

AFRICAN MASCULINITIES

MEN IN AFRICA FROM THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY TO THE PRESENT



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Men in Africa from the Late Nineteenth
Century to the Present

Edited by

Lahoucine Ouzgane

and

Robert Morrell

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AFRICAN MASCULINITIES

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Preface

This book is the result of a collaboration between two people who have never actually met one another! One of the editors works in the Northern Hemisphere and one in the South. One is based in a University Department of English and Film Studies, the other in education. In some respects, they were worlds apart.

In 2001, Lahoucine was based at the University of Alberta, working on masculinities in Africa, and especially in North African and Middle Eastern contexts, from within the discipline of English and against the backdrop of Postcolonial theory. Robert, on the other hand, was at the University of Natal, Durban, working on Southern African masculinities. In 1997 he had organized a conference on Southern African masculinities, and in 2001 he produced the edited collection *Changing Men in Southern Africa* (Pietermaritzburg/London, University of Natal Press/Zed Books). In 2002, Lahoucine edited a special issue of *The Journal of Men's Studies* and had the idea to take this project further with an edited collection on men in Africa. Since Lahoucine's area of specialization did not include Southern Africa, he invited Robert to become a coeditor.

The book is a work of collaboration but it is also a work of political engagement. Both Lahoucine and Robert are interested in issues of masculinity from an intellectual standpoint, but both are also interested in the politics of masculinity and in issues of north–south power relations. Lahoucine, originally from Morocco, now lives in Edmonton, Alberta, with his wife and their two children. Robert is a lifelong resident and citizen of South Africa and remains committed to contributing to the struggle for justice in the continent. Addressing the concerns of the men of Africa has not always been high on the agenda of either gender or international politics. In a way, men in Africa have been treated either as victims of slavery, colonialism, and postcolonialism or as oppressors of their women. The editors see their book as a contribution to gendering the understanding of men and as a way of working towards gender justice in Africa.

This book could not have happened without the wonders of electronic communication. Nor would this editing project have resulted in this book

without the support of Ella Pearce, our Palgrave editor. We would like to thank the following people for their contributions to the production of this book: the Palgrave reviewers for their comments and suggestions and our contributors for giving us excellent material to work with, for their patience and their willingness to revise.

Robert would like to thank, for their friendship, support, and brilliant conversation Geoff Schreiner, his canoe and running friend; Alan Rycroft, Cathy Burns, and Keith Breckenridge, his bridge playing partners; Mike Hart, his long-standing fellow diver; Lebo Moletsane and Mike Thurlow, his university colleagues; and Ben Carton, Bob Connell, and Dave Johnson, his friends from overseas. He would also like to thank Dawn Lyon for her companionship and, especially, his daughters, Tamarin and Ashleigh, for just being who they are.

Lahoucine would like to thank Joni, Ben, and Ryan for their unwavering love and support.

L.O.
R.M.

Edmonton/Durban, May 2004

Acknowledgments

The chapters in this volume were all peer-reviewed. Our publisher obtained expert readers' reports on the entire manuscript while we also independently obtained academic opinion on the scholarly merit of each contribution.

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Lahoucine wishes to thank Joni, Ben, and Ryan for their unwavering love and support.

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Notes on Contributors

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Lahoucine Ouzgane is Associate Professor of English and Film Studies at the University of Alberta. He locates his teaching and research interests in postcolonial theory and literature, composition and rhetoric, and masculinity studies. His publications include *Crossing Borderlands: Composition and Postcolonial Studies* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2004) and *Islamic*

Masculinities (Zed Books, 2005). He is consultant editor for *The Routledge International Encyclopedia of Men and Masculinities*.

Rob Pattman's research interests focus mainly on young people and how they construct their identities. He has published articles based on research in Britain and Southern Africa on whiteness, gender identities, sex and AIDS education, and social theory. He is coauthor, with Stephen Frosh and Ann Phoenix, of *Young Masculinities* (2002), a book based on a detailed, qualitative study of the experiences and identities of young boys in London. He is coauthor, also, with Fatuma Chege, of *Finding Our Voices: Gendered and Sexual Identities and HIV/AIDS in Education*, (2003). This book, based on a UNICEF funded qualitative study of young people's views and identities in seven African countries, focuses on the implications of its findings for appropriate social policy and educational responses to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Currently he is working at the Institute of Education, University of London.

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Margrethe Silberschmidt, PhD is a social anthropologist who has done extensive research on gender issues in East Africa. She is the author of "Women Forget that Men are the Masters": *Gender Antagonism in Kisii District, Kenya*, a book based on a detailed qualitative study of changing relations between genders in the context of socioeconomic change. She is Associate Professor at the Department of Women and Gender Research in Medicine, Institute of Public Health, University of Copenhagen.

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African Masculinities: An Introduction

Robert Morrell and Lahoucine Ouzgane

It is a curiosity that with the burgeoning of work on gender in Africa, and particularly the work on women, the subject of masculinities in Africa remains neglected.¹ There are two contributions that *African Masculinities: Men in Africa from the Late Nineteenth Century to the Present* seeks to make: the first is to address the subject of masculinities in Africa; the second is to apply the concepts of critical men's studies to the analysis of masculinities on the continent.

Three key definitional steps have to be taken to open discussion on masculinities in Africa. The first is geopolitical and requires that we discuss what "Africa" means. The second step involves an engagement with theories of masculinity. The third step is into the field of recent and current work that discusses and analyzes gender in Africa. In this step, we situate our own work, showing how our collection draws on, deviates from, and contributes to existing perspectives.

WHAT IS "AFRICA"?

Beyond the accepted geographical fact of the African continent—the largest but poorest continent in the world—there continue to be debates about what the term "Africa" might refer to and whether it has any political utility (Jewsiewicki and Newbury 1986). Africa is an exceedingly diverse continent in terms of religion, language, climate, topography, economy, governance, and culture. In historical and political terms, therefore, advancing the notion of some kind of conceptual unity for "Africa" is to make a specific claim. Claims of this type are quite recent. In fact, European historians of the nineteenth century were very strenuous in their denial that there was anything in common between the "ancient world" (North and

North East Africa) and sub-Saharan Africa. In 1959, the Oxford Historian Hugh Trevor-Roper famously discounted the importance of sub-Saharan African history and achievement by describing it as the “unrewarding gyrations of barbarous tribes in picturesque but irrelevant corners of the globe” (quoted in Miller 1999). His views were extreme but not exceptional. Generations of European historians, drawing on the work of ethnologists, had glorified the achievements of the Egyptians while tacitly or explicitly negating the history of non-Egyptians (Curtin et al. 1978/1995). One way of doing this was to develop derogatory terms for peoples deemed not to have been part of the ancient civilizations. Another was to credit lighter-skinned inhabitants of the continent with more intelligence than darker-skinned people and to attribute to them the credit for African civilization. Associated with this was the view, supposedly based on the Bible (Book of Genesis), that the black people of Africa were descended from Ham. Noah had cursed Ham, and therefore Ham and his descendants, the black Africans, were inferior and forever cursed (Goldenberg 2003).

The claim that sub-Saharan Africa had no history was successfully contested by a generation of Africanist historians after World War II. Basil Davidson was a pioneer in this regard. He and others (Oliver and Fage 1962/1975; Oliver and Fagan 1975; Fage 1978; Oliver and Atmore 1981, 1981/1994) demonstrated that the so-called dark continent could boast substantial material achievements and rejected outright the attribution of “backwardness” to Africa. Africanist history drove forward the argument that Africa should be considered an integral part of the world and an organic geopolitical system in its own right. Earlier analytical moves to fragment history were resisted and the claim was made that people on the continent had historically interacted with one another and, indeed, had extended their influence beyond the confines of the continent, even into Europe.

At the same time the argument was developed that Europe’s influence had been deleterious for Africa. Far from having “civilized” the continent, the slave trade and colonialism were analyzed as having been highly damaging, as having unleashed destructive and fragmenting forces on and within Africa.

The emergence of African history as an area of study coincided with the process of decolonization. After World War II (starting with the independence of Ghana, formerly the Gold Coast, in 1957), the former colonial powers, primarily Britain and France, granted political independence to their colonies. The one notable exception was Portugal, which held on to its colonies until the mid-1970s. Despite the unevenness of the process of colonization, which had started as early as the fifteenth century, when the first explorers began to travel from Europe to Africa, it had the effect of

uniting Africans. The slave trade and subsequent colonization were not simple processes in which white Europeans enslaved, subjugated, and exploited black Africans. Walter Rodney's classic study of the West African slave trade, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1972), showed how certain indigenous groups participated in and benefited from the slave trade. In many respects, both the slave trade and colonization were highly divisive, setting one local group against another. This was an effect of both indirect rule and colonial labour policies, which reified ethnicity and deepened ethnic divisions. Yet there were other forces promoting the idea of African unity.

The American Civil War and the freeing of slaves provided a major impetus to pan-Africanism. The establishment of Liberia in 1847 as a country independent of European rule, the symbolic rule of Haile Selassie in Ethiopia, and the work of black American intellectuals such as Marcus Garvey fueled the emergence of a pan-Africanist movement. But more than anything else, it was the experiences of Africans who participated on the side of the allies in World War II that created a climate of anticolonialism that itself fueled pan-Africanism (Thomas 1998).

The postcolonial experience in Africa has continued to feed pan-Africanist discourses. The modernist hope of development and economic independence failed to materialize. The material fortunes of many Africans rose briefly in the wake of independence, only to decline steadily to the point where, in the new millennium, large numbers of Africans have ceased to believe in First World promises and instead concentrate on surviving the effects of structural adjustment—scarcity of food, declining employment opportunities, and the dwindling delivery of social services. This gives African people an investment in a discourse that presents them as collectively victimized by “the West.” Such a discourse is itself fueled by ongoing practices of “orientalism,” which systematically devalue African cultural forms and expressions and fix the continent's people with an “othering” gaze. Furthermore, indigenous social and political forms that predated colonialism continue to provide political and cultural focus for attempts to present an alternative to Western views on development.

In short, historical experience and current material circumstance provide some basis for constructing a credible argument about the existence of “Africa” as a geopolitical reality. It is this basis that was used to establish the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963 and the African Union in 2002. Both attempted to give organizational expression and economic and political capacity to the notion of one, united Africa.

This discussion of Africa will not assume homogeneity or uniformity, but it will work from the basic assumption that what unites much of Africa

are particular experiences of colonialism and development that have had a profound effect on the wealth of the continent's peoples. At the same time, we acknowledge diversity, difference, and inequality in the continent, which make claims that simplistically link identity to race and geographical location highly problematic (Howe 1998).

MASCULINITY/MASCULINITIES

In the last twenty years, gender studies has been enriched with the development of an additional focus on men and masculinity. A landmark in this development was a 1985 article by T. Carrigan, R. W. Connell, and J. Lee that introduced the concept of "hegemonic masculinity" as a form of masculinity that was dominant in society, established the cultural ideal for what it was to be a man, silenced other masculinities, and combated alternative visions of masculinity. Since then, the field has expanded dramatically, culminating in 1995 in Bob Connell's celebrated *Masculinities*. A starting point of much of this work is the rejection of the idea that all men are the same. This has occasioned the shift from the concept of masculinity to the concept of masculinities. The shift allows one to distinguish meaningfully among different collective constructions of masculinity and to identify power inequalities among these constructions. Put differently, the concept provides a way to understand the evident fact that not all men have the same amount or type of power, the same opportunities, and, consequently, the same life trajectories.

As critical men's studies has grown, it has also diversified, and it can no longer be seen as a coherent school of thought (if it ever was) or even as a clearly defined field of study. In the broadest terms, one could say that gendered writing on men shares an anti-essentialist foundation that explains the highly differentiated life trajectories of men around the world while at the same time distinguishing men from women. This is not an unproblematic statement, as critics have noted that to talk of masculinity as separate from men (and as a social construct) is tautological (Clatterbaugh 1998; Hearn and Collinson 1994; Hood-Williams 2001). The issue of whether gender matters, and whether it has salience with respect to identities, is discussed in the next subsection.

WOMANISM, AFRICAN FEMINISM, AND MASCULINITY

In the late 1980s and 1990s a number of African women scholars, based mostly in Nigeria, mounted a concerted critique of Western feminism

(Amadiume 1987, 1997; Kolawole 1997; Nnaemeka 1997, 1998; Oyewumi 1997). There are a number of elements to this critique that most of the works share: that Western feminism is predicated on an oppositional gender binarism that translates into theories that emphasize struggle and disharmony between men and women; that Western feminism locates women as victims and overemphasizes sexuality (and sexual orientation) and has ignored the history of African women, which speaks of agency and achievement.

African feminism—a term not easily defined, though it has been used by the authors mentioned above to distinguish the collective nature of their work—has connections with both the “womanism” of African American writers such as Alice Walker and Third World feminist perspectives developed by a host of writers, many of whom were addressing specific issues in the Indian subcontinent (e.g. Alexander and Mohanty 1997; Mohanty et al. 1991). African feminism claims to be part of a broader, global feminist movement but also makes a claim for specificity. Most frequently, this is a claim based on the specific history of Africa and the achievements of its women. A second basis for the claim is that African women share specific concerns that give them a joint interest in expressing a specific interest not adequately captured by other feminist positions.

