's not anything I chose to do, [...] I was doing it for pleasure, and it's a feeling within me that makes me lust for men and not to lust for anything

> else, and I couldn't control that, it was a power beyond my control (Murray and Roscoe1998: 51).

In Kamau's case, he and his partners enjoyed sex equally, reciprocating each others' sexual desires. This was not structured transgenerational or transgenderal homosexuality, but a same-sex relationship freely chosen between social equals. In the above-mentioned relationship, the words 'it's only natural', 'feeling within me' and 'power beyond my control' suggest an awareness of a homosexual identity, which has little to do with choice.

Whether an egalitarian masculinity emerged in these more equal same-sex relationships is difficult to gauge, but it seems more likely in relationships structured on equality and reciprocity. In the following section, I would like to explore the emergence of egalitarian masculinity in South Africa and how this could be employed as a strategy to challenge violent, dominant, patriarchal masculinity.

As in the case of Greenberg (1988), McLean and Ngcobo (1994) assert that the stamp of patriarchy on the lives of men involved in same-sex relationships has evolved three main ways of constructing gay masculinity in the townships of South Africa. However, because of historical differences and circumstances in which they emerged, I shall begin by examining each of the categories, then compare and contrast them with Greenberg's.

1. *Skesana*

In this type, 'a boy who likes to be fucked' (Mc Lean and Ngcobo1994: 164), acquires a feminine role. Many township boys who feel attracted to other boys and men adopt a *persona*, as a way of giving expression to their sexuality. According to McLean and Ngcobo (1994), *the skesana* feels compelled to adopt a *persona* which seems logical within the socially legitimised sexual polarities. Thus, there is something profoundly radical and courageous about a boy 'being a girl' in the face of the strong social taboos against betraying one's masculinity, as well as the culture that has women in a subordinate position. *Skesanas* assert their femininity with great determination as they themselves enforce their receptive role in sex. McLean and Ngcobo (1994: 164) argue

that, while society insists that women be passive, it is an irony that the *skesana* often has to dominate to assert the required 'passivity'. Similarly, the one who wants to be mother tends to dominate in the relationship. It would seem, then, that *skesanas* attain power by flirting with power.

Comparing the *skesana* and transgenerational homosexualities, then, it seems that age disparity in the latter was important, as the older was mainly a mentor in the sexual relationship, while in the former, sexual feeling for other men or boys brought the two parties together. In transgenerational relationships, sexual role-play had to reflect the same-age disparity, as one member had to be passive and the other dominant. However, in the *skesana* relationship, the adoption of the passive role was a personal choice. Finally, transgenerational masculinity was socially recognised and historical circumstances that led to its construction were based on preserving masculine sexual identity, while in the case of *skesana*, patriarchal masculine identity gets subverted and, thus, by departing from hetero-patriarchal norms, the latter constructs same-sex masculinity based on subversion, defiance and even bravery. Hence their dominant femininity.

In comparison with those involved in transgenderal homosexuality, they and the skesana both adopt opposite gender roles, sexual roles that do not correspond with their anatomy. For that reason, both are modelled along heterosexual norms. While transgenderal masculinity was recognised and had a role in society, the *skesana's* masculinity is uninstitutional and falls outside social norms. Similarly, in comparison with egalitarian masculinity, in the *skesana's* relationship, there was no sexual equality, even though age was irrelevant. However, in both cases, sexual relationships could start from childhood or adulthood and they could be casual or exploratory. Factors leading to this type of masculinity were not socially recognised either. However, the 'public' stance of the *skesana* and his defiance of the social norms set him apart from the hidden life of those involved in egalitarian masculinity.

2. *Injonga*

According to McLean and Ngcobo (1994: 165), an *injonga* is 'the one who makes proposals and does the fucking'. He is a boy or a man and he is the the active partner, who services the *skesana*. Many *skesanas* regard *injongas* as heterosexual. For that reason, an *injonga* will not openly acknowledge that he likes having sex with other men.

Comparing the *injonga* with transgenerational homosexuality, it seems that in both cases, sexual relations are asymmetrical. Both mirror social norms by displaying dominant sexual behaviour, even though the *injonga* is not socially recognised. Similarly, in comparison with transgenderal masculinity, both are modelled along heterosexual lines. At the same time, both could be said to be constructed in fear of the 'other,' as is the case with the *injonga*, who fears revealing his sexual identity publicly. However, depending on social circumstances, one could subvert gender as part of personal choice, as was the case with the Indians of North America. There is nothing egalitarian about the *injonga*.

3. *Imbube, mix masala*

In this type, *imbube* (or mix masala) is 'someone who goes 50-50' (McLean and Ngcobo1994: 167). Some *injongas* will confess that they also like to have sex with other men. However, they will not confess their desire openly, as it would be disastrous if *skesanas* were to find out, for the latter regard them as their 'natural' husbands. Because of their indecision, an *imbube* tends to be treated either with mild tolerance as someone who can't make up his mind, or with the same irritation as someone who wants to play *morabaraba* (a board game with bottle tops), but does not know the rules.

In comparison with the three categories above, an *imbube* resembles those involved in egalitarian homosexuality, in which one could either be passive or active, sexually. Their sexual roles, therefore, do not determine their sexual identity. Relationships are also casual, exploratory, and covert. The difference is that *imbubes* enjoy being sexually dominant, whereas in egalitarian relationships, mutual satisfaction seems to play a stronger role.

In summation, then, those who are involved in same-sex relationships have evolved three ways of constructing masculinity, which reflect different responses to patriarchal masculinity and compulsory heterosexuality. The three modes still remain with us today among those involved in same-sex relationships especially in South African townships, as demonstrated in the lives of *skesana*, *injonga* and *imbube*, and as borne out by my previous research (Rankhotha 1998).

Of the three types mentioned above, the *skesana* is the most interesting, as he/she subverts patriarchal norms and flirts with active, passive, masculine and feminine, destabilising these binaries and forging a truly egalitarian masculinity. Foucault's relational concept of power, which considers power as creative, rather than merely repressive, is of relevance here (1990: 92-95). The power of heteropatriarchal masculinity represses, but creates other masculinities, like that of the *skesana*, borrowing aspects of hegemonic masculinity and femininity. Alternative identities are here forged in the network of gender relations.

According to Rankhotha (1998), those constructing masculine identities, outside the boundaries of traditional patriarchal identities, related to each other as men who could compromise their traditional masculine identity, in order to meet each other's needs. As was the case in Greenberg's category of egalitarian homosexuality, the construction of an egalitarian masculinity among Zulu men involved in same-sex relationships was characterised by free choice, which forged their sexual identities, as is demonstrated in the following extracts from the responses:

Vusi (26): [A man] must look masculine outwardly, but also must exhibit femininity at heart.

Thulas (31): I am a lady-acting person and, that attracts straight men. I know they like someone like me: 'a lady with a dick'.

Mzo (47): They are brave in the way they live their life; they provide an alternative life-style, which some of us have always longed for.

Nkanyezi (34): Black gays are over-materialistic or is it a black thing; ... black gays are

not assertive, they lack political consciousness; they internalise homophobia too much.

In comparison with the other group that mirrored the hetero-patriarchal model, the group mentioned above departs from that traditional masculinity by constructing one that incorporates versions of femininity as well. They want to claim a masculinity for themselves outside the hetero-patriarchal framework, as Rankhotha shows:

> Theirs is a masculinity that is reactionary—reacting against hegemonic masculinity, for instance, Nkanyezi's comment that black gays are not assertive directly challenges one of the fundamental assumptions of hegemonic Zulu masculinity (e.g., assertiveness) (1998: 85).

The reaction to and the break with the past is vividly demonstrated by the life of a *skesana* (as shown in McLean and Ngcobo 1994), who defies the hetero-patriarchal norms of a passive femininity. The *skesana* has to dominate in order to assert 'her' own passivity; in this way, the *skesana* becomes a symbol of the subversion of hetero-patriarchal gender norms.

From the above discussion, it would seem that egalitarian masculinity is characterised by everything which heteropatriarchal masculinity does not embody: it arises out of flexible mutuality in a same-sex relationship, rather than out of a dominant, inflexible model of conquest and surrender, often the case in traditional African and Zulu constructs of a heterosexual relationship; it is characterised by a blurring of gender roles, rather than by a rigid set of gender boundaries; it subverts the model of dominance; it escapes the age-old binary traps, which have imprisoned our relationships for too long. But, what are the precise features of egalitarian masculinity which could provide an alternative to the dominant, violent form of patriarchal masculinity which has become such a problem in South Africa today? In the final chapter, I analyse the life-histories of a group of gay and heterosexual black men, purposefully to clarify what the features of egalitarian masculinity are and what could make this form of masculinity an attractive alternative to the heterosexist model prevailing currently.

CHAPTER EIGHT

BLACK MEN'S LIFE-HISTORIES

Introduction

In order to explore what the possible features of egalitarian masculinity involves in our South African context, I document and analyse the life-histories of a group of gay and heterosexual black men in the Midlands of KwaZulu-Natal.[7] The aim is to find out whether the presumed egalitarian masculinity of black men involved in same-sex relationships can be a possibility or an alternative to hetero-patriarchal masculinity in their context. Firstly, I begin by outlining the qualitative methodology which I employ in the study itself; secondly, I explain the actual process of collecting and analysing data and, finally, I examine and analyse the life-histories of the two groups, i.e. black gay men and black heterosexuals.

8.1 METHODOLOGY

My approach will differ from the positivist model, which looks for uniform and precise rules that organise the world. As in the experimental sciences, in the social sciences, positivists examine simplified models of the social world to see how variables, like gender and education, interact. As a result, they often ignore the complexity of life and its effects on human behaviour. Positivists also assume that knowledge is politically and socially neutral and that the same knowledge is achieved by following a precise, predetermined approach to gathering information. As Lincoln and Guba (in Rubin and Rubin 1995: 34) argue, positivists express what they learn through mathematical manipulation of predefined variables, mainly deduced from an existing academic theory. Because they believe that 'truth' can be measured with statistical precision, positivists

7. I am using 'gay' and 'heterosexual' categories here for convenience sake, in keeping with the understanding of the respondents.

tend to reduce complex information to summary measures, ignoring what is difficult to quantify, and eliminating subtleties.

In contrast, the interpretive methodology, which I shall employ, differs from the positivist approach (Rubin and Rubin 1995: 34). What is important to social scientists, they argue, is how people understand their worlds, and how they create and share meaning about their worlds. For this reason, social research is not about categorising and classifying, but it is to figure out what events mean, how people adapt to them, and how they view the world around them. Thus, interpretive social researchers emphasise the complexity of human life in which period and context are important. An interpretive researcher examines meanings that have been socially constructed and accepts that values and views differ from place to place in different contexts. Consequently, interpretive researchers try to elicit interviewees' views of their worlds, their work and events that they have experienced and how they, in turn, are shaped by their contexts.

In my opinion, the most significant researcher within the field of masculinity, using the interpretive model is Connell (1995), whose methodology, which I employ in my field-work, is to conduct life-history interviews, in which he demonstrates the intricate interplay of the body with social processes (an approach which has influenced my linking of egalitarian homosexual practice and egalitarian masculinity in the last chapter).

Connell believes that arguments for changes in masculinity often fall on deaf ears because of the assumption by mass culture that men cannot change. The general belief is that there is a fixed, innate masculinity that remains the same, despite every day social and cultural changes. It is no surprise then, to hear of 'real men', the 'natural man', and the 'deep masculine'. The idea is shared across a wide spectrum, including men's movements, Christian fundamentalists, politicians and the essentialist school of feminism.

'True' masculinity is thought to proceed from men's bodies and is inherent in a male body (Connell 1995: 45). The body is believed to drive and direct action, as is revealed

in aggression, and rape results from uncontrollable lust or an innate urge to violence. In the same way, the body is seen to set limits. For instance, the fact that men do not take care of infants, is regarded as 'natural'. In the same way, homosexuality would be regarded as unnatural and its existence confined to a perverse minority.

As these beliefs are a strategic part of modern gender ideology, according to Connell, '[s]o the first task of a social analysis is to arrive at an understanding of men's bodies and their relation to masculinity' (1995: 45). Hence the methodology that collects life-histories and explores how the body is implicated in the social and cultural network.

In order to achieve this, Connell (1995) employed life-history interviews, in which he extracted from his interviewees a narrative sequence of events, which he subjected to a rigorous analysis, attempting to show how his male subjects engaged or disengaged with hegemonic masculinity, in their accounts of who they were and how they viewed their sexuality. In gay men's narratives, he focussed especially on engagement with hegemonic masculinity, 'closure' of sexuality around relationships with men, and participation in the 'collective practices' of the gay community, as key stages in the forging of gay masculinities (1995:160).

The techniques of qualitative interviewing of the kind employed by Connell have been carefully researched (e.g. by Rubin and Rubin 1995). Of crucial importance is the relationship between interviewer and interviewee (which imposes obligations on both sides, such as respect for confidentiality, and freedom from judgmental moralising) and the accuracy of the write-up of the interview.

In comparison with other research models, qualitative interviewing emphasises the relativism of culture, the active participation of the interviewer, and the importance of giving an interviewee a voice. In this way, the qualitative approach reacts against the limits of the positivist research model, while it borrows generously from both the interpretive and feminist approaches.

The interpretive approach model recognises that meaning is not monolithic, that it emerges through interaction, and that it differs from one historical and cultural context to the other. According to Rubin and Rubin (1995: 38), the interpretive approach emphasises the importance of understanding the overall text of conversation. Above all, it emphasises the importance of seeing meaning in context. The approach accepts the importance of culture and the necessity of a relativistic approach in the interview.

A feminist model of critical social research suggests how to go about interviewing in ways that respect both parties in the conversation. As part of their broader critical approach to social research, feminists reject many of the masculinist political assumptions underlying positivism. They argue that positivist research distorts learning.

Thus, in order to understand the content of qualitative interviews, the qualitative model employs mostly the philosophy of the interpretive model. However, the techniques of interviewing have been strongly influenced by the feminist model. Like the interpretive social researchers, the preference is to let ideas emerge from the interviews, from the lives and examples of the interviewees, 'rather than to categorise answers initially according to pre-existing categories from an academic literature' (1995: 38).

In summary, my choice of qualitative methodology in this research is part of my commitment to the world-view in which knowledge is produced through people's experiences. For that reason, I choose to interview and analyse men's life-histories in order to understand how they construct different masculinities. Life-histories can tell about people's life passages and provide a window on social change. Unlike other models, such as positivism, which looks for uniformity and rules to organise the world, qualitative methodology is about finding out how people understand their worlds and how they create and share meaning about those worlds. The limitations of qualitative methodology are well-known (Terre Blanche and Durrheim 1999: 428-431), in particular the problems of reliability, generalisability and personal bias. As I am a black gay researcher, I am aware that my personal views and my standpoint with reference to gay politics may shape and prejudice my findings. Furthermore, I have not had enduring or

meaningful relationships with heterosexual men, in comparison to gay men, with whom I have had both academic and personal relationships for many years. Consequently, I may well view heterosexual constructs of masculinity through a biased gaze.

Finally, my approach is deeply influenced by Connell's methodology in which he uses life-histories and the physical body to denote an interplay of the body with social processes. In other words, Connell is committed to the world-view in which knowledge, as well as physical bodies, are constructed and affected by socio-economic, political and cultural changes.

8.2 METHOD OF COLLECTING AND ANALYSING DATA

I carried out fieldwork in the form of life-histories. To avoid delays in distributing a questionnaire, which I experienced in previous studies, I asked a few of my friends to spread the word. I also gave each of them a copy of the official letter (see Appendices) about my intentions. I also searched for possible interviewees. I gave them a basic message: I want to interview black men to find out what it means to be a black man in everyday life.