For our purposes, the importance of this work lies in three areas. In the first instance, there is the claim by Oyeronke Oyewumi that gender is not a primary signifier of identity in Africa. Her argument is a more extreme version of that put forward by Ifi Amadiume, who argued that colonialism distorted local gender patterns and particularly reduced the power of women. Oyewumi’s argument goes a step further to say that age and other hierarchies (which are not to be detected in the *sexualized* body) were critical in distributing power and shaping identities in precolonial times. In this system, there was much more gender fluidity than Western feminism acknowledged. Gender inversions (e.g., male wives, female husbands) were possible. Oyewumi’s argument is radical in wanting to relegate gender to a subordinate position in the construction of social hierarchy. It is contradicted by anthropological work that shows that gendered bodies *were* and remain important. The widespread phenomenon of single-sex age cohorts (brought together for rites of passage) is one of the most obvious examples. Although Nigerian scholars may argue that some West African languages are gender-less, this is not the case for all eastern and southern Bantu languages, and where it is the case, it is not itself proof that these societies are particularly fluid and open in gender terms. In fact, patriarchal control in many African societies remains firm to this day.

A second notable area of African feminist work is on sisterhood, womanhood, and motherhood. Each of these concepts attempts to establish

some kind of unity amongst African women as well as making a claim about the strength (i.e., the agency) and historical achievement of African women. Here the importance of adulthood, agency within a collectivity, and a recognized place for all who compose the collectivity are important contributions. They shift the focus away from the individualist thrust of some Western feminist work and make the case for the importance of ethnic groupings, kinship, and family groups.

The emphasis on collectivities and the shared burdens of Africa's people gives rise to the helpful observation that "collaboration, negotiation and compromise" are key features of African gendered life (Nnaemeka 1998). This is because African women and men face the challenges of daily life together and their unity is their strength. Obiama Nnaemeka specifically states that African feminism rejects the exclusion of men (1998: 8). And yet this body of work is notable for its lack of attention to men and masculinity. One searches in vain through the indexes of these volumes for references to men and masculinity. While a great deal of attention is paid to womanhood and motherhood, there is no equivalent discussion of manhood and fatherhood.

This is unfortunate because it misses the opportunity of offering counter-portrayals of African men and explanations for their varied practices. It also loses the opportunity to grapple with the complexities of gender relations in which widespread violence (mostly by men) needs to be understood in gendered terms, and the identities that emerge from these contexts need to be subjected to a careful analysis.

Fortunately, there are literatures that take masculinity in developing contexts seriously. Two converging literatures are of particular importance. Analysis and writing in the area of gender and development has moved in the last decade to acknowledge the importance of understanding the role of masculinity (Cornwall and White 2000). In trying to promote development and gender equality and alleviate poverty, development theorists have looked at the place of men and masculinity in processes that have either perpetuated or ameliorated inequalities.

A second literature engages with indigenous knowledge and development. Here the starting point is somewhat different. The existence and value of indigenous knowledge systems throughout the world are acknowledged. Resisting the development imperative to assimilate and incorporate according to agendas that reflect such global imperatives as capital accumulation and the establishment of "political stability," this body of work seeks to protect and promote alternative ways of viewing the world and life (Haig-Brown 1992; Sillitoe et al. 2002). In Africa, the claim for the existence of indigenous knowledge systems has become part of political and

economic regeneration programs promoted both through the African Union and through the “African Renaissance” in Southern Africa, the brain-child of Thabo Mbeki, South Africa’s President. Setting aside the debatable claims made on behalf of these initiatives, it can be said that indigenous knowledge systems that have their origins in the social formations of pre-colonial Africa still organize thought and exercise the imagination of many of Africa’s people. Indigenous knowledge is not a closed system and centuries of colonialism have obviously wrought great changes on values and worldviews, but the claim of this work is that indigenous knowledge systems exist and, particularly amongst those who have a historical connection with the social processes and institutions that gave life to them, they remain significant.

AFRICAN MEN, AFRICAN MASCULINITIES

This collection seeks in the first instance to retrieve men for the project of developing a gendered understanding of Africa. To the extent that men have been overlooked, taken for granted, or treated as a unified, homogenous category, this book seeks to correct the imbalance. At the same time, the collection brings a variety of gender theories to bear on the understanding of masculinities in the continent. Across time and space, it is obvious that the shape of masculinities changes and that the ways in which these masculinities are positioned in relation to other men (younger, older, of different ethnic or racial origin, for example) and women vary.

Our understanding of African men starts from a position of diversity. Not all residents of Africa are black. Nor do all speak Bantu languages. There are Christians, Muslims, Hindus, and traditional believers. There are white settlers and Indian labourers. The variations are infinite. But there are also communalities. As Bob Connell has pointed out, all men have access to the patriarchal dividend, the power that being a man gives them to choose to exercise power over women. And this can be extended to the power to control the lives of other men as well. In addition, in Africa, men have the legacy of colonialism and the current impact of globalization to contend with. While globalization in theory has offered access to new technologies and a new type of (global) citizenship, in reality it has widened the gap between developed and developing (poor) countries. While some African men may have been able to enter the global economy on something like equal terms (particularly among well-educated and well-located men in the wealthy south of the continent), most men have felt the weight of globalization as poverty. A third factor that African men have had to contend

with is their complex positioning as “other.” Race is an obvious, though not the only, factor here (Stecopoulos and Uebel 1997). As Paul Gilroy has remarked, it remains a challenge in the third millennium to get beyond the “brutal dualistic opposition between black and white” (Gilroy 2001: 28).

In the study of masculinity within colonial and postcolonial contexts, Frantz Fanon, because of his foundational works on racism and colonialism, plays a pivotal role. His book *Black Skin, White Masks*, which examines the effects of colonial domination on the psyche of the colonized, identifies the masculinity of a black man as a central category of anticolonial thought. But while some critics have been quick to point out Fanon’s own misogyny and homophobia, more recent scholars (Sharpley-Whiting 1998; Seshadri-Crooks 2002) are beginning to contextualize Fanon’s masculinism in new and productive ways. For instance, Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks writes:

Fanon’s political masculinism is actually part of a larger struggle for the decolonization of all—black and white, male and female—from relations of power that dehumanize and depersonalize humans. What Fanon makes clear is that at the moment of his writing, political struggle and national sovereignty were unimaginable without a rehabilitation of masculinity. (2002: 96)

Seshadri-Crooks locates Fanon’s masculinism, meant to counter the violent colonial masculinity that dehumanized women and their men, in the particular historical context of the early 1950s and 1960s, the height of anti-colonialism in Africa, when the unveiling and rape of the native woman was intended, among other things, to emasculate the native man.

THE ESSAYS

The essays comprising *African Masculinities* are intended to contribute to the emerging subfield of masculinity studies and to enrich the larger field of gender studies in Africa by deepening our understanding of how African masculinities, African male bodies, subjectivities, and experiences are constituted in specific historical, cultural, and social contexts. The essays are united by an overriding concern with what it means to be masculine in Africa and with how such identities are shaped, not by biological drives, but by culture in the broadest sense of the term. The essays, which combine empirical social science and cultural studies-based research, are also motivated by two fundamental principles: that definitions of African masculinities are not uniform and monolithic, not generalizable to all men in Africa, and that masculine behaviors in Africa are not natural or

unchanging—suggesting the possible emergence of new (and less violent and less oppressive) ways of being masculine. The collection is also characterized by the diversity of its disciplines and subjects (all within the rubric of masculinities), bringing together scholars working in such diverse fields as sociology, health and anthropology, history, education, English, French, and Spanish.

We give cohesion to the collection by arranging the essays into four different themes. This approach allows essays with different disciplinary orientations to converse with one another. To some extent, work in a literary or cultural studies tradition has remained separate from sociological and historical work with roots in an empirical and materialist foundation. The use of themes in this collection allows the diverse contributions to complement one another and provides a balance between emphases on fluidity and contingency on the one hand and structure and continuity on the other. The approach allows for key concepts such as power and inequality, agency, subject, and object to be deployed in creative ways.

Interpreting Masculinities

This section problematizes masculinity. All the chapters reject the notion that masculinity is one thing, that it is immutable. The chapters show that there are many ways of viewing—interpreting—masculinity, but that different interpretations need to be understood in terms of their origins and consequences. There may be many different interpretations, but the authors urge that these should not be accepted without paying attention to power and the orientaling gaze and without uncovering their normative or political implications. In this section there is evidence of the idea (elaborated in the work of Amadiume and Nnaemeka) that Western feminist concepts are not always adequate for the task of understanding gender in African contexts. The chapters in this section, therefore, raise questions at the same time as they offer answers. How can black bodies be understood? Do they carry a highly sexualized charge? Are they strong and virile? Are they gay or straight? And when we ask these questions, what assumptions do we ourselves reveal? What discourses are invoked in these framings? What influence does context have on interpretation?

The section opens with a piece that will interest especially those who work on ideas about the human body. Arthur F. Saint-Aubin's "A Grammar of Black Masculinity: A Body of Science" examines the ways in which eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Western masculinist science and medicine helped to construct and posit as natural a particular black male body—endowed with an inordinately huge penis and an insatiable sexual

appetite. This process of Othering, the discursive creation of the white man's Other, described and pathologized the African male in order to define the European as inherently different and superior. But, as the chapter demonstrates, at the core of this body politics lurked intense white masculine insecurity and anxiety. Saint-Aubin's historical analysis provides a useful framework for situating several contributions in this book.

Raising significant questions about the questionable economics of international (gay) tourism and its impact on the equally suspect motives of the thriving tourism industry in South Africa, the second contribution, Glen S. Elder's "Somewhere, over the Rainbow," offers an account of the development of spaces for gay tourism in Cape Town, drawing our attention to the ways in which the "homomale" nature of these spaces seems to cater more to elite, white gay men than to lesbians of any colour or to poor (black) gay men.

In "Visualizing Homosexualities in Africa," Beti Ellerson engages in an interview with Mohamed Camara, eliciting the filmmaker's insightful views on his controversial film *Dakan*, which explores gay sexuality and relationships. The chapter examines black gay male responses to the "taboo" film, documenting the impact upon and challenges posed to his African and gay audience by Camara's self-presentation as a heterosexual man.

The final essay in this section, by Frank A. Salamone, looks at the ways in which the Hausa concept of ideal masculinity is both reinforced and challenged by the *'yan daudu*, "men who talk like women," who dress and behave as women, and who have sexual relations with each other. Among the Hausa, such sexual practices are considered an inversion of dominant male heterosexuality, and the *'yan daudu* express, very publicly, male and female roles that challenge established masculine and feminine identities. With its attention to the marginalized Hausa men and women and its implied criticism of the ideological notions underpinning Hausa masculinity, the chapter is also especially useful in our understanding of gender and religion among the Hausa-speaking people of Nigeria.

Representing Masculinities

At a time when meta-narratives are coming under scrutiny, when we are beginning to realize that masculinity is a fictional construction, what can we learn from postcolonial criticism when it is applied to masculinities in postcolonial locations—those diverse sites of intercultural conflict and negotiation that have emerged in the wake of Western colonialism in Africa? How are myths of masculinity reinforced or challenged in literature and the popular media? Do the new practices reinscribe or modify

conventional understandings of men and masculinities by offering different images, different roles, and different options for men? If genders and sexualities are the products of cultural practices and institutions, then what modified forms of sexualities and genders are produced or maintained in the hybrid societies of postcolonial places?

This section shows how, in various contexts, masculinity has been represented by Africans in the process of “making masculinity” within the continent. Apart from showing how the process of representation occurs in various settings, this section also presents essays which in disciplinary terms reflect approaches more germane to postcolonial studies, a field whose primary object of investigation centers on the effects of Western colonialism and its aftermath. Once again, issues of (hetero)sexuality are foregrounded and, predictably, race and religion run through the contributions. Two important questions are raised here: “How did these representations produce new forms of masculinity?” and “In what ways did these representations challenge gender inequalities/patriarchy?” In political terms, these questions can be rephrased into “How can representations of men offer alternative, egalitarian/peaceful visions of masculinity?”

Lindsay Clowes opens this section with a historical analysis that carefully charts the development of male identities—from family-centered caregivers to solitary self-made men—in *Drum*, a magazine produced for African readers in South Africa after World War II. Manhood, as represented by the early *Drum*, was achieved through the social recognition of the male roles of husband and father, brother and uncle, son, grandson, and grandfather. In portraying a “man,” the early *Drum* acknowledged the complex and mutually supportive relationships centering on family members inside and outside the home, and provided public recognition of a social “manhood” rooted in an extremely wide variety of domestic obligations inherent in these roles. Over the course of the 1950s, this began to change, so that by the 1960s it was a man’s relationships with his colleagues and bosses that were privileged in the pages of the magazine. At the same time, by the middle of the 1960s, a man was represented as having little or no domestic obligations beyond that of financial provider. By the middle of the 1960s, *Drum* was producing images of males that established manhood primarily through relationships with apparently independent and autonomous interactions with non-kin men outside rather than inside the home, as well as through sexual relations with women.

“Of Masks, Mimicry, Misogyny, and Miscegenation” examines the construction of black South African masculinity in Bloke Modisane’s *Blame Me on History*. Contextualizing her analysis with reference to the *Drum* generation, Meredith Goldsmith looks at the dilemma of the black male South

African intellectuals of the 1950s, caught between the expectations of the white artistic world and the demands of the black resistance struggle. The essay is theoretically informed by Fanon's discussion of the objectifying and distancing effects of the racist gaze, which has the power to make the black man see and experience himself as the white man's inferior "Other," and by Bhabha's concept of mimicry, with its ability to locate and exploit cracks in the certainty and authority of colonial dominance. It suggests how, in *Blame Me on History*, as in much writing coming out of slavery in the United States, the concepts of man, manhood, and masculinity are deeply intertwined with the concepts of citizenship and the definition of what it means to be a full human being. Modisane made the brutal ironies of life under apartheid into his signature, inhabiting a liminal space and making it his own. However, *Blame Me on History* demonstrates that the empowering quality of such liminality is temporary at best. His autobiography charts his efforts to gain partial empowerment from ironic imitation of white screen and literary heroes, claiming the autonomy denied him through a self-consciously theatrical mode of selfhood. Although appropriating these masks protects him from the daily physical and psychological brutality of white racism, Modisane perpetuates his own oppression by willfully reducing women, both black and white, to objects. More than any other Sophiatown autobiography, *Blame Me on History* answers the question Steven Biko posed in a manifesto of the Black Consciousness Movement: "What makes the black man fail to tick?"

In "The Troubled Masculinities of Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*," Kathryn Holland argues for the significance of Dangarembga's male characters, who have received little critical attention despite their major role in the narrative. Holland first turns to the work of Emmanuel Akyeampong, Karin Barber, Homi Bhabha, Timothy Burke, Marc Epprecht, Frantz Fanon, and Carol Summers to establish a context for her reading, offering a critical look at numerous models of African masculinities—the Big Man, the good native, the native intellectual, and the colonial mimic. Holland then positions the novel's four central male characters along a spectrum of masculinities, with each representing a unique identity type. Yet these models do not operate as or offer simplistic understandings of gender and racial roles, and we are made to question the mutual reinforcements and tensions between British and African systems of control, both patriarchal and colonial.

Sally Hayward's "(Dis)Enabling Masculinities" focuses on one of Nawal El Saadawi's most widely read works, *God Dies by the Nile*, especially on its male characters overlooked in other readings of the novel. The chapter deals perceptively with class, hierarchy, and nation in an Egyptian context,

paying attention to El Saadawi's gender politics and more generally to men's and women's lives under patriarchal states, to the ways in which patriarchy as a system of male power and privilege victimizes both women and men. Hayward's argument confirms Ouzgane's thesis that violent heterosexuality remains the foundation of the hegemonic masculinity depicted in major North African and Middle Eastern literary works (Ouzgane 2000).

Wilson Chacko Jacob's "The Masculine Subject of Colonialism" argues that the Egyptian experience of colonial forms of power predated the British occupation of the country in 1882, and that Egypt's relationship to the Sudan was a formative element in the rise and consolidation of Egyptian nationalism and national consciousness. Specifically, it attempts to locate the emergence of new ways of performing masculinity and national identity within the interstices of this "autochthonous" logic of coloniality. Exploring the two-volume work of Ibrahim Fawzi Pasha on the Sudan, the chapter charts a path that ultimately demonstrates the ambivalence of political modernity in the Egyptian *fin de siècle*. Fawzi's text performs a complicated negotiation between multiple subject-positions, which were themselves the products of radical transformations of Egyptian social life in the early nineteenth century. By focusing on the intersection of race and gender in Fawzi's text, the chapter argues for a re-visioning of the constitution of colonial masculinity that goes beyond the limited offerings resulting from the simple Eurocentric binarism of colonizer and colonized.

Constructing Masculinities

In this section, the attention turns to contemporary issues and how, in different contexts, masculinity is constructed. All four chapters focus on gender inequalities, violence, and sexuality. The recognition that these factors are critical in the spread of HIV/AIDS has made the construction of masculinities an important part of the research and intervention agenda for the pandemic.

In order to reduce the transmission rates of HIV/AIDS, many prevention initiatives have begun to work with young men in an attempt to reshape masculinity. A shift has occurred in gender approaches to the treatment and prevention of HIV/AIDS. Until recently such approaches stressed the necessity of focusing on and working with females, who are more at risk. Now it is accepted that gender approaches need to work with males and females and that such work needs to acknowledge that masculinity can be reconstructed. Such "reconstruction" work needs to be informed by analyses of the ways in which men understand and enact their heterosexual desire. When this desire is violently meshed with the power of

men over women, risks of HTV infection are increased. For this reason, it is critical to examine the ways in which violence is legitimated within constructions of masculinity.

It is widely acknowledged that AIDS has affected Africa more than any other continent in the world. Figures in fact bear this out. The highest per country figures are reported in Africa: in Botswana, for example, the rate of adult infection stands at 35.8 percent (Barnett and Whiteside 2002: 11). According to a 2003 UN report by far the fastest spread of HIV/AIDS among young people in the world is in sub-Saharan Africa, where an estimated 8.6 million youths (67 percent of them female) are living with HIV/AIDS. In Botswana, South Africa, and Zimbabwe, an estimated 60 percent of boys now 15 years old will eventually become infected. The overwhelming majority of the world's AIDS orphans live in Africa. By 2010, their number is projected to reach 25 million. Teachers are also succumbing to HIV/AIDS. UNAIDS estimates that in 2001 as many as 1 million children and young people in sub-Saharan Africa lost their teachers to AIDS (<http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2003/english/ch3/index.htm>).

The chapters in this section all deal with areas of Africa (South, Central, and East) that have been chronically affected. However, it is important to note that in Islamic parts of Africa (particularly the North and North East), the pandemic has had less impact. Levels of infection are very low. Among young people (15–24 years) only 160,000 in North Africa and the Middle East are HIV infected (Table 4: Young people 15–24 living with HIV/AIDS, by sex, December 2001, <http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2003/english/ch3/index.htm>). National levels of HIV infection in 2002 were in Algeria, 0.1 percent; in Libya, 0.2 percent; in Morocco, less than 1 percent; and in Tunisia, less than 0.5 percent. One of the possible reasons for this is that there is little sexual contact among unmarried young people, which in turn makes a statement about constructions of masculinity in these areas.

The AIDS pandemic has promoted debate about gender. In some quarters, there is recognition of the need to work with men and to promote new ideas of masculinity, though this is by no means universal. In Swaziland, for example, where levels of HIV/AIDS are very high, there have been recent signs of men taking responsibility for addressing the challenge of AIDS. Charles Mduli, a trade unionist and one of the founders of the Swaziland Alliance of Men, acknowledges the nature of the challenge: "I don't think we knew how bad we were until we started reading news reports about the chauvinistic Swazi man. We are out to prove that Swazi culture provides for strong men who are still sensitive to others." ("Creating the 'New Man,' " IRIN PlusNews, June 12, 2003 at <http://www.irinnews.org/AIDSreport>.

asp?ReportID=2152&SelectRegion=Southern_Africa&SelectCountry=SWAZILAND.)

Authors in this section offer gendered insights into the pandemic that collectively underscore the importance of including consideration of masculinity in epidemiology. Paul Dover argues that AIDS prevention strategies have been undermined because symbolic understandings of sexuality in Zambia have been ignored and because of changes in socioeconomic conditions occasioned by globalization. In “Gender and Embodiment: Expectations of Manliness in a Zambian Village,” Dover carefully looks at the ideas of the Goba people about gender and sexuality. Using the work of Jacques Lacan and Judith Butler, and placing his essay within the larger studies of sexuality and the body, Dover goes on to suggest, especially in his discussion of the Goba phallus, the significance of Goba notions about the penis.

Margrethe Silberschmidt examines the way in which changes in the labour market in East Africa have undermined the role of men as providers and shows how this has had highly damaging consequences for their sexual and social behaviour and that of their partners. Her chapter controversially argues that men have become disempowered. Globalization, Silberschmidt argues, has made some Tanzanian men “fragile,” unable to fulfill the increasing expectations of male economic performance. Their response has been to expend their energies and resources on women and alcohol, leaving their wives to create productive and viable homesteads on their own.

Deevia Bhana shows that the internal socioeconomic inequalities still existing in the “new” South Africa provide fertile ground for violent school-boy masculinities. Her chapter, “Violence and the Gendered Negotiation of Masculinity among Young Black School Boys in South Africa,” deals with the culture of bullying and the construction of male identities in the classrooms and in the playgrounds of the major port of Durban. Noting the importance of masculinity formation in the early years of schooling and the significance of age as a category of analysis in masculinity studies, she finds that racialized gender identities are characterized by poverty, unemployment, and economic dislocation and violence. Economic inequalities become fertile breeding ground for the creation of violent masculinity as the hegemonic form that others, bullies and subordinates other masculinity formations.

Rob Pattman identifies heterosexual imperatives among middle-class African university students. He analyses the ways in which a hierarchy of masculinities is created into which xenophobia is woven. He shows how this justifies and fuels what, in the demographic literature, is called precocious sexual activity and desire. Pattman’s chapter describes the construction of gender idioms at the University of Botswana. In “‘Ugandans,’ ‘Cats,’ and

Others,” Pattman interviews a group of Botswana undergraduates about their own sense of their masculinities and their perception of their fellow Ugandan students as both rugged and highly masculine figures on campus. He offers a close look at two examples of African male youth subcultures and highlights the significance of age and class as fundamental categories of analysis in the study of African masculinities.

Contesting Masculinities

The final section shows that the processes whereby masculinities are constructed are always associated with contestation. It is not automatic that a particular version of masculinity will become dominant. Among others, Bob Connell’s work has drawn attention to the importance of recognizing configurations of masculinity that are not dominant—that are complicit, marginal, and subordinate. This section provides chapters that examine how different versions of masculinity come about.

In Goolam Vahed’s chapter on the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century experiences of Indian laborers indentured to work in colonial Natal, we see how grim working conditions affected their responses to their release from indenture. “Free” to find work on their own terms and to create “home and family” life, most attempted to create a domestic environment that was invariably precarious in material and emotional terms. Many found that the brutality of their working lives still exerted an influence in the way they expressed frustration and dealt with problems. For these men, the transition from single-sex indentured life to domesticity was violent. But this was not the only response, and there were conscious and publicly valorized efforts to create responsible and viable relationships. Vahed’s chapter poses the question of whether, from a history of deprivation, violence, and racism, a new set of domestic arrangements can be created that has some potential to undermine or at least soften the excesses of patriarchy. In this chapter, the answer is that grim working conditions make such an exercise very difficult and suggest how important the nature of work is for gender change in the wider society.

A major feature of contests over masculinity is their impact on gender relations. Will new configurations of masculinity be to the disadvantage of women? Victor Agadjanian’s “Men Doing ‘Women’s Work’” tackles the ways in which rising unemployment and the increasing “informalization of the economy” have undermined men’s economic advantage in the recent history of Maputo, Mozambique, by forcing them into low-income and low-prestige “women’s” occupations such as street vending. Like the

previous one, Agadjanian's chapter shows how, in conditions of broader social change, a contradictory process has unfolded in which traditional sexual divisions of labor have broken down without altogether dismantling patriarchal authority. And yet Agadjanian's chapter finds that men's entry into such niches results in both a "de-gendering and re-gendering of the workplace," a phenomenon that may in fact lead to greater gender equality among the segment of the urban population least integrated into the modern urban economy.

In the context of South Africa, where a negotiated settlement brought the ANC, as the democratically elected representative of the black majority, to power in 1994, Robert Morrell suggests that regime change can provide fertile conditions for gender change. Such change, however, although it is promoted by progressive human rights discourses, cannot be legislated into new understandings of masculinity. He asks: what are the social forces most likely to shift the content, expression, and enactment of masculinity? Toward this end, he identifies a number of men's movements and their different responses to the goal of gender equity promoted by the government. In analyzing the different visions of these movements, Morrell draws on the work of Mike Messner to suggest what contribution these movements might, or might not, make to gender transformation in the country. He then goes on to examine the importance of race and the apartheid past to suggest that any analysis of men and gender politics should be sensitive to different understandings of gender and location within the current gender order.

Marcia C. Inhorn's "Sexuality, Masculinity, and Infertility in Egypt: Potent Troubles in the Marital and Medical Encounters" shows how hegemonic constructions of masculinity that prohibit the discussion of subjects that reveal vulnerability produce acute dilemmas for women and in turn provoke contest over what is acceptable. Inhorn's chapter tackles a subject that is largely ignored and definitely under-theorized, especially in Africa and the Middle East. Inhorn finds that, although the factors of male infertility are many, the topic's invisibility in Egypt, one of the "most married" societies in the world, can be traced to the gendered dimensions and consequences of male sexual dysfunction: in a culture that rewards and locates masculinity in a man's ability to father children, especially sons, the shame of sexual dysfunction is too stigmatizing for men to bear, especially in public, a sphere where women are inevitably blamed for the reproductive failings of the couple. Masculinity is contested by men and women and it is what Bob Connell called a "crisis moment" that often provides the opportunity for shifting male behavior and the norms inscribed within masculinity.