Generally, I identified men who are Zulu, could speak English well, and have lived in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands most of their lives. However, in situations where I found volunteers, who could not express themselves in English, I made use of an interpreter. All these interviewees had to sit with me at my table, while I typed out their stories. The language they used is left unchanged, except for some grammatical adjustments.

The average age of the respondents was twenty four for the gay men and twenty three for the heterosexual men. The profiles and the life-histories were examined individually for the sake of clarity. For this reason, there was no specific focus on common themes or traits in the lives of the respondents, such as in Christian's analysis (1994: 18-19). The main aim in his interviews was to trace life experiences under identifiable headings. In my case, I compared and contrasted themes between the two groups of men, as they

emerged during analysis.

Similarly, in analysing life-histories, I stayed within the bounds of Connell's categorisations of 'gay' and 'heterosexual' men (see **Introduction**), as they are known and accepted in the social and cultural context of the interviewees. However, I hoped that the life-histories would relate embodied experiences, as well as inform us about how prevailing discourses of sexuality shape what is known, and can be known, about 'men' and 'masculine identity', bearing in mind socio-economic and political contexts.

8.3 PROFILES AND ANALYSES OF LIFE-HISTORIES

A. Gay black men

(1) Life-history of Sam, 29 years old.

Sam is one of my many gay friends, who has lived in Pietermaritzburg for a long time. He participated in my previous study on black men involved in same-sex relationships in the Pietermaritzburg area. When I approached him again, he was more than willing to share his life-history:

> I was born in Transkei in 1973, in a rural place of Moriting, near Mt. Frere. My family is very poor. My father who passed away when I was very small, worked as a mine labourer. I also do not know my mother, from whom I was removed when I was three or four years old; I believe she still lives in Moriting. She has no profession and is just a house-wife.
>
> My uncle brought me up from the age of four because I was told that my parents could not cope. My uncle was a farm labourer who lived in Merrivale near Howick There were about three children before me, but I am not sure, perhaps more after me as well. I do not know. I left my mother too early in life and so I can't really say much about her.
>
> I started school in 1978, when I was six years of age in the same farm school, where I did sub A and B. Ashley, the school was called. I was very bright, to the degree that

they wanted to promote me, but my uncle felt that I was too young. My favourite subject was Afrikaans and I had a lovely time at school. Teachers loved me a lot as well as the other children, especially girls who used to like my company.

The next school was Thuthukani, a rural place where my uncle had bought a plot outside Howick. There I did my Std 1 and 2. I had a wonderful relationship with our only teacher, a woman. There was not much sporting activity at the school, but every now and then I found myself having to play soccer which I hated very much. I liked the company of girls because I felt uncomfortable among boys.

I did my matric at Njoloba High School in Howick in 1990. 1986 to 1990 were the most difficult years in my life, because I moved from my uncle's home to an Indian man's, where I would go to school in the morning and work for them (the Indian family) after school. Because of work, I had very little time to prepare for school every day. Although they promised to buy me a uniform, they never did. I was paying for shelter that they provided me. That's all. Fortunately, I did pass my matric, even though I did not get a university exemption. There was not much sporting activity here, as well, but I liked choral music, as well as gospel.

My experience of falling in love was when two girls wrote a love letter to another girl for me and the girl agreed to be my girl-friend. I was so terrified by this, but I still agreed to be her boy-friend. It was at that time that I realised I had to be a man and not part of the sisterhood. However, I managed to get out of the relationship later on, when she came to school with *sjambok* marks on her legs from her parents because she did not sleep at home. I used that to accuse her of being loose and dumped her. After all, that's how guys treated the girls who were my friends and I did the same.

My first sexual encounter was at the Indian man's house, where I slept in a garage with another Zulu boy older than me. We did not have enough blankets, so we slept with each other, and the boy forced me to have sex with him. I actually never liked the guy because the following day he would pretend that nothing happened to us. He was a former convict, looking ugly, and I think I hated him for those reasons as well. The owner of the place also used to fondle me when his wife was not there. But looking back at it now, I think I enjoyed the man's attention because I thought he loved me and that he understood my need for love.

When I was busy writing matric, the Indian chased me away and I found myself on the street for three days. Eventually, I went to the convent of Catholic Sisters in Howick to

> ask for accommodation. I stayed at their place until I finished writing. One day a Pentecostal Pastor came to ask the sisters to let me go and stay at his house. I do not know what he told them. I stayed with his family for a year. He started abusing me sexually. The reason why I eventually left was, firstly, because I felt guilty about our relationship. I feared that his wife might one day catch us. Secondly, they made me work so hard, doing house work and garden for no pay at all.
>
> From 1991, I started studying again with the help of my uncle. My first temporary job was in 1995. Then I got my permanent job that I lost in 2001. My first relationship was with a man when I lived in town [Pietermaritzburg]. It was a fair and equal relationship, except when he was drunk. I was the bread winner.
>
> I never played any sport nor got involved in any body activity. I love dancing and singing. I started drinking when I was working. But I never really get drunk. I am relatively a healthy person, who eats and drinks many things.
>
> I have always known that I was different from other boys, but it was in 1991 when I saw the Pride March on the TV in Johannesburg and I knew I was one of those. In fact, that's where I first heard of the word 'gay' and I immediately took the dictionary and checked it.
>
> Although I have never been an outlaw, I have had a clash with the police calling me a moffie. The incident happened on our way from a club. The police, who were patrolling the street, tried to stop some of us and harassed us. I must have 'performed' and asked what they were doing and one of them just shouted: Look at this moffie. I nearly opened a case against them, but other police at the charge office discouraged me from doing so.

Firstly, in a social context in which Sam was taken away from his parents, due to economic challenges facing the family, Sam's first bodily interaction with others (outside the girls' company), was that of sexual abuse and labour exploitation. In the patriarchal culture in which he grew up, women and children are rendered powerless and vulnerable and thus become a target for sex and labour slavery.

Secondly, Sam finds love and care among girls and women. They treat him like one of them. However, they also police his gender behaviour by forcing him to act like a man,

namely, to have a girl-friend. In that way, he discovers that he is not actually one of the girls. According to Connell (1995: 143), patriarchal culture has a simple interpretation of gay men or those who behave in a feminine fashion: they lack masculinity. The interpretation, according to Connell, is linked to the assumption, about the mystery of sexuality, that opposites attract. The belief is pervasive and creates a dilemma about masculinity for men like Sam, who are not sexually attracted to women.

Thus, while gender identity is a description of one's social experience, at the same time, one is forced to see hetero-patriarchal masculine identity as a normative ideal that is assured through the use of identifying categories like 'sex', 'sexuality', 'gender' and 'race' (cf. Petersen 1998: 24-5). Although the experience of falling in love with a girl is so terrifying for Sam, as he has never done it before, he does not shy away from the relationship. In fact he gets out of the relationship by using the acceptable Zulu masculine strategy, which he learned from his women friends' boy-friends, namely, that of accusing the girl of being loose and then dumping her.

Falling in love with a girl is Sam's first moment of engagement with hegemonic masculinity, through which he continues to negotiate his gender identity. According to Connell (1995: 146-7), boys' relationships with their mothers and sisters are the primary means of marking sexual differences as well as a source of alternatives to identification with the father. The conventional structure of the household, Connell argues, necessarily opens up a range of possibilities in emotional relations and in the construction of gender. In Sam's case, he identifies strongly with the girls in the absence (perhaps) of his own mother and father, but he is pushed out by the girls who want him to behave in a masculine manner.

In response, Sam endorses the conventional definition of masculinity and the established authority. He does so by displaying a hyper-masculine *persona*, namely, by accusing the girl-friend of being loose. Other examples of hyper-masculinity, according to Connell (1995: 147), include smoking, fighting and resisting the ruling class. At the same time, resistance can also mean doing something unmasculine, like dyeing one's

hair, wearing hipster clothes and painting one's nails.

Thirdly, Sam experiences being called a 'moffie' by a policeman—an identification he has not publicly learned to embrace, probably because he knows that it is not socially acceptable to come out as gay in his context. According to Connell (1995: 151), gayness is so reified that it has become easy for men to experience the adoption of the 'coming out' process. Because of the reification, it has become easy for the public to recognise gay men, which can be dangerous in homophobic societies. Sam is aware of the likely consequence. He regards the 'outing' by the policeman as a form of harassment and threatens to take legal action. However, the police, as the legal representatives, refuse to co-operate. I want to argue, therefore, that the policeman's discrimination should be seen as part of general sociol-political, legal and cultural discrimination and harassment against people, who do not conform to heterosexual and patriarchal masculinity.

It would seem, therefore, that the police action is a form of social policing. Connell argues that gay 'collective identification sustained in this milieu' (1995: 152) could be a means of social control and thus, ultimately, oppression. It would appear, then, that this is what the police are doing to Sam. If Sam wants to defy the political system he finds himself in, he acquires the word 'gay' which he hears from the media (referring to a political occasion) and identifies himself with those to whom it referred. Thus, he makes 'language the site of struggle over meaning, which is a prerequisite for political change' (Weedon 1987: 21).

Fourthly, contrary to when he was younger and sexually exploited by older men, when Sam starts working, he falls in love with another man with whom, he says, has an equal relationship. Although Sam is the only bread winner in the relationship, he is a (grown-up) mature man, who decides to choose a lover, with whom he constructs a masculinity that suits them both. They are both males, they love each other and for this reason, they construct a masculinity that departs from their patriarchal upbringing, which expects masculinity to be dominant, heterosexual, abusive and subjecting the other (i.e. the woman) to male control. The change in Sam's life occurs away from his rural or semi-

rural environment, to a less restrictive life in the city, where he can choose a different life-style without too many patriarchal challenges.

Through Sam's life-history, one glimpses the social setting in which he constructs his masculinity in line with his gay identity. In other words, one comes to understand how Sam understands his world and how he creates and shares that meaning through his body. Because of the life of poverty, in which he is loses his parents, where he is brought up by other people and in which he struggles for education, Sam is exposed to many dangerous situations through which he has to negotiate his masculine identity. Firstly, through lack of a stable home environment and parenting, he has to sleep at other people's places in which he experiences emotional and sexual abuse. This, I would argue, is one of the factors that leads to many children and even adults getting sexually violated in South Africa, which in turn, perpetuates the cycle of abuse, as we experience every day in the lives of women and children especially.

Secondly, the context in which younger people like Sam are sexually abused, demonstrates that masculinity is a socially learned behaviour in a particular social setting. The behaviour of the Indian and the pastor show that masculine identity is a social performance that can be constructed to suit desires and situations and that this identity is not always desirable. It would seem, then, that one can also choose an alternative to hetero-patriarchal masculinity, even as it remains the norm in our context. Thirdly, Sam's love and companionship which he finds among his female-counter-parts, help shape his own sexual identity—an identity confirmed by the 'acceptable' gender discourses of gender dichotomies. For instance, Sam accepts his gender identity by learning about 'gay' identity with which he identifies himself, as opposed to 'heterosexual' identity. This behaviour is demonstrated in his choice of another man for a lover.

Fourthly, lack or rejection of hetero-patriarchal support which Sam experiences in sexual abuse also results in his rejection of patriarchy and embracing an alternative masculinity. Again, it seems that sexual identity can be acquired and even rejected. In

other words, one's choice of one type of masculinity and rejecting the other can be an emotional and conscious choice in a particular setting, even if it is a forced identity (as in the case of heterosexuality). Hence Sam's rejection of traditional masculinity and embracing of the alternative 'gay' identity.

In summation, after having been separated from his biological mother, Sam found love and care from among his female counterparts and identified with them. This early life reaction was to set him on a different path of sexual identity, opposed to the traditional and normative masculinity in his culture. His interests and hobbies also tell the story; he does not get involved in sporting activities, but prefers choral music, he does not drink much and does not smoke as most boys do. Despite the forced identification with traditional hetero-patriarchal masculinity, Sam rejects the latter, and embraces an equal, loving and caring relationship with another man. This is in contradiction with the abusive and unequal sexual encounters of his childhood. However, although Sam felt different from other boys, his deliberate choice of the 'other' masculine image is decided upon, once he learns that it is a recognised sexual identity. The same process is evident in the life-histories of other gay men in the study.

(2) Life-history of Bongani, 25 years old

I met Bongani at the beginning of the year and we immediately became friends. He was waiting to graduate as a Bachelor of Commerce and was staying temporarily with a friend in the neighbouring flats. He came to visit quite often. However, a few weeks later, he disappeared and I thought he went home. When he eventually re-appeared, he arrived at my place one afternoon and told me he had just been released from Townhill Hospital, a mental institution. When I told him about my project, he was also happy to share his life-history.

> I was born in 1977 in the township of Madadeni, Northern KwaZulu-Natal. My mother is a nurse and my dad is unemployed at the moment. He was a pastor of the Lutheran Church. We are four boys in the family and the fifth one is a half-brother.

My relationship with my mother is great. She understands me very well. They say I look like her. My dad, we are not on very good terms since I was a kid; he never liked me. I am not sure of the reason. With the rest of the siblings, we love one another. They all want to follow in my footsteps. They think I am strong because I never show my emotions. If you're a man, you never show your emotions very easily. I do feel proud about that, but sometimes I feel they should know the real me–sensitive and emotional.

I began school at Melmoth Primary, Vryheid, when I was six years old. My grandmother was a principal of the school. I was a very quiet child and shy. It was a boys' school. I do not remember having many friends. Because my granny was there, the teachers tended to like me, but not necessarily because I was bright. We used to play soccer at school, although I did not like it. I was there until standard 5 (Grade 7).

I did my secondary school at Hermannsburg, next to Grey Town. I got involved in sports such as aerobics, athletics and ball-room dance. I loved ball-room dancing and I have many trophies from that. I loved these sports because there was life in them and I felt lively. I had my first girl-friend when I was in standard eight, which resulted in pregnancy. I was head boy at school and I had access to the keys to the class-room. I used the opportunity to get my girl-friend to have sex with me in the class room in between study-time. I wanted to show her that I was a man and prove it to my friends. After some weeks, she told me that her periods had stopped. I was so frightened. At the same time, I felt happy that I was a father. I had other girls as well. I think I was playful in high school.

After graduating from high school, I came to Pietermaritzburg and attended Damelin, where I got a diploma in public relations. I had one more girl-friend, but she did not want to have sex. After a year, I went to the University of Natal. There was not much physical activity throughout my university years. I was very passive. There was too much work and this was a time of self-discovery; discovering who I was sexually. I guess I already had sexual feelings for other guys from high school, but I thought it was a passing phase.

In my second year at university, I fell intensely in love with another guy. He came to visit me in my room, where we started kissing after a few minutes. While I was busy kissing, my mother surprised us. In shock, I told my crying mother that I was gay. After the incident, I went for counselling at the University Students' Counselling Centre. It was at that stage I decided to accept gay inclinations. But I was in denial, thinking that

> it was a passing phase. One of the reasons why I was confused and in denial was because I was abused by my father. I do know for a fact that he sexually abused me. I was six years old when he started, and this continued until I was in matric. Every morning, after my mother left for work, he would come into my room and tell me to come to his bed room. Then he would start by threatening me that he would kill me and everybody else if I ever told anybody about what he was doing to me. I told my mother the story when I was in matric, which led to my mother's eventual divorce from my father.
>
> I graduated in 2002. I came back to varsity to do a post-graduate diploma in commercial studies, but I had applied for a job, for which I decided to halt my studies and go back. However, I became ill and went to Townhill Mental Hospital, where I am still under observation. At the moment, I am looking for a job, and get on with my life.
>
> I find gay life very stressful. Maybe it's because of me; I am too demanding. I am looking for real love, not just sex. Around thirty-five years of age, I want to get married and have children. Otherwise, I would be too lonely. I also want to quit smoking and drinking. I only did these things in high school in order to fit in with my friends.
>
> When it comes to relationships, I can't say whether I am top or bottom. It depends on different people I get involved with. For me, being versatile is an ideal. However, I think deep-down, I hate the idea of another guy fucking me. Let alone touching me in public. In most cases, I want my space and time to be alone. You see, I think I am a difficult person.