CONCLUSION

Although this book attempts to represent Africa in all its diversity, *African Masculinities: Men in Africa from the Late Nineteenth Century to the Present* must necessarily be selective; it does not claim to cover comprehensively every single aspect of African masculinities. The book offers an exploration of how location, class, and racial politics affect the social relations of masculinity and gender in Africa. It tries to grapple with the question of what happens to critical men's studies theories when they are brought into conjunction with the challenges of gender research in Africa. The first answer is that the theories have to be used carefully and the second is that they may have to be revised. This is one of the reasons this introduction raises problems of Western feminism and the way gender concepts have been forced down onto and into gender research in Africa. The studies in this volume show (a) that gender theories can be productively deployed to understand African conditions, (b) that African conditions and understandings are not simply laboratories for the application of existing gender theory because they talk back at that theory, and (c) that they do so politically, in terms of perspective, and theoretically (challenging the very building blocks of gender theory). These essays build on an existing tradition of postcolonial studies in which the prerogative of the center to dictate frames and export theories is being challenged. But this is not simply a binary competition; it is a reflexive process in which the fluidity that globalization has created for ideas is of importance, just as the inequalities that globalization has materially consolidated are politically important. We hope that the essays will stimulate further discussion and research because so much of African history and so much of the literature on gender in Africa over the last twenty years has been written and read with African men as an unmarked category.

NOTE

1. Work on this collection began in 2001 with Lahoucine Ouzgane's preparation of a special issue of *The Journal of Men's Studies* on African masculinities, which was published one year later. Since then, an important collection edited by Lisa A. Lindsay and Stephan F. Miescher has appeared. Unlike *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa* (2003), the majority of whose contributions deal with West Africa and are written within the disciplinary frameworks of history, *African Masculinities: Men in Africa from the Late Nineteenth Century to the Present* has a continent-wide focus and is more of a contribution to men's studies than to history. Our book, whose contributors include a good number of scholars residing and working in Africa, also brings the story up to the present by taking in contemporary issues such as AIDS and globalization.

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I. Interpreting Masculinities

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1. A Grammar of Black Masculinity: A Body of Science

Arthur F. Saint-Aubin

EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY SCIENCE: A VOCABULARY OF RACIAL DIFFERENCE AND A MODALITY OF BLACK MASCULINITY

Eighteenth-century European science set out to codify common assumptions about dark male bodies; indeed, science began to recodify these assumptions since the efforts made during the 1700s were not new. Scientists undertook this recodification by providing a precise vocabulary to talk about racial difference and about the process of racial differentiation and by circumscribing black corporeality within a particular modality. Although scientific racism and racialism have led to a particularized reading, what one might label a “misreading,” of all bodies of color and certain marginalized white male bodies, I focus on the black male body because of its axial role in the history of science and thus in the narrative of white-supremacist patriarchy. Eighteenth-century science set out to illustrate natural law by establishing biological differences between different (i.e., black and white) bodies and by proving that these “natural” differences explain the differences between the races and between the civilized and the primitive.

Black men and white women were the targets of eighteenth-century European anatomists. Scientists were obsessed with these groups because of their positions within the “family of man”—black men as the superior gender of an inferior race, and white women as the inferior gender of a superior race. This led to conclusions that “Women and black males had narrow, childlike skulls; both were innately impulsive, emotional, and imitative. European women shared the ape-like jutting jaw of the lower races, while the males of the lower races had prominent bellies similar to

those of Caucasian women who had born many children.”¹ Moreover, science was obsessed with black men and white women because they threatened white men with demands for political enfranchisement, although the threat was not articulated as such or even experienced as a threat at particular historical moments. However, the efforts to delineate race and gender were rooted in a desire to establish certain relations of power, however obliquely this desire may have been articulated. Although I am highlighting only black male bodies and black masculinity, scientific discourses on race and gender intersected, reinforcing each other in such a way that femininity and women’s bodies, both white and nonwhite, are necessarily implicated in any theory about black masculinity that emerged at the time. This intersection was not always deliberate or apparent since discourses on race and gender were at times written and read as separate literatures. Today, in the wake of Foucault’s notion of “political anatomy,” many scholars have written extensively about the intersection of the scientific literatures on race and gender.²

Perhaps the first book to result from the dissection of African bodies of both sexes was written by a German anatomist who had received black bodies from a colony of Africans established near Frankfort in the 1780s. This text, whose English title might be translated as *The Nature of the Physical Differences between Negroes (Moors) and Europeans* (1784), presented an image of, and therein established a “truth” about, black male bodies that went unchallenged until well into the nineteenth century.³ Although there were antecedents to eighteenth-century European notions about racial difference, it was during the 1700s that large quantities of data were accumulated as bodies and body parts were increasingly examined, measured, compared, and catalogued in private collections and in museums. When black male bodies were compared with white male bodies, the former, though deemed primitive and inferior, were still considered similar to and thus, in the grand scheme of the universe, linked to white male bodies. In particular, the areas around the testicles and nipples of white men were confirmed to be darker and thus closer in appearance to the corresponding areas of black men, thus confirming that whereas superiority was to be linked to skull size and intelligence, inferiority was to be linked to sexuality.

The notion that black men could be linked biologically to white men was the source of enormous anxiety and scientific resistance that made the erecting and the policing of racial borders imperative and a never-ending or never completely successful undertaking. That there were general physical similarities between the races was, of course, undeniable. Moreover, from the point of view of the Europeans, there were some easily observable psychological similarities as well, even though they may have been deemed

superficial. All of this made for a situation in which the anxiety felt by scientists (and white men in general) can be linked to the discomfort of most humans, according to James Baldwin, observing monkeys in zoos eating their own excrement. It is a kind of anxiety and fear of loss of self or loss of identity that occurs when boundaries are deemed fluid. It is a combination of arousal and discomfort, of fascination and revulsion that Baldwin has commented on in some of his essays and fictionalized in at least one of his novels: "The sight of monkeys eating their own excrement turns some people's stomachs," writes Baldwin. "They might not mind so much if monkeys did not—so grotesquely—resemble human beings."⁴ Black male corporeality and black masculinity were indeed to European men of science grotesque and grotesquely familiar.

Although black men were categorized within the sexual as opposed to the intellectual mode, genitalia were not used by eighteenth-century scientists to separate the races of men in the way that the shape and size of the breast, the clitoris, menstruation, or the position of the pelvis were used when women of different races were compared.⁵ As I explore later, it would fall to nineteenth-century scientists and especially to the American physicians of the nineteenth century to fixate science on the black male genitalia and on black male sexual modality. However, from the times of the earliest contact with dark-skinned peoples, Europeans had been obsessed with the sexuality of dark men (and women); moreover, fear coupled with desire generated cultural narratives, in the form of myths and stereotypes, as mechanisms of defense, as means of compensation (in the psychoanalytic sense) and as a means of social and political control.⁶

Although the European obsession with the black penis has shown variation over the centuries, it seems to have traversed the centuries and to have emerged essentially intact into the twenty-first century. The long-held theory of the bone in the penis of lower primates and the myths and fantasies about the black male member notwithstanding, little can be found in the early scientific literature about black male genitalia. Some voyagers to Africa, though not scientifically trained, did make observations about what they thought were the sexual practices of the natives. Sometimes they also made observations regarding the anatomy of black men. Several wrote about a practice observed among the Hottentot in southern Africa of cutting off the left testicle of young boys. Although some accounts claimed even that the testicles were violently removed and ceremoniously eaten by mothers after parturition, there had never been direct evidence of such a practice. The partial castration could have been performed for various reasons: to fulfill a religious tradition akin to and directly derived from Jewish circumcision; to improve the hunting skills of men by allowing them to run

faster; to avoid the malediction of twin births; and to promote the conception of male offspring.⁷

NINETEENTH-CENTURY AMERICAN SCIENCE: ADJECTIVES AND ADVERBS

Prescientific Discourse

If European science in the eighteenth century set forth a vocabulary and a modality of black masculinity, American science in the nineteenth century developed and deployed a system of adjectives and adverbs *to flesh out*, literally, the black male body that the Europeans had (re)invented. By the end of the eighteenth century, thinkers of the American Enlightenment, such as Thomas Jefferson, were subscribing to the view that in all probability black men were inferior to white men and that this inferiority had only to be “proven” more conclusively by the rigors of science. Around 1784, Jefferson wrote about blacks, for example: “The opinion that they are inferior in the faculties of reason and imagination, must be hazarded with great diffidence. I advance it therefore as a suspicion only, that the blacks, whether originally a distinct race, or made distinct by time and circumstance, are inferior to whites in body and mind.”⁸

Nineteenth-century science set out to draw permanent racial lines separating black men from white. Science itself, however, was motivated, developed, and deployed in response to and in the service of the dominant cultural and ideological currents of the period. Although it would be convenient to think that nineteenth-century ideologues, leaders, and policymakers used science to buttress and to justify their theory and activities in regard to black men, in actuality the relationship between the men of science and political ideologues and policymakers is a complex one. At times, scientists and intellectuals extracted their theory and their “science” from commonly held and articulated views on racial difference evident in certain laws and social imperatives. It is these views that I refer to as “pre-scientific” discourse and that find their way subsequently into official science. Clearly, racial animus and prejudice—as manifested in the institution of slavery, for example—date back to the earliest contact between European and non-European peoples; therefore, racial prejudice predates scientific racism, which might be defined as a fully thought-out worldview based on ostensibly objective observations, scientific experimentation, and historical reconstruction. Prescience and what one might term “extra-scientific discourse”—a kind of diluted science for popular consumption—presented themselves as absolute and ahistorical. They are

related to Roland Barthes's notion of "mythology" and Fredric Jameson's notion of "ideologeme." As Eric Lott notes, Barthes uses "myth" to designate narratives that present themselves as pure history (science) unadorned and unencumbered by ideology; for Jameson, an "ideologeme" is "ideology *narrated*, that is, narrations of ideology presented as history or historical fact but from which history has been abstracted, evaporated, overthrown."⁹

Before the 1830s, although slavery and other forms of subordination and prejudice were clear indications that whites considered blacks inferior, a carefully articulated and scientific rationale for the *inherent* inferiority of black men did not exist. However, with the increasing abolitionist call for an end to slavery, a call that implied that blacks were humans deserving of certain inalienable rights, slaveholders and antiabolitionists were obliged to resort to theorizing that blacks were subhuman to counter their opponents' argument. By the mid-1830s, the force of the abolitionist argument was such that pro-slavery whites began to argue for an inherent and permanent black inferiority; and, in all of this theorizing, "Negro" was reduced to "black man" and therefore black masculinity was taken as the norm. Academics and politicians, including Governor George McDuffey of South Carolina, Senator John C. Calhoun, and Dr. Thomas R. Drew of William and Mary College, gave authority and respectability to a "world view, an explicit ideology around which the beneficiaries of white supremacy could organize themselves and their thoughts."¹⁰

More significantly, what was seen as the black "difference" was attributed to physiology; and the views on black masculinity became the thesis of science itself. Physicians, anthropologists, naturalists, and biologists took it upon themselves to prove the validity of what was thought to be a natural black body and the essence of black masculinity. Whereas, before this time, one could speak of racism or racial prejudice as an emotional and sometimes inarticulate response that led to certain practices of white subordination of blacks, after this date, one can begin to speak of "ideological" racism in the United States. Using the rigors of scientific investigation and ostensibly objective interpretation, racism became a conscious effort to justify and to propagate a universal white supremacy based on the notion of an inherent black corporeal, intellectual, and moral inferiority. Henceforth, antiabolitionists resorted to physiognomy and phrenology and eighteenth-century biological arguments about cranial size and facial angles to argue for inherent black inferiority.

However, by the early 1860s, most naturalists, except for a few not considered serious scientists, had abandoned phrenology and were turning to the new evolutionary psychology as the scientific way to measure intelligence and to delineate the races. For anthropologists, however, the shift

from phrenology to the evolutionary psychology of Herbert Spencer (1820–1903) and John Fiske (1842–1901) was a subtle, almost imperceptible one.¹¹ The racial terminology and the racial borders that phrenology had erected transitioned intact into the terminology and into the tenets of psychology. It is as though phrenologists, under pressure to conform to the standards of scientific rigor, went from measurements of the surface of the skull to determining cranial capacity. As Schiebinger indicates, skull size as an index of intelligence and racial difference was displaced by IQ tests and the science of interpreting IQ test scores in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Moreover, by the end of the nineteenth century, phrenology itself had been discredited, but craniometry was still a respected science. Indeed, the antiabolitionists began to use body measurements and in particular skull and face measurements to reestablish a racial hierarchy. They began to add more flesh to the skeleton that European scientists had produced. The endgame of the antiabolitionists' position was to play upon the already deep-seated white male anxiety about black male sexuality and the white fear of miscegenation. To stipulate black inferiority was, ultimately, to argue against the degeneration of the superior race through race mixing.

An 1833 pamphlet by Richard Colfax entitled *Evidence against the Views of the Abolitionists, Consisting of Physical and Moral Proofs of the Natural Inferiority of the Negro* was the first fully developed prescientific, racist text.¹² Later, some scientists literally and sometimes unself-consciously simply provided the necessary “objective” proof for Colfax's arguments. Moreover, because Colfax, like his contemporaries and predecessors, took the black man to be the prototypical, genderless Negro, black masculinity was the basis for these conclusions. Colfax confirmed, first, not only that the Negro was unfit to be free and equal, but that he was ideally fit for slavery; and, second, that the Negro found his true or natural state and thus his ultimate fulfillment with a white master. This belief that the black man is incomplete without his white master was utopian; it was the desire for an interracial homosociability that would have constituted, as I have suggested elsewhere, a combination of the phallic and the testicular masculine modes.¹³

It is not difficult to see how this belief in a masculine interracial cooperation emerged from and in turn contributed to the stereotype of the child-like black man, the smiling, contented slave, better off under white domination in the United States than in his naturally savage state in cannibalistic Africa.¹⁴ The stereotype of the happy, carefree slave served not only to counter the abolitionist claim of the horrors and sufferings of blacks under slavery, but also to quell the antiabolitionists' own fears about slave

revolts and black male empowerment. It was comforting to imagine the slave as contented with his place in the natural hierarchy. Subtending white male anxiety, however, was a belief in black male duplicity and envy. The grinning face of the banjo-playing or dancing adult Negro was not to be trusted; it was feared that his affability was a mask worn for white consumption; it concealed a seething rage, a desire for rebellion, a thirst for revenge. From the master's point of view, to paraphrase Chaucer, here is a smiler with an erect penis in his trousers.¹⁵ "[A]s long as the control of the master was firm and assured, the slave would be happy, loyal, and affectionate; but remove or weaken the authority of the *master*, and he would revert to type as a blood-thirsty savage."¹⁶ What is perhaps not as easily understood is how the belief that the black man is incomplete without his white master and how the theory that the combination of a firm, superior white masculinity with a subordinate but supporting black one would constitute a desirable synthesis and balance—came themselves to be a thesis that biologists, anthropologists, psychologists, and physicians set out to prove. Using mortality and morbidity data and projections, scientists and statisticians in the nineteenth century also concluded that the Negro was healthier and happier under slavery. Moreover, science and especially medicine went a step further by theorizing and then confirming that, once emancipated, the black man was on an unalterable path: he would become irreversibly either crazy or criminal and, therefore, would eventually become extinct.

"Niggerology," or Official Science

Before the 1840s and 1850s, *scientific* theories of racial differentiation and hierarchy did not enter in any significant way into the political debate on slavery, even though, as Fredrickson indicates, on rare occasions abolitionists of the 1830s did resort to environmentalism to explain the black male deficit and black degeneracy. During the first decades of the nineteenth century, Samuel Stanhope Smith's *Essay on the Causes of the Variety of Complexion and Figure in the Human Species* (1787) was the most authoritative and influential text on race. Smith, president of what was to become Princeton University, made a case for "monogenesis," the belief that all races emanate from a common origin and thus belong to the same species. It was the view that had held sway in the eighteenth century and that had postulated that the white race constituted the original and superior race. If black men possessed an aberrant skin color, if they differed anatomically, psychologically, and morally, it was due, according to the monogenists, to different physical and social environments. Changes in environments

would or could theoretically over time alter racial characteristics so that Africans transplanted in the Americas would become civilized and white.

Opposing Smith's environmentalism were scientists such as Charles Caldwell, a southern physician who practiced in Philadelphia and who from 1811 to 1830 formulated and published his position in *Thoughts on the Origin of the Human Race*. Caldwell made the scientific case for "polygenesis," the belief that the different races came into being separately and thus constitute distinct genera. Among other "objective" conclusions, he found that " 'the vast preeminence of the Caucasian in intellect' was of such an order that it could not be attributed to environment but must be a 'gift of nature' that had been withheld from inferior races."¹⁷ In spite of his professed scientific intent and a denial of any political objective, Caldwell's work, his own objections notwithstanding, was used to defend slavery and to rationalize the decimation of Native Americans. His influence on other scientists such as J. H. Guenebault (*Natural History of the Negro Race* [1837]) helped to make polygenesis the dominant scientific position in the 1840s, a time when American scientists had succeeded in discrediting environmentalism. In 1854, for example, the eminent scientist Josiah C. Nott, as editor of *Types of Mankind: On Ethnological Researches*, made it clear that anthropology and ethnology, and indeed what Nott describes in his correspondence as "Niggerology," were designed to be used as a justification for American racial politics.¹⁸

With Nott's work, recognized in the United States and Europe as some of the best of science, the history of science and "Niggerology," or racist propaganda, came to be irremediably conflated; put another way, prejudice became a science. It was in part Nott's observations concerning mixed-race individuals that justified scientifically and legitimated socially the abjection of black male bodies and the seemingly innate white male aversion to interracial sexuality. Interracial sexuality meant sexual relations between black men and white women only, since sexual relations between white men and black women did not elicit the same repugnance and did not pose the same kind of threat. Therefore, the relations between white men and black women did not require the same kind of policing. On the contrary, since slaveholders, and to some extent white men in general, had access to and control over black women's bodies, these relations were encouraged in the sense that the slave master could sire his own slave and thereby generate his own property. In other words, although sexual relations between black women and white men had been transgressive in that they required the crossing of racial borders, there were different social consequences and, more significantly, different psychic consequences for this particular transgression. W. W. Wright got it right in 1860 when he concluded that color

prejudice, anti-Negro sentiment, or negrophobia was ultimately an aversion to miscegenation, an aversion to black male/white female sexual union.¹⁹

Whereas earlier efforts to distinguish between the races had concentrated on the head and face, by the late nineteenth century anatomical measurements, or anthropometry, had become the principal way for anthropologists to study the races and specifically to discriminate between black male and white male forms and functions. "The importance of bodily proportions—the perforation of the humerus, the curvature of the femur, the angle which the body makes with the diaphysis, the angle of torsion of the humerus—gained credence principally with the acceptance of race evolution after Darwin."²⁰ Darwin's work did not alter the terms or the tenor of the principal debate on what separated black men from white men physiologically or anatomically. After Darwin, the facial angle theory and research incorporated the idea of evolution, which itself did not alter the theory that black men were visibly and demonstrably, within the rigors of science, members of an inferior race. Yet, it was only in the second half of the nineteenth century that osteological studies became part of comparative race studies; "along with measuring the proportions of the skeleton, physicians began to study muscles, viscera, vessels, and nerves for comparative analysis."²¹

These late nineteenth-century efforts succeeded in confirming the white male body as the body *par excellence*, the one with which all other bodies were to be compared. In 1861, President Abraham Lincoln had called for the creation of the United States Sanitary Commission, charged with a comprehensive examination of the physical and mental readiness of the federal troops. With the advent of new or improved anthropometric devices, the commission oversaw in its first year the examination of over 800 white Union and Rebel troops. No black men were included in this study. Moreover,

The Sanitary Commission based its anthropometric investigations upon the statistical methodology of Belgian philosopher Lambert Quetelet. Quetelet had made several statistical analyses of human physiognomy, including examinations of 900 men enrolled for the draft in Belgium, 9,500 Belgian militia, 69 convicts in a penitentiary at Vilvarde, and 80 students at Cambridge, England. In 1846 Quetelet applied his theory of probability to "moral and political science."²²

His methodology was designed to profile the physiology and the psychology of the average man; therefore, when the U.S. Sanitary Commission used his results as the starting point of its own studies, it confirmed that a European male was to set the standard.

Dr. Benjamin A. Gould, charged with the commission's report to the U.S. President, wrote in 1869: "Indeed the external form of this average man may legitimately be adopted as a standard of beauty and a model for art. The eminent scientist [Quetelet] . . . has shown that we may discover not merely the outward semblance of this abstract being, but his needs, capacities, intellect, judgment, and tendencies."²³ In its second report, the commission included black and mixed-race men and some Native Americans in its investigations. Having by then established the norm, it could set about reconfirming the racial hierarchy. The commission studied over 12,000 white soldiers and sailors, over 2,000 "full Negroes," 863 "mulattoes," and 519 "Indians." Even though the universal body was white male, it was the black male body that drew the most attention, as evidenced by which bodies were autopsied and, in the reporting of the results of the autopsies, by which black male physical structures were the most thoroughly examined and the object of the most sustained commentary. Dr. Sanford B. Hunt, a surgeon in the United States Volunteers in 1869, "made studies of the autopsies performed during the Civil War . . . He drew up statistics derived from 405 autopsies . . . twenty-four of the autopsies were performed on white soldiers and 381 on black."²⁴ Hunt's ultimate objective, and thus his most important conclusion, was the confirmation that the brains of black men were five ounces lighter than those of white men.

By the late nineteenth century, the notion that black and white men possessed different anatomies and thus different intellects and moralities was accepted throughout the scientific communities in the United States. For example, Dr. J. Arthur Thomson in "The Influence of Posture on the Form of the Articular Surfaces of the Tibia and Astragalus in the Different Races of Man and the Higher Apes" (1899) and Dr. John H. Van Evrie in *White Supremacy and Negro Subordination* (1868) concluded that because of the black man's place in the hierarchy of being, his physiology did not permit him to assume an *erect* posture.²⁵ Moreover, the way he was built—the position of his head in relation to his body, the structure of his arms and legs and in proportion to his trunk, the way his pelvis was formed, the shape of his spine—made the Negro man distinct from the Caucasian and similar to the ape: "Characteristics that were simian—flattened tibia, narrow pelvis, elongated calcaneum, long and perforated humerus—relegated the Negro to the bottom of the scale of race development. Osteometrical differences of body linearity, and internal anatomical differences, corroborated such skull peculiarities as wide nasal aperture, ankylosed nasal bones, prognathism, receding chin, and well-developed wisdom teeth and created an index for a hierarchy of the races."²⁶ Finally, according to Dr. William T. English,

in "The Negro Problem from the Physician's Point of View" (1903), the black male anatomy was coarse, rude, and asymmetrical. His hands and feet in particular identified him as a closer relative to the ape than to the European.

ANATOMY OF SEX

It is not surprising that nineteenth-century physicians and scientists would stipulate and then set out to confirm that black men were closer to the lower animals also when it came to sexual appetite, (lack of) morality, and to a certain degree, sexual anatomy. In accordance with the general view at the time that there existed an opposition between the head and the loins and that the brain was the mark of superiority, physicians researched and wrote about "the greater abdominal and genital development of the Negro [which] merely corroborated the inferiority of his other anatomical peculiarities—his black skin, flat nose, lesser cranial and thoracic development."²⁷ Dr. Eugene S. Talbot postulated, for example, that the Negro body reached maturity faster than the Caucasian body, which meant that the Negro boy also experienced and acted upon his sexual passions at an earlier age. However, Talbot continued, because the Negro man, in counter-distinction to his white superior, ceased to develop further mentally beyond puberty, he became a slave to his sexual passions.²⁸ Talbot, like other physicians, believed that in the preadolescent, the body was in conflict: either the brain or the reproductive organs could grow and develop, but not both equally. In the Negro and in the Mulatto, there was an absolute triumph of the reproduction function.

Moreover, physicians were unanimous about the "massive proportions" of the black man's "virile organs." By the late nineteenth century, it was medical consensus that the black penis exceeded the average white male member in length and girth. However, the Negro woman too was marked with sexual difference. Speculations generally concerned "the position of the hymen, early menstruation, and the frequent 'atrophic' condition of the external genital organs in which the labia are much flattened and thinned, approaching in type that offered by the female anthropoid ape . . . lemur and other pithecoïd animals."²⁹ But it was the male and his penis that drew the most attention. However, as I have indicated, these late-nineteenth-century scientists and physicians did not initiate this interest in the black penis. The sexual organs of blacks had been the object of earlier medical and anthropological studies. Curiosity dates back to the initial encounters between Europeans and Africans; and some naturalists in the first decades

of the nineteenth century also had made observations in particular about the sexual characteristics of black men as part of their comparative studies of the ape, the African, and civilized man.³⁰ In 1799, for example, Dr. Charles White published *An Account of the Regular Gradations in Man*:

After examining many “parts of generation” himself—White had at least one African penis preserved in a jar—the doctor reported that the black member was “invariably” longer and stiffer than the white man’s, even relaxed. (In one memorable autopsy, the penis on an African corpse—an organ stiff *and* relaxed—was measured to be twelve inches.) But the typical African’s testicles and scrotum, White found, were smaller in size and weight than the typical European, as were the ape’s.³¹

Like earlier scientists from the eighteenth century, nineteenth-century American physicians also resorted principally to the sexual anatomy of the black woman to distinguish the black and white races “by determining the direction of the vagina, the position of the hymen, and the general structure of the [female] sexual organs.”³² In other words, in terms of sexual anatomy and function, white men and black men, except for pencil length and girth and testicle and scrotum size, were deemed to be the same; whereas black women were considered much closer to apes than to white women. There was, however, an asymmetry in the scientific conclusions concerning the sexual differences between the races—an asymmetry that was perhaps convenient for some white male scientists and physicians themselves. First, although black men and white men were similar in sexual anatomy (whereas black women and white women were dissimilar), it was, on the one hand, the sexual union between the white male and the black female that was thought to be physically possible and indeed proclaimed “natural” since it led to the production of offspring. On the other hand, the sexual union between the black male and the white female was declared to be physically difficult and unnatural; such a union was thought to be infertile. Quoting the explorer Serres, whose conclusions he nevertheless questions, Paul Broca writes in *L’Hybridité humaine* (1860):

One characteristic of the Negro race is the length of the penis when compared to that of the Caucasian. The dimension of the Negro member coincides with the length of the uterine canal in the Negress and both are the result of the form of the pelvis in Negroes. However, the result of these physical differences is that the coupling of the Caucasian man with the Negress is easy and poses no inconvenience to the latter. This is not true for the coupling between the Negro and the Caucasian woman. She, on the contrary, suffers in the act because the neck of the uterus is pressed against

the sacrum in such a way that such a coupling is not only painful, *it is most often infertile*.³³

These conclusions contradict earlier theories from the eighteenth century that had proclaimed that biologically, in terms of the pelvis, cranial size, and facial angle, and psychologically, in terms of emotional disposition and mental capacity, black men and white women were similar.