Bongani is emotionally attached to his mother, both because he physically resembles her, but at the same time, because he could not identify with his father who 'never liked me.' Rather than treat him like a son, his father denied him the opportunity to become masculine and treats him like a little girl, because he looks like his mother and, perhaps, for identifying more with her. Confused by his father's action, Bongani does not react against hegemonic masculinity; instead, he adopts what he conceives to be a masculine personality, by concealing his emotions and vulnerability, a behaviour that is admired by his all-male siblings. According to Connell, 'hegemonic masculinity has a social authority, and is not easy to challenge openly' (1995: 156). Bongani is happy that his masculine behaviour is endorsed, but at the same time, he knows that he is only

wearing a *persona*—the real Bongani is shy and emotional. It would seem then that, in a patriarchal culture, this is the price one has to pay in order to fit in.

However, his shy personality shows in the all-male school in which he is passive and does not like playing football. He knows that playing with other boys will force bodily contact, as well as possible aggressive behaviour. Only in high school does he get involved in physical activity. It is his second engagement with hegemonic masculinity, in which he adopts the hyper-masculine activity of impregnating a girl. Like other boys locked in hetero-patriarchal masculinity, he has to prove his masculine ability. However, the act of impregnating becomes a source of confusion to him, for it frightens him, while at the same time he is happy to be a 'father'. Peer pressure is part of policing and controlling male behaviour in the hetero-patriarchal Zulu culture.

Bongani's move from home to university becomes a time for reflection and 'coming out'. According to Connell, the process of coming out in a homophobic world, necessitates the structure in which the 'life-history is experienced as migration, as a journey from another place to where one is now' (1995: 157). In this case, Connell wants to emphasise personal agency involved in this journey, namely, 'that the majority of these cases show a firm ego-development which allows separation without rejection,' as opposed to the traditional psychiatric belief in disordered relationships with parents.

According to Bongani, the experience of gay life is stressful. It would seem then, as Connell (1995: 152) argues, that 'homosexual identity formation' is not neat, as social psychologists would have us believe. Bongani has problems with sex being in the centre, as he thinks is the case in most gay relationships. In fact, as is the romanticised ideal in hetero-patriarchal masculinity, Bongani's preferred pattern of relating is a long-term, loving and committed relationship. His reaction could also be seen as a 'critique of the internal conformities of the gay world', according to Connell (1995: 152). I would argue that his desire to get married to a woman and have children also endorses the hetero-patriarchal myth of non-lasting gay relationships, a belief which Bongani internalises because he has not found 'true' love and happiness in same-sex sexual

experience.

Bongani also thinks of changing his life of drinking and smoking, which, according to Connell (1995: 158), may lead to a deliberate reform of (his masculinity) of the patriarchal type. In fact, despite the hetero-patriarchal hold on him, Bongani thinks that in a relationship, 'versatile' sexual practice and masculinity is the ideal. However, he still has to decide whether he can be 'fucked' by another man, in order for the ideal to be realised. It seems that bodily (or sexual) connectedness for Bongani is very important because as a 'man' he needs to have sexual enjoyment, reach climax and ejaculation, which in turn, ensures both emotional and sexual attachment, necessary in a relationship. For, as Connell argues,

> [T]he social process here cannot be captured by the notions of 'homosexual' identity' or a 'homosexual role.' As in the heterosexual cases [...], both sexual practice and sexual imagery concern gender bodies. What happens is the giving and receiving of bodily pleasures. The social process is conducted mainly through touch. Yet it is unquestionably a *social* process (emphasis retained), an interpersonal practice governed by the large-scale structure of gender (1995: 150).

Through his life-history, then, Bongani rejects traditional hetero-patriarchal masculinity, because of the way in which it is expressed by his father, namely, as violence and sexually abusive, as in the case of Sam. However, when forced to adopt hetero-patriarchy in his masculine identity, he protests by engaging a hyper-masculinity, as a result of which he impregnates a girl—socially acceptable behaviour in his context. Bongani's behaviour, as is the case in the next life-histories, mirrors acceptable social expectations of masculinity and its expression in society today. For instance, the choice of sexual violence against women and children (because of economic or cultural frustrations), as opposed to hijacking and shop-lifting, is socially acceptable. If one is caught shop-lifting, one is likely to end up in gaol, whereas, a man who rapes and batters his partner or wife is likely to get away, as he is seen as someone who is trying to put his house in order, especially in a culture that regards women and children as the 'property' of men. It would seem, therefore, that economic, political and cultural

disempowerment are not sufficient justification for men to abuse women. This is behaviour deliberately chosen, which can thus be changed in favour of more positive alternatives.

Similarly, the awareness and acceptance of 'gay' identity take place in a social context that accepts such categorisations. In our context, although same-sex practices are not socially acceptable, despite the constitutional rights of gay people, embracing 'gay' identity can be a powerful protest and rejection of hetero-patriarchal abuses, if done consciously, deliberately and with a political stance. At the same time, as in the case of Sam and Bongani, unacceptable or extreme masculine behaviour (as demonstrated in Chapter Four), like battering and sexually violating others, has adverse consequences for individuals and the community at large. It also seems that the choice of an alternative masculinity, like gayness, is not always a comfortable and positive experience for some people. Again, one realises the fluidity and volatility of gender identity. Gender identity, like everything else, needs to be re-examined and altered, according to sociol-economic and political circumstances.

In summation, then, in protest against the abusive and violent behaviour of his father, Bongani chooses the loving and caring mother and aligns himself with her. At university, he reflects more on his gender identity and decides that he is gay. He expresses his desire by kissing a man. At the same time, counselling helps him to make up his mind. It would seem, as in Sam's case, although the path towards choosing the 'other' masculinity is difficult, Bongani decides against the abusive and violent traditional masculinity of his father. Bongani also decides to redefine his acquired patriarchal masculinity, by deciding to stop smoking and drinking, and thus becoming responsible for his choices and experiences, even if it sometimes means clashing with socially endorsed values. Bongani's reaction to the aggressive, violent masculinity of 'straight' men makes his chosen departure from hetero-patriarchy such a powerful political statement.

(3) Life-history of Bafana, 28 years old

I have known Bafana for two years, as he was studying at Msunduzi College. Every now and then, when he is in town, he comes to visit me. That is how I got hold of him for an interview.

I was born in Swayimani Location, near Wartburg. My father used to work for the Toyota Company, but now he is a pensioner. My mother is a house-wife. We are six children in my mother's house and in the senior family (polygamous), there are four; all together we are ten children. My mother is my favourite parent because she is kind to all of us. My father is too aggressive, and when we make mistakes, he shouts at us.

I began school at Brodmore primary school, on the Catholic Church Farm. I did grade one up to grade six. I was not very bright at school. I was involved in athletics because I did not like soccer. From there, I went to Mbava Primary School, where I did grade seven. I continued doing athletics. I was not involved in any relationships with girls. I was not interested in them. As part of peer pressure, I smoked a little bit, like my friends, but it never became habit for me. I like the way someone holds a cigar when smoking.

After completing grade seven, I went to Masijabule High. I went on with athletics, as well as volley-ball. At high school I began drinking a little. I still did not get involved in sexual relationships. I once tried to propose love to another boy, but he told me that he couldn't get involved with me as he had a girl-friend. I was not hurt by what he said, because I wanted it to appear like a joke, even though I was serious. There was another guy I used to have sex with outside my school. Once I referred to him as 'my wife' and he retorted, 'No, you are my wife.' From there on, we used to have sex between the legs. I do not think he was aware of gay things, but I was, and I enjoyed sex with him so much. But it was only when I heard about the word 'gay' on the radio that I decided I was gay as well.

When I finished grade twelve, I came to Pietermaritzburg to work at Willowton Oil and Cake Mills. While I was working there, I had a male lover at Kwa-Mpumuza. He was a friend of my nephew, whom he used to smoke with. I was like his girl-friend, but I bought him cigarettes because I was working.

> The following year, I came to study at Msunduzi College, doing Assistant Management . At the college, I also saw another gay guy who used to sit among girls. I also used to go to Alexandra Park to find gays, as well as to hear more about being gay.
>
> After study, I am at home, busy looking for a job. I have a fifteen year-old lover. I also help my ailing mother with cooking and baking and the general house-keeping. However, my parents do not complain about my doing women's work because they know nothing about gays. On Sundays I go to Church.

Bafana's polygamous family epitomises the ideal version of traditional Zulu masculinity, in which a man flaunts his wealth and prestige by having large property: many wives, children and livestock of which he is the supreme master. Part of being in control, as demonstrated by Bafana's father, is to adopt aggressive and domineering behaviour. However, in contrast, Bafana marks his masculine identity by aligning himself with his mother, as his primary means of establishing sexual difference in his conventional home. Bafana's choice of his mother for her caring behaviour, as opposed to his father's aggressive behaviour, it would seem, is the first sign of his departure from traditional masculinity and his embrace of a more gentle and nurturing masculinity. According to Connell, '[...] the relationships through which gender is constructed contain other possibilities. Families are not fixed, mechanical systems. They are fields of relationships within which gender is negotiated' (1995: 146). Bafana thus negotiates his identity within the field of relationships within his family.

Whilst growing up, he does not remember being ever sexually attracted to girls, as was the case with Sam. However, there is nothing that suggests 'abnormality' in his behaviour, family and in his masculinisation. Gender conformity, according to Connell (1995: 146), includes wearing pants, playing football and learning sexual differences. At the same time, outside the family circle, Bafana would have been 'inducted into the usual sex-typed peer group', receiving sexual education and being subjected to the gender dichotomies structuring patriarchal institutions. It would seem, therefore, that by not getting involved with girls, Bafana is clearly, emotionally and sexually, departing from the hetero-patriarchal culture, where a man has to flaunt his masculinity by conquering

women and having sex. However, while Bafana is constructing another masculinity, born out of the same social context, he has to learn to be traditionally masculine.

His first attempt to get a male lover immediately confirms his fears that he is treading on the wrong path. The other boy informs him that he has a girl-friend, meaning that Bafana also ought to do the same and be a 'man'. According to Connell (1995: 106), the insistently masculinised public culture of peer groups, schools, workplaces, sporting organisations, and the media, sustains conventional definitions of gender. However, the very insistence of masculinity can be a reason for the young people to use gender to resist the established authority. Firstly, Bafana resists traditional peer pressure by smoking and drinking 'a little', as he says. Unlike other males, he will not make drinking and smoking behaviour part of his masculine image. Similarly, holding a cigar, for Bafana, is more of a fad, than a sign of masculinity.

Secondly, proposing love to another man marks a major leap away from traditional masculine behaviour in his context. According to tradition, a woman is supposed to be man's love object as well as his sexual object. However, Bafana's choice departs from that ideal, as he is not interested in girls. Although to a certain degree, Bafana manages to resist the established gender dichotomy in his context, again he does so within the acceptable patriarchal bounds of 'feminine' and 'masculine' roles. He establishes a sexual relationship with another boy on condition that they play the 'girl-friend/boy-friend' or 'wife/husband' roles, even as his same-sex behaviour violates the hetero-patriarchal ideal in his culture. At this stage in Bafana's sexual relationship with a man, gender roles are being negotiated, as the quarrel seems to suggest: 'You are my wife. No. You are my wife'. As in many gay relationships, who is the 'top' and 'bottom' are subject to negotiation and are not taken for granted, as they often are in a traditional hetero-patriarchal context, where there is a clear dichotomy of who plays the 'woman' and 'man'.

Having sex between the legs represents further departure from the traditional masculine ideal of conquering, penetrating and impregnating a woman. Unlike in ideal traditional

masculinity, in which males often deny sexual responsibility, in Bafana's case, sex is an aspect of physical and emotional satisfaction, rather than a strategy for conquest and boosting one's masculine image. After the sexual experience with the boy, Bafana is led to the discovery of his gay identity. However, as happened to Sam, it was not until he heard the word 'gay' on the radio that he decided he was also gay. As in Sam's case, then, language is not only the site of possible social forms in which political consequences can be defined and contested, but also 'the place where our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity, is constructed' (Weedon 1987: 21). According to Weedon, language is constructed and socially produced. Like language, the 'gender dynamic' is both powerful, complex, contradictory and certainly not monolithic. For instance, although in his sexual relationships, Bafana performs the 'feminine' role, however, as a working partner, he buys the lover cigarettes. This is another contradiction which does not belong to the patriarchal ideal, for a 'man' is supposed to work and provide for the partner and the family. It would seem again that their relationship is a departure from the traditional masculine ideal and embraces a more egalitarian kind of masculinity.

Similarly, 'decisive inflection,' in the case of Bafana, follows from a sexual experience. He experiences his body through interaction and the same bodily contact has a direct influence on his sexual conduct. As a result of this, he has male 'lovers' and goes out to find and belong to others professing the same identity. It would seem in this instance that 'gayness' is reified by Bafana; discovering this identity is equal to finding the 'truth' about oneself. Bafana seems to come to an easy conclusion that, because he enjoyed sex with another man, therefore, he must be gay. Hence, his decision to go out and be part of the larger gay community. His discovery of another 'gay' man who sits among girls, validates his own experience.

Although Bafana continues to blur gender differences at home by helping his mother, he does it in the context of helping his ailing mother and not as 'gay.' Only in that sense, will his role remain acceptable and he is commended for it. If he 'came out' to his parents, it would be a different story altogether. Again, Bafana knows that he cannot hope to challenge patriarchal masculinity and get away with it, especially in the 'family'

context—the cradle of Zulu traditional masculinity. However, he is able in his context, to redefine traditional masculine expectations by performing 'other' masculine roles. This flexibility, again, marks the break with the rigid hetero-patriarchal gender role ideal. Similarly, on Sundays, he goes to Church, something unmasculine, as on Sundays most men take the liberty to go out smoking, drinking and chasing after girls, if not sleeping late and feeling sick from *babelaas*. Bafana's behaviour is thus associated with women and children, for it contradicts his traditional masculine expectations.

Thus, in summary: coming from a family that epitomises traditional Zulu masculinity and hetero-patriarchal culture, Bafana departs from his social context and masculine ideal in fundamental ways. By aligning himself with his mother's values as opposed to his father's, Bafana deliberately rejects patriarchal and traditional values; he prefers same-sex encounters as opposed to 'normal' heterosexual relationships; he resists peer pressure by smoking and drinking a little; he negotiates his gender identity with his lovers, as opposed to rigid and set gender roles in hetero-patriarchy and he has sex between the legs, as opposed to the penetrative and risky sex in heterosexual relationships. By so doing, Bafana borrows from the largely discarded traditional Zulu heterosexual practice of safe sex. He also expresses both his physical and emotional pleasure in male-male sexual encounters, unheard of in his traditional masculine setting. Once he learns about gay identity as a known and recognised form of identity, he embraces and adopts it as his. As a 'girl-friend' in some same-sex relationships, he does not mind supporting his 'man,' marking another departure from the heterosexual culture of his context. He also tries to redefine his masculine role within his context, in order to help his ailing mother; again, contradicting his hetero-patriarchal culture. At the same time, he aligns himself with women and children by going to Church.

It would seem then that Bafana has decided on his 'other' sexual identity as a man, he acts on his decision by seeking ways and behaviours that will sustain his masculine choices. For instance, he goes to the Park where gays meet, to learn from them as well as to get a sense of belonging, thus confirming and validating his identity. The motive for Bafana's action, as demonstrated from the beginning, is to find an alternative to his

father's masculine behaviour, which is oppressive for him, confining, exclusive, abusive, aggressive and violent. Instead, he wants to redefine his masculinity by becoming like his mother: caring, gentle, emotionally and physically expressive, inclusive of women and children. In trying to forge a new masculinity, then, Bafana has to strike a balance between the acceptable traditional practice and the risk-taking involved in negotiating a new identity.