If, however, black and white men were practically indistinguishable in sexual anatomy, they belonged to different species in their sexual appetite and, more importantly, in their sexual behavior and morality. Moreover, as Dr. William English confirmed, if black men were bestial in their sexual needs, it was proof that they had not evolved significantly as a race much beyond their “animal subhuman ancestors.”³⁴ Moreover, in a study on syphilis that was clearly more sociological than medical, Dr. Thomas W. Murrell concluded that the black man was essentially amoral and that on those occasions when he appeared to be moral in not acting on his sexual impulses, it was merely a ruse, “a matter of convenience,” or because there was “a lack of desire or opportunity” to satisfy himself.³⁵

Repeatedly, science and medicine went to great length to affirm that if black men were similar to white men anatomically, in sexual practice and morality they were not. There were, physicians and scientists confirmed, close similarities between black men and bulls or stallions during moments of *furor sexualis*. Thus, black men in white society were by their nature criminals and sexual perverts:

When all inhibitions of a high order have been removed by sexual excitement, I fail to see any differences from a physical standpoint between the sexual furor of the negro and that which prevails among the lower animals in certain instances and at certain periods . . . namely, that the *furor sexualis* in the negro resembles similar sexual attacks in the bull and elephant, and the running amuck of the Malay race. This *furor sexualis* has been especially frequent among the negroes in States cursed by carpetbag statesmanship, in which frequent changes in the social and commercial status of the negro have occurred.³⁶

On the matter of uncontrollable urges, however, the black woman too was deemed a slave to her passions. She was considered as contemptuous and cynical about morality as he; she was judged as incapable of chastity as he. It was the black male, nevertheless, with his “stallion-like passion and [his] entire willingness to run any risk and brave any peril for the gratification of his frenetic lust”³⁷ that made him alone a criminal and the most immediate and intransigent threat to the white race and world civilization.

English had remarked also that the fact that the Negro male was living in close proximity to members of the superior white race simply exacerbated his already inordinate sexual appetite. Other physicians postulated that the ultimate object of the Negro's passion was the Caucasian woman. She alone could provide the complete and perfect satisfaction for his lust. Dr. William Lee Howard of Baltimore likened the black man's lust for white women to other "natural" and thus unalterable traits. His lust could be lowered or made even more intense, but it could never be eliminated: "what was decided among prehistoric Protozoa," wrote Howard, "could not be changed by act of Congress."³⁸

It was this crucial and unalterable differential, the sexual difference between the races, above and beyond all other differences, that proved that white and black men were distinct beings who would forever be in conflict, ostensibly over white women primarily and black women secondarily. The difference confirmed that black men and white women were meant to be kept sexually separate. No less an authority than science itself confirmed that this sexual difference between the black and white races was one that no act of Congress, no degree of education, religious indoctrination, or moral suasion could erase or mitigate. Howard writes, still in his capacity as a physician:

It is this sexual question that is the barrier which keeps the philanthropist and moralist from realizing that the phylogenies of the Caucasian and African races are divergent, almost *antithetical*, and that it is gross folly to attempt to educate both on the same basis. When education will reduce the large size of the negro's penis and bring about the sensitiveness of the terminal fibers which exists in the Caucasian, then will it also be able to prevent the African's birthright to sexual madness and excess.³⁹

It is not surprising then that some late-nineteenth-century physicians recommended castration as a preventive and punitive measure for the black man's "sex-diathesis," his particular and natural perversion that compelled him to seek genital gratification in general and to seek his gratification with white women in particular.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the circularity between prescience, official science, and extra-science, wherein preconceived and popular notions became appropriated by ostensibly valid science to be used in turn to validate and reinforce popular notions and to justify social and cultural imperatives, argues, simply, for the historical contingency of scientific truth. Since at least the publication of Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962), the notion that science and the production of

knowledge in general are historically contingent is no longer a view seriously challenged, not even by most scientists themselves. It was Kuhn who reversed the thinking that science progressed because of individual and extraordinary discoveries by particular scientists who, from their observations of nature (including human bodies and behavior), made significant contributions to an expanding body of knowledge. Kuhn argued instead for a kind of collective thinking and theorizing responsible for scientific development. Adopting Kuhn's terminology, one could say that what took place in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the science of racial construction would be considered "normal science," not "revolutionary science." That is, anatomists, anthropologists, biologists, naturalists, and physicians of the period, in spite of their apparent disagreements on the subject of the origin and the meaning of racial difference, were, nevertheless, guided by a common paradigm. The shift in the predominance of the polygenists and the monogenists during the nineteenth century was not a revolutionary one and did not constitute a "paradigm shift." Moreover, since Kuhn first published his thesis, it is commonplace to presume, if not to investigate, how the organization and development of science cannot be divorced from the psychology and the politics of the collective nonscientific experience of the culture within which science emerges.

Finally, there is little doubt that the scientific and medical texts of the late nineteenth century, and in particular the data and the conclusions of the United States Sanitary Commission's reports, which were never systematically questioned by other scientists or physicians, were used after the Civil War and well into the twentieth century to justify political policy and social imperatives in race matters. These texts, which set out to describe the Negro body, *reinvented*, in fact, this black male body and therein they also created a particular social and psychic reality for black men and women alike. In addition to general Jim Crow laws mandating the segregation of the races, some state legislatures adopted, and governors signed into law, legislation that "deemed one-thirty-second African or African American ancestry the key that distinguished [scientifically] 'black' from 'white.'"⁴⁰ However, the fact that science could theorize but not measure such a narrow distinction merely augmented white anxiety because it pointed to the ultimate meaninglessness of the blood and thus physical distinction separating the races. Therefore, in spite of its obsessive attempts to construct and police racial borders in and on the body, science highlighted, by its efforts, the ultimate invisibility of any color line separating black from white. For this reason in part, and in the context of the anxiety provoked by the presence (within a white-supremacist, patriarchal culture) of black *male* bodies in particular, a grammar of black masculinity was

necessary to discriminate, to make sense of, and, ultimately, to control these threatening black male bodies.

NOTES

A longer version of this essay appeared in *The Journal of Men's Studies* 10, 3 (2002): 247–270.

1. Londa Schiebinger, *Nature's Body: Gender in the Making of Modern Science* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993), 158.
2. See, for example, Michael D. Harris, "Ritual Bodies/Sexual Bodies: The Role and Presentation of the body in African-American ART," *Third Text* 12 (1990): 81–95; and Hazel Carby, "On the Threshold of Women's Era: Lynching, Empire, and Sexuality in Black Feminist Theory," in *Race, Writing and Difference*, ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986). Carby writes: "white men used their ownership of the body of the white female as a terrain on which to lynch the black male. [Moreover], a patriarchal system which had lost its total ownership over black male bodies used its control over women to attempt to completely circumscribe the actions of black males" (308–309).
3. Schiebinger, 115. I have not been able to locate an English translation of this text. The German title is *Über die Körperlich Verschiedenheit des Negers (Moren) vom Europader*. The original 1784 title was changed from "Moren" (Moors) to "Negers" (Negroes) in 1785.
4. James Baldwin, *Giovanni's Room* (New York: Modern Library Dell, 1988), 39.
5. Schiebinger, 156. Since the nineteenth century, the shameful episode of the "Hottentot Venus" has been written about extensively. This was the African woman, whose Dutch name was Saartjie Baartman but whose original African name is unrecorded, who was transported by a surgeon (Alexandre Dunlap) from the British colony on the Cape of Good Hope to London in 1810. There, because of a condition known as steatopygia (enlarged buttocks), she became a curiosity attraction and was exhibited publicly. Drawings were made of her, she was examined by physicians and scientists and, upon her death, she was dissected and her genitalia were preserved. See, e.g., Sander L. Gilman, "Black Bodies, White Bodies: Towards an Iconography of Female Sexuality in Late 19th-Century Art, Medicine, and Literature" in *Race, Writing and Difference*, Henry Louis Gates, Jr. ed. (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1986), 225–235; and T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting, *Black Venus: Sexualized Savages, Primal Fears, and Primitive Narratives in French* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 32–51.
6. For an interesting instance of this kind of cultural narrative, see, e.g., *Some Years of Travel into Africa and Asia* (1638) by Thomas Herbert and *A Collection of Original Voyages* (1699) by William Hacke. Once again, the Europeans did not create their myth and fantasy about black sexuality out of whole cloth. The myth of the peculiar anatomy and the fantasy of the hypersexuality of black men can be found also in Aristotle who believed that men of all races but especially African

men were hypersexual. He believed further that since the African male was ape-like, if not true ape, he shared the ape's wild and wanton sexual appetites, activities, and preferences. The dark-skinned man, according to Aristotle, also shared the ape's physiology since both were capable of a perpetually erect penis. As Schiebinger notes, one of the few naturalists to depict a male/female ape couple, in an illustration entitled *Orangutan and his Female*, represents the male orangutan with "his stunningly erect penis, a sign of virility [which] embodies Aristotle's belief that the ape, like the dog, has a bone in his penis" (76). Moreover, the term "orangutan" actually means "wild man" in Malayan and the term "pygme" was used to designate the great apes—confirming further a scientific and general conflation of dark-skinned man with ape.

7. Schiebinger, 136. Among the sources cited by Schiebinger, I find the following the most interesting: François Leguat's *Voyage et aventures [sic] de François Leguat* (London, 1707); Peter Kolb, "The Present State of the Cape of Good Hope" translated by Guido Medley, 2 vols, 1731; and C. P. Thunberg's "An Account of the Cape of Good Hope" (1795) in vol 16 of John Pinkerton's *A General Collection of the Best and Most Interesting Voyages and Travels in all Parts of the World* (London, 1808). Moreover, if early European scientists attempted to distinguish between humans and apes by studying the sexual organs and characteristics of females but not those of males, Aristotle had concluded that there were no differences between the genitalia of female apes and those of human females. However, he considered the genitalia of male apes, with the bone in the penis, to be like those of the dog and totally dissimilar to the genitalia of human males. As Schiebinger confirms, Aristotle's conclusions were accepted as fact or at least they were not challenged until 1676 when Claude Perrault in *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire naturelle des animaux* "showed that the ape's penis lacks the bone present in the dog's" (89).
8. Adrienne Koch and William Peden, eds., *The Life and Selected Writings of Thomas Jefferson* (New York: The Modern Library, 1944), 256.
9. Eric Lott, *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 267–268.
10. Fredrickson, *The Black Image*, 47.
11. Herbert Spencer, "The Relations of Biology, Psychology, and Sociology," *Popular Science Monthly*, XIV (1879): 427; and *The Principles of Psychology*, 2 vols. (New York, 1870–1872); John Fiske, *A Century of Science*, vol. X in *John Fiske's Miscellaneous Writings*, 12 vols. (Boston, 1902).
12. Later, there were, as Fredrickson documents, other pamphlets, tracts, and books written in the 1850s and 1860s including a translation of Joseph Arthur Gobineau's *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* edited by Josiah Nott; and John H. Van Evrie's *Negroes and Negro Slavery*.
13. Arthur Flannigan Saint-Aubin, "Testeria: The Dis-Ease of Black Bodies in a White-Supremacist, Patriarchal Culture," *Callaloo* 17.4 (1994): 1054–1071; and "The Male Body and Literary Metaphors for Masculinity," in *Theorizing Masculinities*, Harry Brod and Michael Kaufman, ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1994), 239–258.