(4) Life-history of Vincent, 21 years old

I found Vincent at the Alexandra Park one afternoon, waiting for a friend from school. He was in town visiting his mother who works at the Kismet Hotel. I have known him for almost two years now and, when I asked him for an interview, he was willing to help.

> I was born in Sweetwaters, near Pietermaritzburg in 1981. My father is a mechanic, while my mother works as a receptionist at Kismet Hotel in Town. In family, we are three children and I am the eldest. My mother is my favourite parent and she is always there for me.
>
> I went to school at Imbubu Primary School, where I did grade one up to grade four. At school, I used to run and liked choral music. I like singing a lot. I was good in Physical science and maths. My teachers used to like me at school because I was clever. At that age, I liked girls and had girl-friends with whom I had sex, but I was young. Besides school, I was an altar boy in the Catholic Church.
>
> When I left Imbubu, I went to Northdale Primary School where I did grade five. I played cricket and I also swam. I also had lovers, both girls and boys. My first lover was Sanele. I met him at the taxi rank, when I was waiting to go to school. I was fourteen years old. At first he could not really say what he wanted. He asked for my phone number and in the evening he phoned me and told me that for a long time he loved me. At first I told him he was crazy, but, with persistence, we eventually became lovers. But we became only 'lovers'; nothing happened between the two of us. I was not sure what was happening. Meanwhile, I continued with my girl-friends.
>
> As I do not smoke or drink, I play gospel music and stay at home. I also teach catechism to children preparing for first communion.

CS RANKHOTHA

> In 1999, when I was in standard nine at ML Sultan, a friend told me about gays. He might have been gay, but I am not sure. He told me it was 'nice', but I was not interested. However, I started wondering if I was gay: why should my friends be interested in telling me gay stories? My first gay sexual experience was with an Indian guy; I met him at school. After school, he was going to his flat and he invited me and, there for the first time, we had sex. However, I am not sure whether I am gay or not. But now I know that I love men's company more.
>
> At the moment, I am home. I help my mother with house duties, like cleaning and cooking. Both parents admire what I do, as they often comment: 'When you take a wife one day, if she is lazy, you will not suffer'.
>
> When it comes to gender issues, I think both father and mother should be equal in the family, as children become scared of a dominant and controlling father.

Vincent's gender identification starts with his mother, who is his favourite parent. Apart from that, he grows up and constructs his masculinity along conventional, hetero-patriarchal principles, determined by his experience. Besides, as the first male in the family and heir, as in the case of Bongani, he must exhibit exemplary, traditional masculine behaviour. For instance, he gets involved in sports like athletics, cricket and swimming. He also has many girl-friends, as expected of a 'normal' young man. At the same time, however, he gets involved in the Church and becomes an altar-boy, in which he has to dress up in flowing robes and look like a drag queen—dress which is not in tune with traditional Zulu masculinity.

However, his childhood masculinity is challenged in secondary school age, when other boys tell him they love him. Rather than backing off, Vincent decides to be passively involved, he becomes a 'lover' and nothing further. He is still confused. His hetero-patriarchal masculinity is further challenged. According to Connell (1995: 151), unlike gender sexuality which is acquired through a gradual process, the social identity of being gay can be imposed on people, whether they like it or not. The imposition of homosexuality on Vincent happens when he is involved with girls. At this stage, like other fellow interviewees, Vincent gets involved with both boys and girls, in what could be

called bisexual behaviour. Although he first protests, he then agrees to be a lover. Thus, it would seem that homosexual identity formation is never a neat process, as was the case in Vincent's and Bongani's lives as well.

As in the case of Bafana, Vincent is confused about his sexual identity, but he decides to settle for men, after the sexual experience with a school mate. It must be noted again, that to have a man as Vincent's first love marks an important departure from the traditional behaviour expected of a Zulu man. Similarly, as in the case of Bongani, both have had sex with women, but neither claims to be bisexual. Why? In their context, sexual preference is also dichotomised and, therefore, bisexuality is not a regular feature of sexual discourse in the traditional Zulu context, in which bisexuality is likened to being *inkokoni*-like or confused in identity. *Inkonkoni* is a wildebeest in Zulu, an animal that is seen to resemble both a horse and a buffalo (cf. Rankhotha 1998: 88). At the same time, it seems that, although one's first sexual experience may be with girls, thus adhering to compulsory heterosexuality, heterosexual identity is not necessarily realised in long-term practice. For, as Connell suggests: 'Young people's sexuality is a field of possibilities, not a deterministic system' (1995: 149).

As far as entertainment is concerned, it is clear that Vincent's behaviour departs radically from the traditional masculine expectations of a Zulu man: he is sober, drinks little, prefers his home to clubs and other places of fun, and he likes singing and gospel music. The preference for home is realised in his love for domestic work, where he helps his mother. Because his parents do not know that he is gay, his preference does not translate into 'lack of masculinity' but is reinterpreted as a preparation for 'normal' heterosexual masculinity in marriage.

In Vincent's case, his experimentation with both sexes persists until his teenage years, when he is compelled to decide on his sexual orientation, namely being gay. As is the case with Bafana, Vincent is exposed to different possibilities from which to choose his masculine identity from an early age. His friends, who were probably gay, tell him that it is worth trying out, for it is 'nice'. 'Nice' in this context, as an experience, could be

contrasted with the imposition of hetero-patriarchal experience, which so far has been experienced as aggressive, abusive and exclusionist by some gay men. For that reason, it would make sense that, after his gay experience, Vincent decides to acquire the identity. So far a pattern seems to have emerged amongst the gay men; they hear about gay identity, or they have a gay experience first hand, as a result of which they decide to engage with and adopt this identity. I shall thus argue that in order for their heterosexual counter-parts to change and embrace an alternative masculine identity, they too need to be given an alternative.

In brief, although Vincent is tossed back and forth in polymorphous sexual experiences, as he tries to construct the acceptable traditional Zulu masculinity, his departure from that culture is inevitable. His mother provides the model for his future masculine image, while other interests like singing, going to Church, and the rejection of smoking and drinking point to the 'other' masculinity. His 'un-masculine' behaviour reaches a climax in his having sex with another man. His adoption and embracing of non-hetero-patriarchal masculinity is further realised in his taking on of domestic chores and helping his mother. In that way, he redefines his masculine role and challenges the status quo. Thus, rather than go out and hunt for work, like most males will do, Vincent decides to make his home the place for forging his 'new' and 'other' masculine identity. Vincent's attitude and practice differs sharply from that of his 'heterosexual' counter-parts, who feel a man's place is outside the home, searching for salaried employment at all costs in order to support the home , which is the domain of women and children. As in the case of Bafana, through his behaviour, Vincent aligns himself with women and children in his context.

(5) Life-history of Nkululeko, 16 years old

One afternoon, a tall and slender dark boy arrived at my door. I was busy at my computer and I shouted for him to come in. It was Nkululeko, with his graceful walk. He told me that someone saw him in town a few days back and told him I was looking for gay interviewees. His English is very good for a township boy. I am grateful to him for

relating his life-history.

I was born in the town of Pietermaritzburg, 1986. My mother is a house-wife and my step-father is a taxi-driver. My mother divorced our biological father when I was small. We are two boys and I am the first-born. I feel closer to my mother because she buys me things when I need them, but we tend to fight with my step-father.

I began school in Westgate, Grange Primary where I did grade one. Then I moved to Ridge Primary School in Scottsville. I did grade two and, again, moved to Prince Alfred School in town, where I did grade three up to grade four. After grade four, I moved to Bisley, where I did grade five up to grade seven. The reason why I moved from school to school was because my grand-father was not keen on paying my fees. So at the end of a year, I would move again to avoid paying fees I owed.

Presently, I study at Newton High where I did my standard six and seven. When I was young I used to be very naughty. For instance, my friend (called Siyathemba) and I used to peep at boys in the toilets, tease them, then run away. They used to call us *izitabani* (queers), but we did not care. We knew we were gay, so we did not really care. I have always known that I was different from other boys because I felt like a girl and I used to like the company of girls and not boys. I also used to like to steal my mother's wedding dress and pose in it for my friends.

I never liked sports, but I want to be a fashion-designer one day and design women's clothes. I do not drink or smoke. Although some of my gay friends want me to smoke because they think it's fun, I think it wastes money and is bad for my health.

I had my first boy-friend last year. He is a seventeen year old white chap from Bisley. We met at Newton High. We started at Bisley Primary school, but I refused his proposal because my other friends, who were girls, said to me that he was gay. So, I agreed with them, because I was hiding my sexual identity from them. They also insisted that I fall in love with girls. However, at Newton, we had a crush on each other and we decided to fall in love. I visited him at his home and we had sex in his room.

I am comfortable with being gay, even though I do not want everybody to know. For instance, I have a woman friend whose boy-friend hates me because I am gay. However, he teases me and says he wants to have sex with me. I think he is actually serious because of the way he looks at me. I think he tells his girl-friend that he 'hates'

> me because he does not want her to know the truth. But if one day he wants to have sex with me, I will agree, because he is quite cute. Besides, I shall win him over by sleeping with him and get him to stop 'hating' me.

Like all the others, Nkululeko identifies with his mother. His step-father is not interested in inducting him into a masculine role, as he is not his biological son. For that reason, Nkululeko grows up sexually identifying with his mother and girls in school. The boys treat him as sexually 'other' because of his behaviour. His reaction to the hegemonic masculine challenge is a bold one, he does not seem to mind going against the mainstream culture at a very young age. The experience of being gay came quite early in his life, as he describes it as 'something he has always known'. He acted on the feeling by occasionally stealing his mother's clothing and, of course, by spending all his time in female company. It would seem, therefore, that already at a very young age, Nkululeko has searched for his masculine identity outside traditional Zulu masculinity.

In other words, unlike the other four before him, Nkululeko seems to have experienced 'gay' identity quite early in life. He saw himself as different from the other boys and they, in return, labelled him as *isitabani* or a girl-boy. Seeing himself as different from other boys reaches a climax in his stealing and wearing his mother's dress. The possibility of being something other than masculine is experienced as being feminine, and so Nkululeko thinks of himself as female. Similarly, like the other 'gays' in their context, the gay alternative is structured in terms of femininity, as an opposite to traditional masculinity and its accompanying compulsory heterosexuality.

As in Sam's case, the girls police Nkululeko's gender identity and remind him that he is not actually one of them. They ask him to reject homosexual advances and to fall in love with the opposite sex. Contrary to his defiant reaction, when boys accused him of being gay, in this case, he seems to endorse hetero-patriarchal masculinity by hiding his 'true' identity from them and pretends that he is straight. Does this reaction confirm Connell's (1995: 156) argument that hetero-patriarchal masculinity is not always easy to challenge? Perhaps so. It seems that he also fears 'coming out' as gay. Besides being well entrenched in social, cultural and political institutions, hetero-patriarchal

culture is policed through many ways, including violence and abuse of those that are seen as un-masculine, like women and children. For that reason, Nkululeko has to be shrewd in his pursuit of 'other' masculine identities without suffering the consequences.

In his pursuit of non-heterosexual and non-patriarchal masculinity, Nkululeko rejects sports, as well as smoking and drinking. In most cases, these activities are rough and violent, and are sometimes used to demonstrate extreme masculine behaviour or super-machismo. Instead, he wants to be a fashion-designer for females, a practice that also goes against the specific patriarchal image in his culture.

It also seems that Nkululeko likes 'flirting' with power, for he knows that homosexual 'hatred' from some men, as in the case of his female friend's lover, is a strategy to hide their real feelings. For example, the lover tries to convince the girl-friend that he hates Nkululeko, while we know that the opposite is true. In his case, therefore, Nkululeko will try to win the man over by having sex with him. Nkululeko knows that he can't win by hating back, so why not try and use his charm and seduce the man into bed! In this case as well, bodily pleasure is going to be used to redirect sexual experience and attitude, as happened in the case of Bafana and Vincent. Nkululeko's behaviour contrasts sharply, here, with the hetero-patriarchal homophobic behaviour and hatred of the 'other' in many societies. As opposed to hating back, Nkululeko converts the violent image of masculinity into a more gentle and loving identity. The man's behaviour seems a typical example of internalised homophobia or a strategy to hide his same-sex desires.

In summation, then, one could capture Nkululeko's departure from hetero-patriarchal masculinity in his context thus: from early age, he demonstrates that he feels different from other boys by wearing female clothes. He also hates the rough and tumble of male activities, such as sports, as well as toxic substances like smoking and drinking. For him they waste money and endanger health. Instead, he wants to design women's clothing, an interest that seems to develop out of love for and, perhaps, appreciation for women's loving and caring behaviour, with which he closely identifies. Although he is not aware of why he feels 'gay' from very early on, Nkululeko demonstrates a clear understanding

of his choice as a gay person, for he is ready to suffer the usual patriarchal taunts or homophobia in the construction of his gender identity.

Generally, all the gay men interviewed identified with their mothers to a large extent, as a sign and rejection of the abusive, dominant, aggressive and violent masculinity of other men; their interests and hobbies such as love of music, singing and non-physical activity, as well as the rejection of drinking and smoking, attest to their departure from the traditional masculine identity in their culture. Instead, these men embrace the loving, caring and mutually reciprocated relationships outside the usual hetero-patriarchal context; they fall in love, have sex and express their emotions in same-sex relationships. In this way, they oppose their cultural upbringing in which women and children are the objects of male sexual satisfaction and, of course, aggression and violence, if they resist. For them, sex roles are negotiated and rigidly traditional gender dichotomies are subverted in their relationships.

Their choice of same-sex, egalitarian masculinity is conscious, in defiance of abusive, aggressive and violent traditional masculine behaviour. For this reason, they are ready to suffer patriarchal homophobic taunts for what they believe in. The choice of intercrural sex, of taking on domestic chores, blurring gender differences, and the courage to redefine their masculine behaviour, marks a giant step forward to challenge the patriarchal *status quo*. It would seem that one of the most important lessons from the 'gay' men's egalitarian masculinity is, firstly, that women and children are not sexual objects, instead, their loving and caring attitude is worth emulating in our South African context. Secondly, a loving and caring sexual relationship in which one can express physical and emotional love cannot be restricted to gender identity and, thirdly, abusing of one's body through physical activity, abuse of substances, aggression and violence, is inherently opposed to their new masculine identity. I now relate and analyse the life-histories of the five heterosexual black men interviewed.

B. **Heterosexual black men**

(1) Life-history of Kwanele, 16 years old

Kwanele was brought to me by his friend, S'bu, who is at the moment homeless, but has become a good friend of mine. Kwanele is a student at Carter High School. During the interview, I discovered that he was not only fluent in English, but mature as well.

> I was born in 1985 in Richmond, near Pietermaritzburg. My mother works at a clothing store, Ackerman's, as a Chief Executive Officer and my father works at the Department of Home Affairs. We are three in the family: me, my sister and a baby brother.
>
> I am closer to my father in the family. Whenever I am in some sort of trouble, my father helps me out. But more so because I was his only son.
>
> I started school at Bisley Park Primary School. I was not particularly seen as bright. Although I was mostly quiet, I also had a big social circle. My teachers did like me, but others said that I had an attitude problem because I had mood swings. I played cricket and soccer, with cricket being my favourite. I was also in my school's debating team which I was good at.
>
> From there, I came to Carter High school, next to Grey's Hospital. I still stand out in sports and debates. My first relationship was with a beautiful girl called Zotha. We had many things in common, such as dreams and ambitions. I had another lover with whom I had sex. I could not have sex with Zotha because she wanted to leave that until marriage, but with the other one, we had to prove love for each other. Besides, my friends were having sex at a young age, so I also wanted to experiment. But I later felt guilty for using the girl.
>
> For entertainment, I drink hard stuff and sometimes, beer. I get drunk a lot and the following day I experience head-ache and some back-ache. However, my friends taught me that to cure *babelaas*, I should take a raw egg, mix it with milk and two teaspoons of brown sugar and drink. That should help.
>
> When it comes to gender-relationships, I feel a man must be in control, otherwise

> there is chaos in the house. I am more like my father who is old-fashioned and wants boys and girls to behave accordingly. My mother is different; she wants both boys and girls to be independent.

Kwanele's parents, both father and mother, hold high-paying jobs, which is certainly unusual for a woman in patriarchal Zulu culture. Similarly, unlike the gay interviewees, Kwanele clearly identifies with his father, the reason perhaps being that he was the only son, until the youngest boy was born. This could also be the reason why his father spoils him. He also stays within the boundaries of hegemonic masculinity, as he is very involved in sports, like soccer and cricket. He also has a large social circle of other male friends, with whom he competes in debates. His beliefs concerning gender relationships are shaped by these traditional attitudes. As a man, he believes he must be masculine, and that women have a specific role and function as well. Thus he is going to run his family as the dominant partner, like his father.

Secondly, compulsory heterosexuality is also the main feature in Kwanele's life-story. He engages in casual sex at the age of fourteen, because other boys of his age are also doing it. He also parties a great deal and gets drunk with his friends. As Connell (1995: 108) observed in his own interviews, the practice of masculinity among peers looks like 'a ritualised relationship in which an acceptable masculinity is sustained'. However, in Kwanele's case, while he can use women to prove his own masculinity, he is also aware that he is merely using the girl for selfish motives, as he comments that he 'felt guilty for using the girl'.

In Kwanele's case, then, he is forced to fit into a heterosexual life-style, where he has to experiment with sex early, as well as with drinking. He is also taught how to deal with his recalcitrant body, which will not endure toxic substances which he consumes as a feature of proving his masculinity. His compulsory heterosexual masculinity, in turn, leads him to abuse girls of his age for sex. Above all, he is forced to believe that masculinity is about control: of one's body first, then his family or homestead in which all have to play their respective gender roles. Otherwise there is disorder. In other words, lack of alternatives, lead him to a forced and very ordered life-style, governed by

rules and behaviour patterns that are often detrimental to his health. This behaviour among 'heterosexual' men is typical of Zulu patriarchal masculinity, in which abuse of onself and the abuse of women and children have become the norm.

(2) Life-history of Sithembiso, 22 years old

I met Sithembiso who had come to visit with my friends. They were waiting for me outside on the road and they had a bottle of brandy in their possession, drunk half-way. He was already drunk. I decided to approach him about the interview the following day when he returned sober. Through talking to him, I found him to be a pleasant and mature person, who also speaks English well. When I told him about my project, he was interested in sharing his life-history.

> I was born in 1980 in Ashdown Township in Pietermaritzburg. My father was a soldier and my mother was a teacher, but they are both retired. I am their only child. My mother is a former nun and my father a former religious brother. I am closer to my mother, as my father was not always around and they divorced when I was young.
>
> I began school at Eastwood Primary School up to standard five. I was one of the brightest children at school. I used to play rugby and table-tennis. I was a very sociable child and had many friends. I was never involved in love with girls, but I started smoking in primary school. I stayed with a Coloured family, in which almost everybody smoked. I was influenced by them.
>
> From there, I went to Ixopo High School, where I did my standard six and seven. It was a boarding school. I swam and also played basket ball. At Ixopo High, I started drinking. It was the only way we could entertain ourselves. We used to sneak out and go to drink in town, by stealing keys and making copies out of them. In standard seven, I had a girl-friend. In fact before I went to Ixopo, I had a girl-friend at home, who was older than me. I got her at a shebeen. Although she was older, I proposed love to her because I wanted her for the night. She already had a two-year old baby when I met her. I did have sex with her at my place and that was my first experience. I enjoyed the experience and it ended there. When I came back from Ixopo, she wanted more sex, but I already had an age-mate for a lover from school and so I refused to go back to her.

Because of drinking and smoking, many of us were expelled from Ixopo High. From there, I went to Bronkerspruit, a farm place in what is now Mpumalanga Province. I went there to continue my studies, staying with relatives. At school, they treated me with respect, seeing that I was from the city. I even got a girl-friend who was the mayor's daughter. I had sex with her many times. In fact, I wanted her to have my baby, but she used contraception. I never played any sport, except smoking and drinking. I scandalised other students there by drinking and smoking in public.

After standard seven, I went to Vereeniging to do my standard eight. It was an Assemblies of God School. Although we were not allowed to smoke, I continued to break the rules by smoking and drinking. I finished my standard eight and then moved to Boksburg, because the other school was too expensive. However, half- way through school, I dropped out because I was tired of schooling. The people whom I stayed with were born-again Christians and their rules were too much for me. From there, I went to Soweto to stay with my aunt. Now, Soweto is the hub of crime and care-free life. I started smoking and drinking heavily, using drugs like ecstasy, cocaine, mandrax and dagga. I was involved with many *tsotsi* guys.

We used to roam about at night looking for money. We frequented the railway stations and robbed working people of their money. We used to frighten them with a gun. However, we never raped women; we just wanted money. Whenever I sniffed cocaine, I used to shiver and blood would come out of my nose, but I knew I would not die, because my aunt used traditional herbs to purge me of the drugs. My aunt never scolded me for being involved in that kind of life because I brought money home. I almost got arrested at some stage. I was carrying mandrax, about forty tablets. The police were patrolling, they searched me, but before they got to me, the packet fell down, when I took my hand out of the pocket, and they did not see it. That was how I survived.

I came back to Pietermaritzburg in 2001. At home, I am trying to complete my matric. I hope I shall finish because there is not any form of pressure on me. I still do drink and smoke, but I am no longer on drugs. I also have one girl-friend and we use a condom while having sex. I want to get involved with a woman who works, so that we can have a baby together. I am still a student, so I cannot afford getting married. I want to see if I am not impotent now. If so, my parents have to do something about it (before they die). When I was a child, I got involved in an accident in which my genitals had to be operated on. So I fear I might not have children. I desperately want to have my own

> children, especially since I am the only child.
>
> Concerning gender issues, I feel a man has to be in control of the family and be in charge of its security, like buying a house and a car for his partner. If equality becomes the issue and a woman has her own way, that might lead to divorce.

Like many children, Sithembiso or S'the [for short], begins by sexually identifying himself with his mother, to whom he is emotionally attached, in the absence of his father. He engages well with hegemonic masculinity by playing sports and smoking. He also starts drinking at school to offset boredom in a boarding school. This act sets him on a long path of rebellion and engagement with protest masculinity. It seems that school is not an empowering experience for S'the. In fact, as Connell has observed, 'school authority is an alien power and [he starts to define his] masculinity against it' (1995: 100). As a result of smoking and drinking, S'the is thrown out of school. However, despite the experience, he does not change his behaviour. As a result, he jumps from one school to the other, and school authorities and, of course, religion, stand in his way. He eventually drops out of school without a certificate.

According to Connell (1995: 114-5), protest masculinity is a marginalised masculinity, which borrows from hegemonic masculinity and translates it in the context of poverty. In other words, protest masculinity can be complicit, in a sense that one distances oneself from direct power display, while accepting privileges that come with the male sex (or masculine gender). S'the's masculine project, like S'bu's, is shaped by class deprivation. They have constructed gender in the context of poverty, with little cultural or economic resources. For instance, robbing working people of their money is S'the's display of resentment and protest masculinity, which he also displays by protesting against convention, especially religion.

When it comes to relationships with women, he is manipulative and uses them for his own gain. He wanted his first girl-friend only for a 'bedwarmer' and when he finds a younger girl, he ditches the older one, in case his friends laugh at him. Above all, he wants to prove his masculinity by impregnating them. In a married relationship, he

believes a man must be in charge. According to him, equality in a relationship means loss of control on the part of a man. It would seem that, although S'the is distanced from hegemonic masculinity, he is not engaged in resistance, rather, his masculinity is complicit in the collective project of patriarchy. Whilst talking to him later about his attitude towards gays, he retorted: 'We do not have that shit in my community!' In other words, his protest masculinity is more complicit, rather than resistance to the hetero-patriarchal cause.

S'the's masculinity is the supreme example of Zulu patriarchal culture today. Like Kwanele, S'the is taught to smoke and drink quite early in life, to use women for fun and as receptacles for his sperm, or even making babies he longs for. He is expelled from school for bad behaviour. He becomes a *tsotsi* in Soweto, robs people of money and gets involved in drug use and trafficking, which becomes endorsed as part of his masculine role of winning bread for his poor aunt. Even now, on his return to 'normal' life, he still smokes and drinks heavily. He also wants to use a working woman to have a baby and prove his masculinity. In other words, his journey into masculinity, like that of many men, is geared towards the external satisfaction of what he perceives as manhood: he has to be seen to be acting like a man, even if it is done at the expense of his own feelings and, ultimately, his life. Thus, the kind of masculine domination he constructs, expresses itself as transforming all relationships and human activity into objective, instrumental and dehumanised forms. For this reason, be believes a woman has to be controlled, providing she is given the basic 'needs' of life, like a home and a car.

It would seem, then, that from early childhood, S'the is bound to construct the kind of masculinity that contributes to violence, aggression and abuse of oneself and others in South Africa today. Although both his parents are religious, he rebels against that kind of upbringing by drinking and smoking; he stays away from class for the sake of conforming to the pressures of a masculine image; he sees women as sexual objects for reproduction, and gets expelled from school. Then he embarks on an ego-trip in order to enhance his masculinity away from home; to command the respect of other

pupils at his new school, he smokes and drinks in public; he also falls in love with the mayor's daughter, whom he wants to impregnate to prove his manhood. The ultimate in the quest for masculinity happens when he leaves for Soweto, where he gets involved in gangsterism, robbery, armed robbery (the gun is a symbol of masculinity for him), drug abuse, trafficking and lawlessness. His aunt also endorses his masculine behaviour by not scolding him; he has to win bread for the household even at his young age. Thus, the quest for an extreme variety of hetero-patriarchal masculinity is won at a great price—abusing himself, others, being aggressive and violent, and perhaps ending up in gaol, if not paying the ultimate price: death.

(3) Life-history of Sibusiso, 24 years old

He is the same S'bu, who brought his friends to me. Although he has standard eight, he cannot speak English well. However, he was keen to share his story with me. I asked Bongani (one of the interviewees) to interpret for me.

> I was born in 1977, in Imbali Township, in Pietermaritzburg. My father died in 1997 and my mother works as a cleaner at the local University Campus.
>
> We are four children; three boys and a girl. I am the last born. I am closer to my mother because I stay with her, unlike others who stay in their respective schools as boarders.
>
> I attended my first school at Lungisile Primary School in Imbali. I was a bright child and teachers liked me. I had many friends at school, mostly boys. We played soccer and athletics. I was good at football. I had a girl-friend and I remember that I loved the girl, but my friends also had girl-friends. It was my first sexual experience with her. I did grade one up to grade four.
>
> From there I went to Zamazulu Primary School where I did grade five to grade seven. I was good in Maths and Zulu. I also continued playing the same sports. When I was in grade seven, I started smoking and drinking. I also had a girl-friend and I drank beer: hard stuff and cigarettes, but no drugs. I had one friend who smoked dagga, but I was more interested in gym and playing soccer. Dagga makes the body feel tired and

> so I would not mix sports with it. I had a girl-friend from school that I met during a school match. I talked to the girl after the match and so we became lovers. One day, I asked her to visit me at home, where we had sex
>
> I finished grade seven and then went to Zibukezulu Secondary School. I stopped school at standard eight or grade ten. From there I went to Hammersdale to continue with grade ten. There was violence at Zibukezulu. While I was busy studying, my father passed away, so I could not continue. After dropping out of school, I found myself on the streets of Pietermaritzburg.
>
> The first time I came into contact with the police was when I and my friends broke into a store and stole clothes. Then I was tried and went to prison for three months. Life was hard in prison. However, I was never (sexually) abused in prison because I had a strong friend from the same township. He was there for a long time, so he knew a lot about life in prison. I was introduced to smoking dagga, so that I could forget the problems of being a prisoner.
>
> I also joined a gang called the 26s, because the 26s were full of home boys, who would protect me. One has to belong to one group or the other (like the 28s).. I have tattoos on my body to show that I was a member of the 26s.
>
> I had another sexual encounter with a man after a drink, when I left prison. After drinking, we went home together and had sex. I enjoyed the experience, although it was for the first time after a long time. When I was a child, I had sex with a younger boy, who had come to watch a game on the TV and stayed on until late.
>
> I do not think I am gay though, because I hope to get married and have children one day. I prefer to have sex with guys here (on the street), because they do not ask for money, like women would. I think the wife and husband should be equal, because both make mistakes and, therefore, no-one should be above the other.

S'bu, like Kwanele, has engaged with traditional heterosexual masculinity. He gets involved in traditional male activities, such as sports and getting a girl-friend. Smoking and drinking form part of peer pressure and having to fit in with the patriarchal male collective. However, his love of sports is at odds with indulging in drink and drugs, like *dagga*. Although he does have intercrural sex with his younger friend, that does not

adapt his masculinity in a culture that does not entertain 'other' gender behaviours.

The loss of a father and family breadwinner drives S'bu to engage with protest masculinity. He leaves home in search of work and ends up on the streets of Pietermaritzburg. He gets arrested for robbery and finds himself having to contend with the hard life of gaol and gangsterism. Although he is rather passive in his participation, because of the protection he gets from his home boys, he has to join one gangster group to display his allegiance and commitment. The symbol of allegiance is a tattoo on his body: ***life of a nigga*** (sic).

His release from gaol is not a bed of roses. Economic hardship has already taught him that patriarchal masculinity is not an option. This time, he decides to try out homosexuality with other street-boys or willing gays. He knows that women won't be interested in a *skhotheni* (who does not have money) living on the streets. Unlike Sithembiso, who adopts a complicit masculinity, S'bu seems to be completely at odds with patriarchy, as shown in his sexual choice of men. In the gay profiles, it seems that sexual encounters with other men confirmed their *feeling* (my emphasis) of being gay. However, S'bu does not seem to think that he is gay, despite his homosexual experiences. According to him, homosexuality is a temporary response to socio-economic circumstances, until he gets married.

In his choice of friends, S'bu defies patriarchal masculinity, as he is usually found among like-minded men: the *amaqenge* (or boy-friends) of 'feminine' gays. However, his protest against patriarchal masculinity will probably come to an end, if he decides to get a girl-friend and gets married. Commenting on protest masculinity and observing the behaviour of those who engage with that kind of masculinity, Connell has this to say:

> Protest masculinity looks like a cul-de-sac. It is certainly an active response to the situation, and it builds on a working-class masculine ethic of solidarity. But this is a solidarity that divides the group from the rest of the working class. The loss of the economic basis of masculine authority leads to a divided consciousness—egalitarianism and misogyny—not to a new political direction (1995:

117-8).

Similarly, it would seem that, while patriarchal masculinity is the norm in S'bu's social context, however, in lived experience, socio-economic and political circumstances can also play a significant role in each and every individual's sexual behaviour or choice.