14. See William Gilmore Simms's essay "The Morals of Slavery" in *The Pro-Slavery Argument*, Thomas R. Dew, ed. (Charleston, 1852); also cited by Fredrickson (52).
15. Tony Fisher cites the Chaucer line, "the smiler with a dagger hidden under his cloak," in "Isaac Julien Looking for Langston: Montage of a Dream Deferred," *Third Text*, 12 (Autumn 1990): 59–70.
16. Fredrickson, *The Black Image*, 54.
17. *Ibid.*, 75.
18. Fredrickson quotes Nott's letters to a James Henry Hammond which can be found in the Hammond Papers in the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.; these letters are also cited in William Sumner Jenkins's *Pro-Slavery Thought in the Old South* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1935), 256–260.
19. See W. W. Wright's "Amalgamation" in *De Bow's Review* XXIX (July 1860): 3–14.
20. Haller, *Outcasts from Evolution*, 39.
21. *Ibid.*, 39.
22. *Ibid.*, 21. See also Lambert Quetelet, *A Treatise on Man and the Development of His Faculties* (Edinburgh, 1842), 98.
23. Benjamin A. Gould, *Investigations in the Military and Anthropological Statistics of American Soldiers* (New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1869), 24.
24. Haller, *Outcasts from Evolution*, 31.
25. J. Arthur Thompson, "The Influences of Posture on the Form of the Articular Surfaces of the Tibia and Astragalus in the Different Races of Man and the Higher Apes," *Journal of Anatomy and Physiology* XXIII (July 1899): 616–639; John H. Van Evrie, *White Supremacy and Negro Subordination* (New York, 1868).
26. Haller, *Outcasts from Evolution*, 49–50.
27. *Ibid.*, 51.
28. Eugene S. Talbot, *Degeneracy, Its Causes, Signs, and Results* (London, 1899), 102.
29. Haller, *Outcasts from Evolution*, 54–55. Haller cites several sources including William Lawrence, *Lectures on the Comparative Anatomy and the Natural History of Man* (London, 1840); C. H. Fort, "Some Corroborative Facts in Regard to the Anatomical Difference between the Negro and White Races," *American Journal of Obstetrics and Diseases of Women and Children* X (1877); "Genital Peculiarities of the Negro" (no author credited), *Atlanta Journal-Record of Medicine*, IV (March 1903): 842, 844.
30. For example, Sir John Barrow, *Travels into the Interior of Southern Africa . . .* (London, 1806); Jeffries Wyman and Thomas S. Savage, "Troglodytes Niger," *Boston Journal of Natural History* IV (1843): 19; Thomas Bendyshe, ed. *The Anthropological Treatises of Johann Friedrich Blumenback* (London, 1865), 169, 384; and as cited by Broca: Serres, *Rapport sur les resultats scientifiques du voyage de circumnavigation de l'Astrolabe et de la Zélée* (Paris, 1841).
31. D. Friedman, *A Mind of its Own: A Cultural History of the Penis* (New York: The Free Press, 2001), 114. Emphasis in the original.
32. Haller, *Outcasts from Evolution*, 50.

33. Paul Broca, *Recherche sur l'Hybridité Animale en Générale et sur l'Hybridité Humaine en Particulier* (Paris: Imprimerie de J. Claye, 1860), 261. Emphasis in the original; my translation.
34. William T. English, "The Negro Problem from the Physician's Point of View," *Atlanta Journal-Record of Medicine* 5 (1903): 468.
35. Thomas W. Murrell, "Syphilis and the American Negro," *Transactions* (1909): 169.
36. Frank C. Lydston, "Castration Instead of Lynching," *Atlanta Journal-Record of Medicine* 8 (1906): 118.
37. "Genital Peculiarities of the Negro," *Atlanta Journal-Record of Medicine* 4 (1903): 844 [no author credited].
38. William Lee Howard, "The Negro as a Distinct Ethnic Factor in Civilization," *Medicine* IX (1903): 423.
39. *Ibid.*, 424.
40. Shawn Michelle Smith, "Looking at One's Self through the Eyes of Others: W.E.B. DuBois's Photographs for the 1900 Exposition," *African American Review* 34, 4 (2000): 590.

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2. Somewhere, over the Rainbow: Cape Town, South Africa, as a “Gay Destination”

Glen S. Elder

South Africa's formerly isolated apartheid urban spaces are now integrated into an increasingly globalized network. As nodes of service provision, the mostly former “white only” parts of Johannesburg and Cape Town are a *cause célèbre*, particularly for those who inhabit these now neoliberal, still-pretty white quarters. In other parts of these cities, the effects of global processes and connections are less celebrated. Bluntly put:

Early in the 21st century low-income South Africans [will] face an urban existence worse off in many ways than before 1994. Overwhelmed, too, by a “homegrown” macroeconomic structural adjustment program—including the highest interest rates ever, massive pressure to cut state spending, deregulation, privatization, trade and financial liberalization, and the deindustrialization of large parts of the manufacturing sector—South Africa's cities [will] take an ever greater burden of the pain associated with the growing global economic crisis. (Bond 2000: 363)

Translated onto the tourist landscapes of South Africa, this means that neighborhoods and cities where foreigners seldom ventured are now increasingly “international” spaces: hyped up and hyperlinked. Other, more peripheralized spaces, however, come to operate as either sites of exotic spectacle (most major cities in South Africa now offer “black township tours”) or areas where the price of “tourist hype” is paid through a lack of basic service provision. In other words, the post-apartheid city is *also* an urban space operating under the heady conditions of contemporary globalization. Yet, in parts of some of South Africa's cities, now teeming with foreign students and tourists in search of a postcolonial and probably racist

“authentic African experience,” South African travel marketers work hard to manufacture “the authentic” to suit all tastes.

Travel marketer spin tends to keep visible poverty and its effects at bay (tourists are now directed away from downtown Johannesburg, for example), where two 5-star hotels have been closed, toward northern suburbs such as Sandton and Rosebank, where luxurious hotels and mallscapes define a neo-apartheid form of South African urbanism (Beavon 1998). Travel marketers spend time qualifying crime statistics, leading us to recall that “the empty meeting ground” is an apt description of contemporary foreign leisure travel too (MacCannell 1992). While you’re there, you could be anywhere:

Media reports have put South Africa in general, and Johannesburg in particular, among the most dangerous destinations in the world. But like Rio, or Russia, or even New York City, the media reports do not correspond to the experience of the vast majority of tourists in the country, who report feeling safe. Certainly, there are parts of Johannesburg that a tourist shouldn’t venture into. Parts of Los Angeles are no different. (*Out & About* 1998: 33–34)

Glib comparisons equating the effects of serious material inequalities in South Africa with “Rio, or Russia, or *even* [my emphasis] New York City,” while perhaps useful to a degree, also create in the tourist’s mind a beguiling sense of interchangeability. Of course, Los Angeles and New York also suffer from urban crime rates, but the reasons behind their crime rates reflect their particular place in a global urban hierarchy, as do Johannesburg’s. This fairly widespread practice of denying local differences masks social inequality, a process I later refer to as *de-differentiation*.

Because of the celebrated gains made by South Africa’s homosexual movement during the writing of the national constitution and the eventual enshrining of those gains in the national constitution in 1996 (a point consistently referred to in gay and lesbian travel promotional material), South Africa’s post-apartheid cities have also come to cater to a growing local and international gay, and curiously male, market.

Since 1996, some urban centers have sought to inscribe the gains around sexual orientation in space; so-called gay neighborhoods in Cape Town and Johannesburg have “emerged.” “The Heartland” neighborhood in Johannesburg and “De Waterkant” neighborhood in Cape Town reflect recent efforts to replicate the urban geography of North American gay life. In these sites—where closeted same-sex desire, interracial heterosexual sex, and interracial cohabitation were ruthlessly put down at different times by apartheid’s infamously voyeuristic policemen—post-apartheid policemen

and women provide multilingual and multicultural protection to gay locals and tourists in "safe spaces" and "gay locales." In fact, apartheid's history and its raced and sexed legacy did produce its own sexual geography (Elder 1998) and with it a geography of same-sex desire that continues to find expression (Leap 2001, 2002).

The ghettoization of gay and lesbian experience, because of homophobia, was a logical outcome of a systemic spatial ordering that Knopp (1987; 1990), Brown (1997), and Valentine (1993a,b) amongst others have shown to be the extension of a distinctly Western European and North American urban experience related to the confluence of particular economic, social, political, health, and safety related conditions in the North. When the segregation of gay and lesbian activity takes place upon an urban landscape still deeply scared by the segregationist policies of apartheid, however, the effects are deeply troubling.

This chapter examines two aspects of these logical outcomes: the international marketing of Cape Town to a hyper-mobile, largely gay male, tourist; and attempts to corral the evolving geography of noncontiguous "gay space" in Cape Town into homogenized "gay *male* identified zones." The compelling question created by this inherently spatial fashioning of the South African city is "How did a homosexual struggle and movement, the logical outcome of an anti-racist/sexist struggle, come to produce a spatially differentiated gay space that is mostly white, male, exclusionary, classist, and neo-colonial?"

I argue that in an effort to de-differentiate Cape Town's gay space from other urban gay centers, Cape Town's marketers have sought to "invent" a gay landscape understandable to the hyper-mobile, mostly male, traveler. By choosing to ignore the geography of homosexual lives lived throughout the Cape Town metropolitan areas and their particular spatial histories, the massive investment and ultimate visibility granted to "gay space" in Cape Town will further marginalize sexual minorities of color in the South African city.

This chapter also adds to an evolving literature on sex tourism. While gay and lesbian travel is not sex travel *per se*, it is nevertheless a form of travel based on sex or, at the very least, sexual identity. I argue that sex travel of this kind necessitates the development of a set of global "gay" signifiers that de-differentiate global gay space and, as such, deny the material inequalities masked by that process. Within South Africa, this process is recent and rapid.

A close reading of the promotional material about "Gay Cape Town" reveals two masculine themes: the "homomasculation" of space and the retelling of masculinist historical geographies. As efforts to disrupt the

organization of real space and time in Cape Town, these thematic reimaginings of the city seek to create a segregated space of exclusion. Finally, I examine the implications of this disruptive remaking of space within the broader context of South Africa's contemporary political and cultural economy.

SOUTH AFRICA AND INTERNATIONAL TOURISM

It is into these swift international currents that the Cape of Storms and the city of Cape Town, as a tourist destination, step. Within South Africa itself, of course, events since February 1990 and the shifting currents of political fortune have been described from without and within as miraculous. Miraculous or not, it has been argued that the onset of globalization and the end of the Cold War helped to usher in free and fair elections in South Africa in May 1994. In discussing the background to South Africa's negotiated settlement, O'Meara (1996) shows how a political stalemate had evolved:

In order to get beyond the violent impasse of the crisis of apartheid each, in some sense, needed the other—each would have to compromise. On the other hand, however, the very fact that the impasse meant that both sides could and did claim not only that they had avoided defeat, but that in some profound sense, they had won. The NP government claimed that the collapse of communism vindicated its long battle against “the Marxist menace,” and that events in Eastern Europe and in South Africa itself confirmed the NP's insistence on primary of ethnic factors in political life. (6)

Escorting in a new political era, the new South African state also found that its reintegration into the global economy would take place under different conditions than those that had led to the expulsion of the apartheid state during the Cold War. Competing with emerging markets of Eastern Europe and Russia, South Africa was quick to ditch revolutionary rhetoric and adopt a neoliberal macroeconomic approach.

Perhaps less celebrated, but for some observers just as miraculous, has been the ruling party's ideological transformation, marked most visibly in its backing away from the Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP) and its whole-hearted embrace of the so-called Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) macroeconomic policy. Indeed since it was first publicly announced GEAR has been highly controversial. It is clear through symbolic and real cabinet reshuffling that instead of the aims of the RDP informing government policy, economic policy now informs the RDP.

Central to this policy has been an aggressive marketing of South Africa to the world (South Africa 1998a). The victorious hosting of the International Rugby Board World Cup in 1995 and the national catharsis precipitated by a failed attempt to attract the Federation Internationale de Football's 2006 World Cup Soccer Tournament and the International Olympic Committee's 2004 games are just three of the more visible moments in a set of alchemy experiments intended to produce the magical foreign direct investments (FDIs) required to energize a sluggish economy. In 2001, the city of Cape Town announced that it would make a bid for the Gay Games scheduled for 2010. Other "bid" proposals continue to emerge to further South Africa's international exposure and, hopefully, generate investment in the country.

Considerable debate rages on the reliability of FDI generated by tourism in southern Africa (Chen and Devereux 1999; Donaldson 1996; Koch 1998; Saayman and Saayman 2000; Viljoen and Naicker 2000) and how to attract "the world." Consensus has been reached that while FDI generated through tourism can be less than sustainable in the long term, it also holds out a promise to uplift the previously disadvantaged regions throughout rural South Africa in particular. Further agreement seems to extend to the observation that regional development will be guaranteed only if foreign tourists are lured to particular places. What is clear, from a report issued by the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism in 1998, is the ironic outcome that, particularly in urban areas, the white-only apartheid-era tourist infrastructure will provide, comparatively speaking, one way of luring foreign currency into a country on a continent otherwise awash in global apartheid's stereotypes, which include poverty, disease, lack of governance and the rule of law, political instability, corruption and nepotism, and crumbling infrastructure (South Africa 1998a).