Although in the early stages of engaging with patriarchal masculinity S'bu is able to avoid hard-core masculine behaviour, such as abusing drugs in favour of bodily health, that stops, when his father dies. He could easily have stayed at home and have done domestic work to help his working mother, like some of the gay men. However, the pressures of masculinity compel him to find work, even though he has no qualifications. He knows that, but he thinks he has to prove his worth as a man. Firstly, he clashes with the law, gets arrested and ends up in gaol, where he has to prove his manhood even harder, because gaol is a symbol of the reassertion of masculine dominance. Secondly, he finds himself having to contend with drugs which he has tried to avoid, in order to deal with loneliness and the tedium of life behind bars. Besides, gaol is not the place where he can hope to find love and friendship. In fact, in order to cope, he has to force his body to get used to brutalising substances and gang life, for which he has to scar his body with tattoos in order to fit in. Disciplining his body in this painful way illustrates how powerful the influence of pressure from men in groups, requiring conformity to a ,masculine ideal, can be.

For someone like S'bu, then, same-sex encounters are a convenient way of dealing with economic problems, rather than being recognised as an opportunity to embrace a new life-style and learning to be emotionally and sexually open to other men, or explore femininity. Unlike the gay men, who could choose to redefine their masculinity in their economic and historical context, as long as S'bu thinks and acts 'straight', and remains confined by the dictates of patriarchal masculinity, he has no choice, but to stay on the streets, get involved in casual same-sex relationship and hope one day that he will fulfil his traditional masculine role of getting married and raising a family. It would seem therefore that, although masculinity is inextricably linked to power, especially within

traditionally hetero-patriarchal communities, it is very fragile, because it does not really exist in the sense we are led to think it exists, as biological reality or something inherent to men. It exists as an ideology and a scripted behaviour, within gendered relationships. As S'bu's life-history reveals, it would be hard to expect S'bu in the future to be a loving, caring and nurturing parent, who would contribute to a non-violent South Africa, in which women and children are protected and cared for.

(4) Life-history of S'bu, 26 years old

I met S'bu outside the shop downstairs, next to where I live. He was with a friend, Bongani and, they came to buy drink 'to quench thirst', as he told me. I have known S'bu for almost two years now, as he likes frequenting Alexandra Park. I explained to them that I needed interviewees for my project in which I needed life-stories. Without wasting time, they decided to come upstairs with me. Our conversation was mostly in the form of question and answer:

> Me: I already know a little about your life-story already from our previous conversation. How is life since then?
>
> S'bu: Nothing has changed much, Sylvester, as you can see I am still on the street, hoping to get 'something'.
>
> Me: Okay. Where do you live now?
>
> S'bu: I am very happy, I am staying with my mother now in Imbali, Unit 15. She eventually separated with my step-father and I moved back home with her. We both do not work. That is why I have to hunt every day.
>
> Me: Your father passed away when you were small, eh?
>
> S'bu: No. He divorced my mother and I was taken by father's parents, who educated me until I finished matric in 1997. I have been looking for a job ever since then. When my grand-parents died, I tried to go back to my mother, but the step-father did not like me. So I had to stay with other relatives, who were willing to take me into their homes

every now and then. That was when I started drinking heavily and found myself on the street. I think I was not coping well with life. But I do not smoke.

At school, I was a runner---as you can see, I have an athletic body. I had one girl-friend, but not for long. I think life was too hard for me; I was thinking most of the time. Although I had sex with other girls, it was not serious, but children playing. I have had sex with many gay guys as well, but it was more of them approaching me for sex, especially after drinking. But out there (in the park), I do it for money. I do not have a job, you see.

Me: Wouldn't you then say you're gay, S'bu?

S'bu: (Thinking). Well, I never seriously thought of going out with a guy. But I also do not have a girl-friend. I am too busy thinking about life right now. Maybe when I get a job, I shall get married and have children.

S'bu's engagement with hegemonic masculinity has not been a smooth one in his context. The grand-father's upbringing leads S'bu to become a 'normal' masculine boy. However, he experiences rejection and hostility from the step-father. This rejection, in turn, leads S'bu to engage with protest masculinity. He starts by becoming a drunk and and eventually ends up by using homosexual encounters to meet his socio-economic needs. Like Bongani, in the following story, it almost seems as if S'bu is a victim of circumstances. He starts by having sex with gays in his drunken state, although he has never thought about whether he could be gay or not. His sex 'for money' also seems to be solely for that purpose. One day when he gets a 'proper' job, he will think of getting married. However, as in the case of the first S'bu, his rejection of hegemonic masculinity is temporary. In fact, his protest masculinity is complicit in nature, as his adoption of the 'other' masculinity (such as it is) will fade with time.

S'bu believes he had a need to stay with his mother, but the step-father was in the way. Only in a nuclear family of this kind do two men become enemies, rather than intimate friends. In many cases, this attitude of competitive male enmity is supposed to toughen him, by weaning him from his feelings. It would seem then, that for S'bu, the experience of patriarchy was tough. For instance, life and family expectations would not allow him

to entertain personal interests, like falling in love. When he does have sexual liaisons with other men, it has to happen whilst drunk, or for commercial purposes. In fact, when he is asked if he is gay or sexually attracted to other men, he denies it. This could be another way of denying his feelings and not wanting to accept responsibility for his actions—a patriarchal masculine attitude in which feelings and expressing one's emotions are not always entertained. Like any other person, whose identity is tied to patriarchal masculinity, S'bu thinks he will one day realise his gender identity to the full, when he gets married and raises children.

Briefly, then, it seems that although S'bu, as in the case of S'the and the first S'bu, does protest against traditional masculinity, his protest does not lead him out of the problem; he is in a *cul de sac*. For instance, his step-father hates him and will not allow S'bu near his mother, where he can experience tender and loving care. In turn, S'bu protests by being a drunk, a coping mechanism which allows him to forget his problems temporarily. Although it seems that, by getting involved in homosexuality, S'bu marks his departure from hetero-patriarchal masculinity, the action is also another coping device. Unlike those gay men, who used same-sex encounters as an opportunity to develop loving and caring relationships with other men, S'bu uses the encounter for using and manipulating others and, of course, he gets used in return. Thus, while his homosexuality here confirms that heterosexuality is only a pattern of behaving, as opposed to being 'normal' human nature, it also demonstrates that at the heart of the difference between being 'gay' and being 'heterosexual' is perhaps a matter of *personal choice* (my emphasis)—a point that I shall later elaborate on further, as I examine the different life choices of the two groups.

(5) Life-history of Bongani, 28 years old

Bongani is less articulate than S'bu and so occasionally used some Zulu words. He is a mature and pleasant person, but as he had to rush off somewhere, the interview with him is less detailed:

I come from Impendle, a rural area about fifty kilometres outside Pietermaritzburg]. At the moment I stay in Dambuza, with my sister and my girl-friend. My girl-friend works at a butchery in town.

I have been away from home for sometime, trying to secure a job. However, I have only been working in white people's gardens, where I get very little money. So I try 'the park' for more, if I can get lucky, every now and then.

Me: Do you get paid well by those guys?

Bongani: Ag, no. If you're lucky, they give you R20-25. Sometimes R10. But what can you do with such a little money! But it's not like sitting at home and doing nothing. At least my girl-friend will see that I am trying.

Who looks after the baby when your girl-friend is not there?

Well, she gets looked after by my sister who works part-time. Neighbours' children also help. But I can't stay at home and look after a baby! You know what people around will say. Besides, my girl-friend will complain.

Me: I know. Anyhow, thanks, Bongani.

Bongani is one of those young men, who had to interrupt his studies, in order to find a job and support a child out of wedlock. He grew up 'normally' as well, in the poor rural environment of Impendle. Unfortunately, as he has to feed others, his situation is very difficult.

His lack of a well-paying job leads him to try out 'other' sexualities, like homosexuality, without the knowledge of his sister and girl-friend. However, as is the case with the other young men, he cannot publicly challenge patriarchal masculinity. This is demonstrated in his home where he feels he cannot stay and look after the child. He knows he could not be domesticated to that degree, without being the laughing stock of the neighbours. His girl-friend would not approve of 'unmasculine' behaviour of this kind. Because of this, he would rather be seen as 'trying' than sitting at home. This is the opposite of what the 'gay' men above will do. For them, being domesticated and helping in the house has

become part of their masculinity. Perhaps this is the most important contrast that exists between 'gay' and 'straight' men in this context, namely, the flexibility or readiness of the gay men to re-interpret their masculinity to fit the situation, as opposed to the rigid masculinity of 'heterosexual' respondents.

In his particular context, Bongani faces tough 'masculine' responsibilities: raising and supporting a big family, without regular employment. However, like the two S'bus, he feels he cannot stay and help at home, looking after the baby, while his girl-friend works. He believes sitting at home is doing nothing—an attitude many men have towards domestic work and women doing it. Besides, he has to be seen to be trying to find a job, firstly, by his girl-friend and then, the neighbours. They are the guardians of patriarchal culture and police his masculine behaviour. Thus, at the heart of one's masculine and feminine behaviour, are perceived cultural expectations: the role of women, who have internalised the voices of patriarchy, is especially striking in this context.

In summation, then, although some of the men identified as 'heterosexual' do protest against traditional Zulu masculinity and compulsory heterosexuality, due to economic needs in their context, their behaviour however does not necessarily reflect engagement with gay identity. Sithembiso's protest masculinity clearly complies with hegemonic masculinity in the way he treats women and hates gay men. The two S'bu's and Bongani clearly protest against hegemonic masculinity, by indulging in occasional sex with men; however, their protest will not necessarily lead to adopting the 'other' masculinity. There is clearly no equality existing between Bongani and his working girl-friend. He still has to prove his worth as a man through work. Kwanele also believes that a man has to be in control, even though he does show some sensitivity and respect towards women. There is no evidence that the heterosexual men interviewed are in any way critical of the patriarchal culture and its version of masculinity, however abusive and violent it can be. Their exposure to gay masculinities has in no way led them to consider the value of a more egalitarian masculinity, in which equality and mutuality, rather than dominance and control, define their gender. Their fear of challenging or undermining patriarchal masculinity keeps them in check.

Recalling my discussion of traditional Africa (in chapter two), although there are many ways of constructing masculinities among those studied, it cannot be said with certainty that there is a strong attempt to undermine gender dichotomies and challenge patriarchal behaviour. The *mashoga* are passive, sexually, and service the *mashaba*, and, in so doing, mirror patriarchal masculinity, in which there is a masculine and feminine gender. The *'yan daudu* are men, who also act like women and have commercial sex with other men. However, their construction of masculinity is complicit with patriarchy. They play down their 'feminine' practices and see them as 'frivolous' and 'irresponsible'. The *ovashengi* (of modern Namibia) also enjoy passive sexual intercourse with other men. Because they are regarded as 'born' homosexuals, their masculinity does not challenge gender dichotomies either, but complies more with hegemonic masculinity's rules of gender behaviour. Thus, all the above comply with the dominant discourses in the construction of a gender identity that is determined by the binaries of masculine and feminine.

However, in my opinion, the gay men interviewed are more likely to forge a new egalitarian masculinity in our context, unlike the heterosexual men interviewed. For while gay men share with heterosexual men the spoils of being male and being dominant in relation to women, gay men are, at the same time, relegated to the margins in hetero-patriarchal cultures. As Kaufman (1987: 104-5) asserts, gay men share with straight men the economic benefits of being male in a patriarchal society; however, gay men do not always participate in the every day interpersonal subordination of women. Similarly, while gay men, like their heterosexual counter-parts, have more social opportunities than women, their sexual identity is not openly accepted in many jobs, sports and professions. In some countries, gay men still carry the stigma of being 'security risks', or are regarded as sick, deviant or abnormal. As gay men do not fully experience the universal privileges of male heterosexual experience, they have had to question the hetero-patriarchal institution in their daily lives, and develop new ways of organising their sexuality, love and support relations.

If heterosexual men are truly interested in transforming their lives, according to Kaufman

(1987: 105), they should stop seeing gay liberation as a separate issue for some men that has nothing to do with them. They should begin to question how the 'other' experience can shape or affect their gendered experience, for heterosexuality is not the only form of human sexuality, but has been ordained as the 'norm' by patriarchal cultures. As has been demonstrated in both the gay and heterosexual men's life-histories, human desire cannot be captured in rigid sexual categories; men who define themselves as 'straight' have had sex with other men. In other words, men experience contradictions that can exist between actual experiences and desires, and the rigid social categories that are used to create a chasm between the 'normal' and 'deviant'. Through their flexible masculinity, gay men are challenging heterosexism and heterosexist privileges. They are also more politically aware (in terms of gender politics), due to their history of being on the margins of society. In fact, I would argue that the use of gender experimentation to their advantage, as a means of liberation and resistance to hetero-patriarchal hegemony, on the individual and social level, is probably one of the strongest features of gay masculinity.

In the last chapter, I collate the findings together so as to arrive at some tentative conclusions.

CHAPTER NINE

FINDINGS

Introduction

In order to clarify precisely how the interviewees differed in their construction of masculinity, I would like to summarise my findings in the following table. Whilst I am aware that tables of this kind tend to be simplistic reductions of human behaviour, I believe that this table foregrounds exactly how the two groups differ.

GAY MEN:	HETEROSEXUAL MEN:
Rejection of traditional Zulu masculinity	**Complicity with traditional Zulu masculinity**
• by identifying with mothers: gentle, kind, non aggressive and non-abusive behaviour;	• by identifying with mother and later, mostly with father: sexist and dominant;
• generally, non-physical interests: including music;	• generally keen on tough physical activity: sports and dancing; and competing with friends;
• little or no smoking, drinking, no drugs abused or physical scarring;	• heavy drinking: hard stuff, drug abuse and some body scarring (e.g. tattoos);
• past-times include going to Church and doing domestic chores: cooking and baking;	• past-times: drinking, smoking, hunting for women, sex;
• relationships: same-sex, mutual physical and emotional expression;	• relationships: compulsory heterosexuality, with fixed and rigid gender roles;
• mode of sexual intercourse: mainly intercrural and non-penetrative;	• mode of sexual intercourse: penetration;
• gender roles: negotiated, gender blurring;	• fixed gender roles: impregnating and having babies;
• women and children: objects of love, care and included in male company.	• women and children: objects of sex, aggression and abuse; excluded from male company.

As the above table demonstrates, the features of traditional patriarchal masculinity exhibited by the heterosexual interviewees contrast sharply with that of their gay counterparts, who seem to have embraced a flexibility and equality in their masculine expression. As hetero-patriarchal masculinity can no longer be sustained in the South African context, because it exists on a continuum, the end of which is violence and abuse, how can gay black men inspire heterosexual patriarchs to change?

The reasons for the heterosexual men's behaviour and attitudes in general have been examined in this thesis. However, from the findings, it seems that both socio-economic deprivation and compulsory heterosexual masculine identity do not allow men freedom to change or to embrace a masculinity of their choice.

According to Kaufman (1987: 19), traditional patriarchal masculinity is not only about learning to be aggressive, but it is also about exclusive heterosexuality, for which the repression of homosexuality is required. For the male person to deviate from the norm is to experience severe anxiety, for what appears to be at stake is his ability to be active and dominant. At the same time, erotic attraction to other men is sacrificed because there is no model central to our social context of active, erotic love for males. It would seem, then, that the anxiety caused by the threat of losing power and activity is the motive behind the 'normal' boy's social learning of his sex and gender roles and his internalisation of his culture's definition of 'normal' masculine behaviour.

Although none of the 'heterosexual' men interviewed is known for violence against women and children yet, their masculinity is potentially threatening and/or violent (see **Chapter Four**). As Kaufman explains (1987: 19), men's violence against other men is also one of the chief means through which patriarchal society expresses and discharges attraction of men to men. At the same time, the fear of other men, in particular the fear of weakness and passivity in relation to other men, helps create a strong dependence on women for meeting men's emotional needs and for emotional discharge. Dependence on a woman or on a relationship with her provides a safe place in which a man can feel in control and can discharge his emotions. In violent situations against

women, there is also the security of interacting with someone, who does not represent a psychic threat and who is both socially and physically less powerful. Thus, given the fragility of masculine identity and inner tension which characterises it, the ultimate acknowledgement of one's masculinity is one's power over women, which can sometimes be expressed in violent ways (see **Chapter Four**).

Because the masculine ego within hetero-patriarchy is formed by continuous blocking and denial of passivity and all the emotions and feelings men associate with passivity such as fear, pain, sadness, embarrassment, it is a denial of the part of what we could be as men. This constant psychological and behavioural vigilance against passivity and its derivatives, Kaufman (1987: 22) argues, is a perpetual act of violence against oneself. The denial and blocking of a whole range of human emotions and capacities are exacerbated by the blocking of avenues of discharge of fear, hurt and sadness. In other words, men become pressure cookers. Their failure to find safe avenues of emotional expression and discharge means a whole range of emotions are transformed into anger and hostility. Part of that anger is directed against oneself in the form of guilt, self-hate and various physiological and psychological symptoms, part of which is directed at other men, and the other, against women. At the end of the process, according to Kaufman, men's distance from themselves is so great that the very symbol of maleness (i.e. aggression and toughness) is objectified, as seen in the life of the 'heterosexual' respondents. The question then is: is there any escape from the cycle of men's violence and the precarious structures of masculinity that our culture recreates to the detriment of men, women and children? The question leads me to the next issue, the examination of the socio-economic and political circumstances of respondents in their context.

The 'heterosexual' respondents came from black, working-class families and, for this reason, most of them have had to deal with economic pressures from early on in life. Most of the respondents had no special training. Those who have had employment, had garden jobs, which could not help them break the cycle of poverty. At the same time, they could not stay at home and do nothing as men. They had to be seen 'to be trying'.

As a result, some even had to drop out of school to support families or to try to fend for themselves on the streets. In their situation, poverty does not allow these men to see beyond their immediate needs, let alone issues of gender equality.

According to Jolly (2000: 79), 'freedom to determine one's sexual behaviour is closely connected to economic and political freedoms'. Although men in general are seen as the 'oppressor' or sharing in the patriarchal dividend, economic needs, however, situate many of our black African men in the subordinate position, in comparison with the their Western counterparts. Their lack determines not only their access to economic resources and their ability to participate in everyday social and political activities, but also their sexualities and masculinities. How can these men respond to gender reforms necessary in South Africa?

In the first place, for a 'straight' man to adapt, alter or change his gender, is considered laughable, socially, in traditional African patriarchies. A man can thus lose his 'masculine' status, as well as being treated as 'other'. However, 'gay' men are regarded as 'feminine' already and, for that reason, they have nothing to lose by performing or expressing their 'masculinity' differently: to be 'top' or 'bottom' in both sexual and other behaviours, whenever it suits them. Conversely, 'heterosexual' men have nothing to gain by being 'gay' or flexible; rather, they will be ridiculed for being 'sissies', they will be regarded as betrayers of *ubuntu* values, as well as being accused of importing western values, instead of being patriotic and acting like 'real' men.

However, as I have indicated in Chapter Four, political, legal and social changes that have taken place in South Africa have ushered in a new era in which all South Africans--men, women and children, irrespective of race, colour, sex, sexual orientation and creed---are made equal before the law. This culture of equality ideally outlaws traditional masculine attitudes, like male dominance, entrenched through violence and rape of those dominated, such as women and children. Men simply have to be 'masculine' in different ways. Examination of the theories of masculinity has shown that masculine identity is a social construct, (see **Chapter One**) and, for this reason, gender identities

differ from culture to culture (see **Chapter Two**), revealing that there is no monolithic, unique way of constructing masculinity even in Africa (see **Chapter Two**). Above all, it is important to realise that, in different cultural contexts, masculinity is constructed to suit social relations, especially gendered ones, which have thus far justified masculine dominance over femininity. Because of this, violence against others is often justified as arising from masculine expectations, but violence involves individual choice in any circumstance. In other words, individual choices interact with our socialisation, which can never be entirely blamed for violent behaviours (see **Chapter Four**).

Thus, if violence can be chosen, it can also be rejected, along with the supportive masculinity of dominance, aggression and male supremacy, as has been demonstrated in the lives of the gay men interviewed (cf. **Chapter Seven**). The latter have shown that hetero-patriarchal masculinity can be rejected for a more egalitarian masculinity, in which aggression, dominance and the need for power are replaced with a caring, nurturing mutuality, which embraces, rather than abuses women and children.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is very difficult, and in fact dangerous research practice, to make generalizations from this study of a sample of black gay and heterosexual men in the Midlands of KwaZulu-Natal. What I hope to have achieved is a demonstration of how, in the light of the current violence in South African society, against women and children particularly, a more egalitarian and potentially less abusive and less violent masculinity is in the process of being constructed by the particular group of gay men studied. What I have not done and what I hope future researchers in this field will do is the following:

***conduct longitudinal studies of black gay relationships in order to assess whether they are in fact more egalitarian than the relationships of their heterosexual counterparts**

***investigate whether violence exists (and what form it takes) within black gay relationships**

***provide in-depth psychological analyses of a set of life-histories of black gay men**

I am well aware that studies of this kind may invalidate many of my findings about black gay and heterosexual masculinities, but I hope that I have at least made a small contribution to a field urgently in need of more research.

However, I do believe that in order to achieve a more egalitarian masculinity (see **Chapter Three**), heterosexual men must be persuaded that traditional, patriarchal masculinity can no longer empower them in our context; in fact, clinging to the latter is marginalising men, if not emasculating them.

To be a 'real' man in the new South Africa, I would argue, is to be able to 'read the signs

of the times' and change accordingly. I would also argue that what empowers men in South Africa and makes them heroes should now be judged by what they do for their communities, families, their loved ones /partners, themselves and other men. They can do so by shunning rape of women and children and other forms of violent behaviour (see **Chapters four** and **Five**), as well as taking responsibility for their sexual acts: protecting women and themselves against diseases, especially HIV / AIDS and other STDs (see **Chapter Three**).

Men should also learn to be critical and take a stance against other men, who use women and children as scapegoats for their insecurities (see **Chapter Four**). We should also not shy away from criticising and condemning cultural practices that undermine the status of women and human equality (see **Chapters Five** and **Six**), as stipulated in the constitution, for fear of being accused of ignorance of African values (cf. Nhlapo 2000).[8] In fact, South African cultures could borrow from enlightened practices elsewhere in Africa (see **Chapter Three**); for example, as is the practice among the Somali people (see **Chapter Four**), South African men could make an undertaking, when they enter a marriage contract, that they will not abuse their future spouses, and contravening such a vow should be a punishable offense. Male stereotypes in which women are seen as sex objects should be also be challenged, so should virginity testing (see **Chapter Six**), in which females are regarded as sexual 'property' of males, submissive objects, waiting to be used by men in a marriage contract. At this stage, in South Africa, it seems that some men want to justify male dominance and block any attempts at gender equality through two main political tools, namely, biological differences, and the so-called African values of *ubuntu*.

Firstly, biological differences between males and females to create 'man' and 'woman' are among those tools used in our context to justify sex and gender inequalities and to

8. Nhlapo (2000: 142-143) is aware of the inherent difficulties between our constitutional demands for gender equality and the recognition of cultural practices, especially in customary law, where there are sex-based inequalities between men and women. He wonders, however, if criticism of such African practices is always justified by human rights activists, seeing that they criticise from an assumed Western moral and religious superiority. See my criticisms of *ubuntu* above.

discriminate against women. While these differences may exist, scholars (Connell 1995; Kimmel 2000) generally agree that they are exaggerated in order to serve political purposes (see **Chapter One**). Secondly, while the concept of *ubuntu* is used to encapsulate all that is good in our South African culture, I would agree with Simpson and Kraak (1998: 5) that the ideal draws on hetero-patriarchal values, some of which, like virginity-testing, justify the oppression of women (see **Chapter Six**). Similarly, emerging ideologies, like the African Renaissance (Internet), have been used by some of its exponents to exclude 'others', especially those who practise same-sex love, on the grounds of un-African activities (see **Chapters Two** and **Five**). According to these beliefs homosexuality has no place in the so-called African culture—an attitude that, in its wild generalisations masks the variety of masculine and sexual expression in Africa (see **Chapter Two**). I would thus argue that all these values should be examined and analysed to make sure that they pass the strictest litmus test of our constitutional values of inclusivity, equality, dignity and respect for all (see **Chapter Four**).

There is, of course, a great deal of work done by women's organizations in order to challenge men's violence against women; women are engaged in public campaigns and public education against rape, battering and sexual harassment; on a national, political level, the *Commission for Gender Equality* and the *Office for the Status of Women* are engaged in information campaigns and in efforts to establish 'gender desks' in the public sector.

However, men too need to be involved in these efforts, in their workplaces, shebeens and among friends. In a different context, Kaufman (1987) suggests that men could form counselling groups and support services for men who abuse women; they could speak out against violence and sexist pornography; they could initiate neighbourhood campaigns on wife and child abuse; they could personally refuse to collude with the sexism of workmates, colleagues and friends. South African men could be encouraged to do this as well; in fact, public ways of validating these strategies should be found.

Kaufman (1987: 25) also refers to the formation of men's support groups.[9] These stress the importance of men talking about their feelings and their relationships with other men and women. This kind of emotional discharge, in a situation of support and encouragement, helps men cease behaving in predictably phobic, oppressive and aggressive forms. The encouragement of emotional discharge and open dialogue among men also enhances the safety men feel among each other and, in turn, helps men tackle their obsessive and unconscious fears of other men.

Practical recommendations for contributing towards the change in traditional, patriarchal masculinity could involve the following:

1. **Establishing a network of South African support groups for black men, in urban and rural areas, perhaps facilitated by a gay gender commissioner**.

One of the deep-rooted problems, which men's groups should tackle, could be the traditional African assumption that most men are innately heterosexual (see **Chapter Three**), which is perhaps the major obstacle in the way of change in South Africa. According to Rich (1997: 322), the assumption remains tenable, partly because 'other' sexualities have been written out of history, or treated as marginal to human nature. Similarly, she believes that, to acknowledge that heterosexuality may not be a 'preference' at all, but a sexuality imposed, managed, propagandised and maintained by force, "is an immense step to take if you consider yourself freely and 'innately' heterosexual". Yet, she would argue that the failure to see heterosexuality as a political and social institution is like failing to admit that capitalism, the caste system or racism, for that matter, is maintained by a variety of forces, like physical violence and false consciousness. Rich goes on to argue that taking the step of questioning heterosexuality as a 'preference' could bring men immense rewards, such as the freeing-up of thinking, the exploration of new paths, and new clarity in personal relationships.

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9. See the Appendices for the 'model of manhood: the sacred masculine'. Although I am aware that this is a highly essentialist model of masculinity, many of the values which, according to Abramowitz (2002: 10-12), emerge from these men's groups are laudable and worth exploring in the South African context.

Rich challenges men to seek ways of changing patriarchal masculinity and femininity (see **Chapters Three** and **Six**), rather than clinging to dichotomising and stigmatising categories of gender identity, if men (and women) want to experience gender equality, based on love, respect and freedom of choice. The issue here is that of identity construction, which reaches into the very heart of the socialisation of black men as children, which needs urgent attention, if heterosexual men are eventually to make the changes necessary to forge the kind of masculinity which gay black men have already begun to shape.

The quest for the construction of egalitarian masculinity, as an alternative to violent, traditional masculinities, will not be easy for heterosexual men, for it strikes at the very nature of patriarchy (further protected by claims that 'this is our culture'). Here women must also be involved, in order to affirm the qualities which they apparently admire in gay men (see Rankhotha 1998).

Listening to men's stories and experiences in group discussions will help men understand each other and hopefully subvert masculine stereotypes, which will help them embrace new gender identities that will benefit all in the changing South Africa.

2. As a strategy in the quest for alternative masculinities, sportsmen in South Africa should be made the focus of gender awareness and change.

Further studies in masculinity should thus concentrate more on soccer and rugby players and examine how the players could be used as agents of gender change. For example, soccer stars like Beckham, Ronaldo, Eusebio, and Pelé are among the most famous players in the world. If we were to ensure that our own soccer and rugby stars were known not only for their goal-scoring, free kick expertise, hot temper and long-range shots, but also for their loving, caring natures and respect for women (as Beckham is), they could exert a powerful influence on constructs of masculinity and gender relations. So far, equal rights in sports has meant equal participation by women, but in the process, these games remain hetero-patriarchal, with traditional masculine

values of competition, aggression and violence, firmly in place and endorsed. *Feminizing* the face of soccer and rugby (in advertising, for example) could be an effective strategy.

3. **In an African context, attaining change in constructs of masculinity requires that development policy and its practitioners have to discuss gender and sexuality in their work**.

Excluding sex from our everyday discussions assumes that, while westerners need sex and love, we in the third world need only to eat.

Development policy-makers and practitioners should intervene in local culture. Often 'challenging gender inequalities is seen as tampering with traditions or culture, and thus, taboo, while challenging inequalities in terms of wealth and class is not' (Jolly 2000: 81). The right to intervene, when confronted by gender abuses defended as 'custom' or 'culture', should be asked of all projects and development agencies.

4. **As one should learn how gender and sexuality are constructed in other African cultures (see chapter two), so engaging help from international organizations and communities is important for information and support, especially in learning how to construct new patterns of behaviour or masculinities that break with the past.**

In South Africa, I would argue that international help is largely responsible for the existence of gay masculinity and its egalitarian ideal in gender relationships.

In the case of the Midlands, KwaZulu-Natal, where the research was conducted, gay activities initially flourished in the homes of white gay men or foreigners, who had the economic means and organisational skills not to be afraid of 'coming out'. While these activities were and are criticised by some Africans for being Eurocentric, I know today, as do many of my friends, that we learned to love, kiss and be flexible about our

sexuality in those gatherings. For example, at New Year's Eve parties, where we had a tradition of kissing everyone present and wishing them well for the year ahead, I heard some friends whisper to me: 'Hey, it is nice to be gay and I am lucky to be part of this group!' A few months later, I would see a trickle of 'straight' women at our club who spoke about feeling 'free' among men for the first time. Similarly, some 'straight' men would confess that they did not realise that 'gays' are like everybody else. Whatever that meant, I believe those men are never the same after their 'gay experience' and that they have changed some of their hetero-patriarchal attitudes. However, to realise this ideal, we need to create a culture of openness about sex and sexuality.

At the same time, finding and using new concepts in our communities is vital. The labels 'heterosexual' and 'gay' remind us of the static divisions between male and female, masculine and feminine. However, the use of the word 'queer,' according to Jolly (2000: 84) constitutes the rejection of the binary divisions between homo-heterosexual, and 'allows us to conceptualise our sexualities as non-essential and transitional'. According to some scholars (e.g. Butler 1990; Moore 1994), there is no 'pure' biological body on which social ideas of gender are inscribed. Rather, the body and social identities interact (see **Chapter One**). The life-histories of the men interviewed can testify to the fact that we understand our bodies through our own social ideas about sex and gender.

Putting new concepts into practice in gender research in social development is absolutely vital in a society that wants gender change. It is important to challenge binary distinctions between the sexes as they are found in everyday language, and in gender training and literacy materials, and to explore, new 'queer' or 'egalitarian' ways of understanding sex.

5. Instead of going back and agonising over by-gone *ubuntu* values, we should put into practice, cherish and protect what we have in our constitution.

Invoking traditional values can be a stumbling block to progress, because they draw on

the same patriarchal values that oppress others. According to Everatt and Sisulu (1992: 24), such values, are in most cases, used 'as a resource by powerful groups to entrench their interests', as men have legitimised sexism and sexual irresponsibility, as well as burdening women with, among others, virginity testing (see **Chapter Six**). The ideals about gender equality and protection of sexual orientation in our Constitution need to be translated from noble rhetoric into reality. Only gender re-education on a massive scale will achieve this aim. Ironically, the HIV/AIDS crisis has made this kind of re-education more possible now than ever before (see **Chapter Three**).

In conclusion, it is clear that violence in South Africa has its roots in hetero-patriarchal culture, as manifested in local traditional masculinities, including the Zulu culture (see **Chapters Three** and **Four**). The analysis of both the gay and heterosexual interviewees demonstrates that, despite their collective socialisation in the patriarchal culture of aggression, abuse and violence, gay men choose different values and modes of constructing masculinity that depart from the 'normal' culture, by embracing values of love and care for others. Unfortunately, South African communities have not always been able to appreciate gay masculinities and their contribution, but instead, they have condemned and ostracised gays as traitors, as demonstrated in our history.

From as early as the 1950s, gays were known as child-molesters (Gevisser 1994: 18); they were persecuted as 'un-Christian' and threatening to the white (apartheid) regime (1994: 31); gay life-style was respectively regarded by both Africans and Afrikaners as a decadent upper-class import 'contaminating' the purity of a mythologised African and Afrikaner race. In the 1980s, at the onset of HIV/AIDS pandemic, gays were blamed for importing the virus and spreading it among heterosexual men in black communities. This attitude was particularly evident, when the then Black liberation movements dubbed gay life as 'un-African'. At present, gay life-style is still not socially acceptable in South Africa, despite the noble ideals of the constitution.

However, this study (see **Chapter Four**) demonstrates that heterosexual men, rather than gay men, are largely responsible for the violent sexual abuse of women and

children in South Africa. We have 'paedophile', as well as 'homosexual' crimes, in some contexts, why don't we introduce 'heterosexual' crimes in South Africa, in order to highlight the fact that men, who abuse and kill women and children, do so as a result of a particular form of gender behaviour, arising from their sexuality? In this study, I have deliberately foregrounded the positive contribution of marginalised gay men to gender identity, in the hope that the weaknesses in hetero-patriarchal masculinity can be exposed.

Those actively involved in the quest for egalitarian masculinity should reject patriarchal masculinity, along with its imposed gender dichotomies. Cixous (in Phoca and Wright 1999: 51) rejected identification with feminism or other movements, arguing that feminists want a place in the system (or patriarchal culture), respect and social legitimation. Similarly, I would argue that gay men should avoid 'acting straight' and seeking validation by hetero-patriarchal culture (see **Chapter Five**). They should begin by rejecting the word 'man'—the title they are constantly denied. Besides, according to Irigaray (1987: 200-201), in hetero-patriarchal culture, 'man' is founded on sacrifice, crime and war. Thus, in order to defeat patriarchy, Irigaray argues that those on the margins of patriarchy, such as gays and women, should challenge heterosexual men to understand their limitations and, I would add, to help them embrace 'other' ways of constructing masculinity. Gays and women, who seek a place in hetero-patriarchal culture, will only receive second-class status, or become 'honorary' members, without full citizenship. So the strategy in the fight for equality, it would seem, is to become politically 'gay' or 'woman' or 'queer'. In this way, honest men, who want to reject patriarchal aggression, violence and abuse of women and children, must be challenged to 'come out' and embrace new ways of constructing masculinity.

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APPENDICES

1. LETTER TO RESPONDENTS

Dear sir

Re: Contribution to my research on men and masculinity in South Africa

My name is Sylvester RANKHOTHA and I am doing a doctorate in Gender Studies at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg. I am conducting research on Black men and gender in the Midlands, KwaZulu-Natal. As you might be aware, gender issues have become very important in the new South Africa. These issues range from wife battering, rape of women and children, family murder suicides, sexual harassment in schools, and gang rape, to the spread of HIV / AIDS and virginity testing. These issues are about gender-related dominance and violence against the weak by the strong, For this reason, we need to understand why gender relations are becoming increasingly violent in this country.

Because men have always played a bigger role in gender relationships in the family and in society at large, it is not a mistake that they tend to be blamed when things go wrong in relationships. In fact, in our country, men have been found to be largely responsible for the above-mentioned gender-related violence against women and children. Thus, it is important that while we try to solve the problem of violence, we begin by trying to understand men: what is masculinity, why do men act the way they do, what are the socio-political, historical, economic and cultural factors that contribute to their behaviour, and finally, how can they change to become loving and caring partners and fathers.

This, in short, is the reason for my research: trying to understand and to do something about men. I am sure that you also are concerned and want to do something about the negative image men get and, for this reason, you are willing to contribute in the study that attempts to understand masculinity or manhood and why men behave the way they do. You can do this by writing your life-history for me (2-3 pages), describing how your own manhood was constructed and shaped by political, historical and cultural context.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

CS RANKHOTHA

25th April 2002.

2. LATEST CRIME STATISTICS

Police statistics for rape cases

South Africa has the highest incidence of rape in the world.

The rape graph rises sharply in girls aged 11, and peaks in young women aged 13 to 25 (Unisa, March,1999).

The highest incidence of HIV is in girls aged 13 to 19 (SA Department of Health, May, 2000).

In every workplace there are rape survivors. In every workplace are employees who have wives, children, mothers, sisters, friends or partners who have been raped.

Crimes committed against children in Johannesburg, 2001 / 2002

General statistics

2% of all the rapes were infants
8% toddlers
14% primary school children [aged 6-12]
76% teenagers [13 years and above]

Indecent assault [ranging from sodomy to inappropriate touching]

6% infants
18% toddlers
38% primary school children
38% teenagers

In terms of total crimes against children in Johannesburg from the 1st April 2001-31st 2002 [period for all these statistics]

55% were rape
7% assault with intent to commit bodily harm
11% abandonment
1% child exploitation
5% child stealing

9% child abuse
18% indecent assault

Risk levels to sexual violence

58% teenagers
18% primary school children
16% toddlers
13% infants

3. SA POLICE STATISTICS FOR REPORTED CASES OF RAPE

Rape (includes attempts) in the RSA for the period January to December 1994-1998

Cases Reported : January to December

Province	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Eastern Cape	5,499	6,037	6,399	7,138	6,514
Free State	3,553	3,802	3,816	3,864	3,496
Gauteng	10,813	11,979	12,938	12,717	11,808
KwaZulu-Natal	7,028	8,020	8,706	8,638	8,525
Mpumalanga	2,472	2,871	3,221	3,111	3,034
North West Province	3,750	4,549	4,426	4,823	4,461
Northern Cape	1,326	1,530	1,450	1,517	1,438
Northern Province	2,617	3,037	3,237	3,693	3,800
Western Cape	5,371	5,681	6,288	6,658	6,204
RSA	42,429	47,506	50,481	52,159	49,280

Intercourse with a girl under the prescribed age and/or female imbecile in the RSA for the period January to December 1994-1998

Cases Reported : January to December

Province	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Eastern Cape	59	59	124	99	73
Free State	84	57	70	45	40
Gauteng	217	163	88	48	58
KwaZulu-Natal	103	94	50	70	103

Mpumalanga 23 21 29 32 15
North West Province 56 64 34 40 22
Northern Cape 32 11 26 24 18
Northern Province 26 14 25 18 31
Western Cape 187 183 134 161 114
RSA 787 666 580 537 474

Indecent assault in the RSA for the period January to December 1994-1998

Cases reported : January to December

Province 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998
Eastern Cape 417 433 569 593 518
Free State 213 340 336 306 279
Gauteng 998 1,144 1,083 966 894
KwaZulu-Natal 585 835 692 753 806
Mpumalanga 154 185 441 221 183
North West Province 150 263 330 276 252
Northern Cape 115 120 139 138 167
Northern Province 108 159 168 208 145
Western Cape 1,134 1,394 1,462 1,592 1,607
RSA 3,874 4,873 5,220 5,053 4,851

21.07.2000
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Http://www.speakout.org.za/events/stats/stats_crime_against.html

4. MODEL OF MANHOOD

The sacred masculine

Paul Abramowitz (2002) takes a journey into men's work and discovers how we need to find fulfilment in our lives by finding our truth and living our dreams, rather than trapped in the endless pursuit of what society deems 'success'.

My father would have loved this work; he was indeed a beautiful man. Like so many of his generation, he remained financially responsible to his family, and as a result, was over-worked - a product of John Wayne generation. That particular model teaches that strength is found, above all, in a tough exterior and interior. I sensed that he struggled to connect emotionally with himself and so too with us, his family.

He had no place to outgrow his emotional negativity which he had lugged with him from a difficult childhood. Like so many of his generation and those men that followed, he remained somewhat aloof and disconnected. As I grew up I watched his life unfold in front of me and had a window into the often difficult lives of the husbands of his gynaecological patients. The picture that was formed was that society has placed great burdens on us men. We often have to compromise our dreams for financial security, and that's just the way it is. Better to accept than fight; better to just knuckle down and 'achieve'.

My journey into manhood only confirmed my father's plight and the plight of those blank faces of the tired men that came anonymously to visit our dinner table. So many men live with the quite desperation of having sold out. Almost everything in our culture is geared towards the external, with the promise of happiness from yet another acquisition, or a better body. Pretty soon, too much attention to the external and surrounding chaos sees a slow dying of the soul, a little every day. We are encouraged, as men, to think with our heads and not trust our feelings.

Consequently, we tend to suffer from a deep loneliness, cut off from our own feelings, and all too often, in fear of intimate relationships. We simply become numb. But life has a way of increasing the volume of the message it is giving until we hear it. So when the 'noise' of confusion and numbness become unbearable, it is often medicated to bearable limits through our addictions. We learn to modify the pain by drinking, drugging, eating too much and believing that good things, like lots of sex, can make the pain go away. Some who cannot quiet the scream inside their heads resort to violence, which is mostly aimed at other men but, more shamefully, sometimes also at women and children.

It seemed to me that men and women start off on fairly equal footing as children, but

that soon little boys experience what is called a 'diminishing in spirit,' perhaps through the act of learning to endure physical and psychological pain without complaining. The result of which is a numbness and ambivalence found so common among teenage boys and adult men. Sensing that this was happening to me, I began longing to meet up with men who shared my vision of living another model of manhood. I wanted more; I didn't know exactly what, but waited and trusted that the universe would provide.

In September 1998 I travelled with other South African men to Sopley, South London. There we took part in the Mankind Projects' New Warrior Training Adventure weekend. I have come to understand the process of that weekend's work a little more now after three and a half years involvement and see now why the men who have done this work for so many years refer to it as a masterpiece. I felt invited to look at who I was, how I make choices, and how I live out behaviours that work or don't work for me. Through the magic of ritual, wisdom, myth and metaphor, I got to face myself and felt welcomed into a new paradigm, no matter which of my demons was waiting to meet me.

I had a felt sense that the 30 facilitators, who themselves had travelled the journey, had a powerfully authentic purpose about them. I sensed their deep respect and understanding for the process and their commitment to the healing, which was immediate and consistent. I felt for the first time in my life, at the age of 36, the sheer transformational possibility of the power of non-judgement and love coming from 59 men - 30 facilitators and 29 other initiates. How different from that place so often set for men in the outside world, that of compulsive competitiveness. It was a weekend of insight, triumph and celebration. I got to meet a small part of the man I had begun to look for way back then, and had been looking for most of my adult life. I knew too, and found great comfort in the fact, that I had finally found a body of men who so beautifully modelled real commitment to transformation in their own lives and the lives of people around them.

My continued involvement and development in the work with men in this community and our overseas brothers has taught me that each man takes something different from his weekend experience. If he stays on in the work and continues the journey inward, supported by his men's group - usually between five and nine men meeting fortnightly - working towards his own truth and passion, he builds a platform to bring about real and sustained transformation. It is from the circle, a place of shared blessing, honour, respect and truthfulness, that I have witnessed myself and so many other men springboard to that place of positive change, a place so deeply desired.

As we drove back from my first men's weekend on a cold rainy Sunday afternoon, I was beginning to get a small sense of how this work fosters brotherhood through self-understanding, something which I had supposed was one of the most basic aspects of earthly plane existence. I have realised that, on a spiritual level, this work serves to offer nothing less than the possibility for a healing of the masculine soul. What I could

not have guessed when I began was the profound and deeply altering effect the work was to have, and continues to have, on my life. Indeed, my journey has allowed me to step into relationships more fully and discover the joy of intimacy more deeply. I have come to meet that part of myself that allows me to discover and speak my truth. I can more easily face my deepest fears, which are no longer roadblocks for my journey. I have begun to experience a paradox of life my father could not have known; that in vulnerability there lies the strength I so desperately seek.

I have learned to trust my own feelings more and to live in that place of connection to others and myself. The journey to authenticity through my own learning of emotional literacy has brought with it a deep sense of joy and a renewed passion, which once seemed unattainable. Through learning clear communication, and with awareness of my own projections, I am better able to empower myself to stay accountable to others and to myself. The lesson of integrity and the knowing of when I am out of integrity with my own truth holds me closer to my path.

It has been through the sharing of experiences and the listening quietly to other men's stories that I have learned of the power of mentorship in community. I know the value of having friendships with other men which are intimate, nurturing and trusting, and how these friendships create the bridges necessary to mark and make smoother the transitions we men have to make in our lives. I have, through these friendships, been encouraged to follow my own truth and passion and bring about a tighter congruency between what I speak and my actions in the world. The old models of man did not allow for a place for shadow to be addressed. The powerful ritual of naming my 'shadow', and hearing other men name theirs, putting mine out in front of me, and sharing the darkness that it is, has given me a clear vision of how and why I prevent myself from reaching my fullest potential. Such is the model of the Sacred Masculine.

While acknowledging both my 'gold' and my shadow, I have come to understand the controlling nature of my unconscious, my unexpressed anger, shame and grief. This understanding has allowed me to feel more comfortable within myself, expressing instead of acting out or 'spilling sad energy', as Rumi described so succintly. This work I have done, not alone, but with the support, blessing, honesty and love offered to me by men in my men's group, my community here and communities overseas, and thanks to the teachings held in sacred space. A circle of men is mystical indeed, where I have seen magic happen time and again, the likes of which all words fail to describe.

As change is facilitated in our lives as men, all things become possible, and so we become moved to look beyond ourselves, to be in service to our community. This is done in the spirit of blessing - that of the energy of the good king archetype. Our work strives to return men to society as better husbands, partners, fathers, sons and siblings.
Therein lies the full proof of the success of such work. There are gifts we were given

by our mothers which our fathers couldn't have given. There are gifts we were given by our fathers which our mothers didn't know how to give. Even if we as men didn't receive those gifts from our fathers, perhaps because they knew not how to give them, or hadn't received them themselves, then we need not cheat ourselves of a fulfilled life. There are men out there in this world who have helped me strengthen and deepen my connection to life itself - to passion and joy - and hope and reality of a glorious life. I am constantly reminded how privileged and blessed I am to have found this.

My father would have loved this work; it would have made all the difference in his life. I know that because that is how it has been for me - and the thousands of men who are making this journey together.

5. BASIC QUESTIONNAIRE USED AS A GUIDE FOR THE INTERVIEWS WHICH RESULTED IN THE LIFE-HISTORIES:

1. Where were you born?
2. Who is your favourite parent?
3. Are your parents working?
4. Where did you begin school?
5. Were you popular with girls / boys?
6. Did your teachers like you?
7. What sporting activities were / are you involved in?
8. At what age did you have your first sexual experience?
9. Who was your first sexual partner (male or female)?
10. When did you start experimenting with drinking, smoking and drugs?
11. Have you ever been to gaol?
12. How would you describe your friends then / now?
13 How would you describe your sexual identity?
14. Are you presently involved with a man / woman?
15. What is your profession?
16. What would you like to do when you finish school?
17. Who is your role model?
18. Are you comfortable with your gender identity?
19. What is your favourite pass-time activity?
20. Where would you like to be in 5 years' time?