It is not surprising then that within this context an emerging interest in the geography of tourism in South Africa has also begun to take hold. Dodson (2000) argues, for example, that

Certainly South Africa, source and destination of significant numbers of international migrants and tourists, is caught up in this rearrangement of the global human mosaic, with its complex reworkings of society and space, place and landscape. (418)

In a call for a cultural geography of tourism in South Africa, Dodson goes on to suggest that the creation of spaces of consumption/leisure in places such as South Africa does not necessarily erase local differences, as a great

deal of early literature about consumption spaces suggests, but masks local distinctiveness:

Thus geographical *de-differentiation* at one level cannot erase the geography of material inequality and social difference at another, more fundamental level. For if the convergence of consumption, leisure, and tourism is both the product and the preserve of the new middle class, it is at the same time a powerful agent of social differentiation, exclusion, and marginalization. In an inescapable paradox, the superficial homogenization of culture and landscape is the means by which inequitable access to opportunities and facilities is reproduced. Perhaps nowhere is this more true than in post-apartheid South Africa. (419)

Dodson's astute observation can be extended to help understand the emerging geography of gay and lesbian travel in Cape Town. As she rightly observes, the apparent homogenization of spaces reserved for leisure in South Africa is only a superficial move. So too in the evolving gay and lesbian travel geography, we see an apparent homogenization of gay space to create interchangeable neighborhoods that produce experiences of place similar to Sydney, Amsterdam, or London. What this space creates is a myth of "community" while also masking the life of gay and lesbian people and the material inequalities of globalization.

THE MAKING OF "PINK" CAPE TOWN

Dubbed the "mother city," Cape Town also has the continent's most developed gay and lesbian scene and eclipses all other South African cities when it comes to the number of gay and lesbian venues (well over 100). It has consistently made it to the top ten of international gay and lesbian travel destinations.¹

Throughout the mid-1990s, half a million to upward of three quarters of a million tourists visited the Cape Town metropolitan area in any given year. South African tourism is presently in the final stages of its international marketing campaign (which does not include gay tourism, per se), having made the largest global investment to date: 70 million US\$. The national campaign has let loose a regional battle between differentially endowed provinces. Within that contest, Johannesburg, Cape Town, and more recently Durban have begun to seek a comparative advantage.

The astounding longevity of a 1993 United States-based report has gone a long way in fueling marketing efforts targeting a yet to be measured economic entity: the gay market. In 1993, Strub Media Group produced a

glossy report that claimed an average income for gay American households of \$63,100, compared with \$36,500 for all households. The report went on to assume that gay men and lesbians have no children, thus making their disposable income even higher than their average income would suggest. Apparently, while renowned for their gourmet capabilities in the kitchen, 80 percent of gay men also eat out more than five times a month. Apparently, gay men and lesbians also buy more CDs, use their American Express cards more, and generally spend more money on the good life than their straight counterparts. In other words, gay people became, in the popular imaginary, the playboys and lesbians of the 1990s. These results were based on responses from a mail survey to subscribers of a magazine that catered to readers who were white, urban, white collar, and mostly male.

The longevity and profligate power of this study, despite self-evident questions about its actual validity, are interesting. While more recent reports have gays and lesbians in the United States better educated but without higher incomes (Yankelovich Partners 2000), the Strub Report is still regularly cited.

Bemoaning Cape Town's formal embrace of a niche gay travel market, Cape Town Tourism, the for-profit agency that markets the city, noted that one event, the Mother City Queer Project in Cape Town, generated more than R50 million, almost half of the R106 million that the recent Argus Cycle Race managed (Heard and Ludski 2001). Salivating, promoters argue that gay tourism in the United States is a 331 billion-dollar market while Sydney, situated similarly to Cape Town, raises R651 million from its famous Mardi Gras.

Rehashing the Strub Media Group's report again, Sheryl Ozinsky, Cape Town Tourism Manager, noted in March of this year that

Gay visitors are lucrative, they have double income and no kids, they spend double or triple the regular visitor, they are also exciting visitors, they have *joie de vivre*, they enjoy doing things like sport, clubbing, and they add flavor to the city. (Heard and Ludski 2001: 7)

By some survey of all gay and lesbian people in the world, Cape Town Tourism enthuses: "Cape Town has recently been voted the sixth most popular gay destination in the world after the Canary Islands, Ibiza, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Amsterdam" (Blignaut 2001).

It is troubling, however, that contrary anecdotal evidence and research suggest that conspicuous, consumptive outness in some parts of the city of Cape Town has made local gay and lesbian lives in other parts of Cape Town, particularly amongst its black and colored gay and lesbian-identified

youth, more life-threatening than ever (Reuters 2001a,b). Homophobic violence, sexual assault, and deadly STDs continue to stalk townships unchecked. Epprecht (2004) has argued that an interconnected HIV/AIDS crisis, crippling structural adjustment programs, and a resurgence of right-wing Christian and Islamic fundamentalisms have combined to produce a state-sanctioned homophobia in several southern African states outside of South Africa. Taking a similar position, Altman (2001) argues that

The strong hostility for some African political and religious leaders toward homosexuality as a “western import” is an example of psychoanalytic displacement, whereby anxieties about sexuality are redirected to continuing resentment against colonialism and the subordinate position of Africa within the global economy. (98)

A cursory glance at the Pink Map Gay Guide to Cape Town reveals a city divided into categories that will please the phantom gay tourist who apparently likes opera. An alluring drag queen holds the city’s “queer world” in the palm of her hand. A list of the information contained in the map appears at the bottom of the page: accommodation, cafés and restaurants, travel info, shopping, services, pubs, clubs, entertainment, transport, adult shops, steam baths, and, curiously, keeping up.

Marketeers’ fantasies about “gay life” have organized the city into convenient zones: Shopping, Entertainment, and Accommodation. This coding of the city does not always provide a contiguous set of spaces, but generally speaking, most venues fall within the city center or what is sometimes called the city bowl. Accommodation lists over 15 sites, many with names that suggest an evocative geography of elsewhere, such as the Amsterdam Guest House or the Mediterranean Villa.

The urban space of Cape Town has been remapped to present a city at once exotic and comfortably familiar to the international traveler. By employing profoundly spatial rhetorical strategies, Cape Town Tourism and other publications have sought to refashion a particular time–space nexus in such a way that the particularities of that actual moment are lost and its material consequences hidden. Three themes are identified and discussed below in some detail. The first seeks to rhetorically conflate time and space, lulling the tourist into a supposed “colonial” aesthetic and style, free of the deeply oppressive structures that helped to produce that stylistic moment. Second, the refashioning of Cape Town seeks to remake parts of the city into male space. Threats of violent crime and a lack of safe venues for women have come to create a day-and-night geography of pleasure in the

city that one might characterize as homomascuine in nature. Finally, the politics of the antiapartheid struggle and the spaces of those struggles have been revised to produce a less threatening vision of antiracist struggles that do not disrupt the consuming patterns of white masculine metropolitan privilege.

THE REMAKING OF MALE SPACE

A distinctive feature of gay travel brochures is the effort to mark territories with "gay" signifiers. Fantasies about gay men in particular produce interesting brochures that mark the landscape with place wherein "gay specific activities might be performed." The remaking of particular locales at particular times into homomascuine space renders, amongst other spatial implications, previously hidden and secluded beaches (often raided by apartheid-era police) an open secret, recalling the notion that "wink-wink, nudge-nudge" language is part of the epistemology of the suffocating closet that Sedgwick (1990) has shown underpins modern Western thought. The "open secretness" of the following account and the implied sexual activity create a similarly oppressive stricture on the travel landscape of metropolitan Cape Town:

Sandy Bay is a nude beach frequented by many gays and lesbians. . . . Follow the signs (and the crowds) down to the walking path entrance, which you will recognize by the soft drink vendors parked there. The walk to the beach is about fifteen minutes, so bring along anything you might need. The gay section is at the far end. . . .

Graaff's Pool. "Graaff's" is more of a nude sunbathing platform than a swimming pool. You'll recognize it by the concrete steps and platform extending into the surf on the beach in Sea Point. This men-only nude sunbathing spot has a straight side and a gay side; it's not hard to tell the difference. (Out and About 1998: 39)

A guide to Pubs, Clubs, and Entertainment once again directs the traveler to 12 locations. The photograph inserted on this map shows a group of mostly white male, presumably gay revelers:

The Bronx is solely a video pick-up bar, catering mostly to men, mostly young and mostly white. Upstairs through an outdoor patio is *Angels*, a dance spot popular with lesbians and coloreds [*sic*, the regional term for those of mixed race]. . . . If you're still not tired after all that dancing, unwind with a sauna at *Steamers*, a place for men to cool down after, um, heating up. For those in search of seamy more than steamy, explore the

down-and-dirty drag shows at *The Brunswick Tavern*. Watch the trannies, watch the trade, and, by all means, watch your wallet. Sadly, the closest thing to a lesbian bar is *Café Erte* . . . its lesbian following fluctuates and seems based more on reputation than fact. (Out and About 1998: 39)

Activities and venues are described in literature and on websites that mark places as gay. The suggestion that many of these places are also places where sex might be sought is never far from the surface. Increasingly, these efforts to create gay spaces have also come to produce a landscape upon which the norm is understood to be white and male, or homomale. Particularly, references to people of color, lesbians, and transgendered people, and the belief that all readers would frequent the bath houses of Cape Town, mark these spaces as intentionally gay and masculine.

Several bathhouses in Cape Town too are presented as possible nodes on an evolving urban landscape of homomale desire. New and catering to a particular class of gay men, expensive by local standards and exclusionary, these establishments stand in stark contrast—in Cape Town and elsewhere—to the history of bathhouses in gay male culture.

As George Chauncey (1994) reminds us, at the beginning of the twentieth century and for much of the first half of it

The safest most enduring, and one of the most affirmative of the settings in which gay men gathered in the first half of the twentieth century was the baths . . . by World War I several of them had become institutions in the city, their addresses and distinctive social and sexual character known to almost every gay New Yorker and to many gay Europeans as well. (207)

Indeed, expanding on the concept of the bathhouse, Tattelman (1997) examines the institutions in history and argues that

The principle of the bathhouse was that you brought nothing inside with you. Ideally, the bathhouse tried to erase the boundaries that divide people: clothing was removed, and issues of class were left at the lockers. By stripping bare, new experiences became possible. When you left, you took those things you had learned from participating in the bathhouse, by communicating your body, back out into the world. (394)

By contrast, a so-called Cape Town “leisure” club, or bathhouse described itself thus:

Situated in the heart of Cape Town’s gay area, the [bathhouse] *offers what you’d expect* (emphasis mine) from a steambath: an enormous steamroom,

sauna, 2 spa baths, 3 video lounges, maze, showers, darkrooms and cabins. But also 2 bars, a restaurant, private cabins, with or without its own TV and video channel, luxurious double volume lounges, fireplace and a sundeck with the most spectacular views over the harbour, downtown and Table Mountain.²

This bathhouse promotion, in fact, suggests a reversal of Chauncey's and Tattleman's cultural logic. The promotional material suggests that the informed tourist go into the facility with a particular set of preconceived ideas. Promotional materials also have pictures of twenty-something, well-defined white men making clear that the "expected" clientele, once again, is white, middle class, and male.

To offer the sense of a "gay city," Cape Town's commercial promoters have created a sense of a city awash in gay and purportedly lesbian sites. In reality, the promotional material appears, mostly, to appeal to a male market. Pineapple phalluses notwithstanding, the list of bars, photographs, and the inclusion of several steam bath locations on the map suggest that the target market is not gay, but middle class, gay male identified, and white. The effort to produce a "gay-safe space" that is not gay, safe, or space in a contiguous sense is a troubling slight of hand.

REVISIONING HISTORIC SPACE

Two recent bombings at "gay destinations" suggest that out travelers are also vulnerable. The re-inscription of former apartheid space as "gay space" is not a seamless process. In fact, the colonizing of some parts of Cape Town as "gay space" requires an ingenuous, perhaps *disingenuous*, slight of hand by slick marketeers.

Robben Island is a windswept island and was the prison home of the former president Nelson Mandela for some three decades. You can experience the view that kept Nelson Mandela's dream of freedom for his country alive. Ferry trips are undertaken to the island and bookings must be made well in advance. Robben Island is one of South Africa's three World Heritage sites.

What many do not know is that it was also here during the Dutch East India Company's (the VOC) occupation of the Cape that the first men were imprisoned for sodomy. The Dutch Sodomy Panic of the 1730s was succeeded by several others, including that of the 1750s. We know that Nicholas Modde was the first to be held on the island, for having sex with a Batavian slave.³

Hallowed post-apartheid space is refashioned into a sanitized chapter of homosexual history from the 1700s. As Foucault has argued,

We must not forget that the psychological, psychiatric, medical category of homosexuality was constituted from the moment it was characterized—Westphal’s famous article of 1870 on “contrary sexual sensations” can stand as its date of birth. . . . Homosexuality appeared as one of the forms of sexuality when it was transposed from the practice of sodomy onto a kind of interior androgyny, a hermaphroditism of the soul. The sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species. (Foucault 1990: 43)

Rather than taking us back in time, Robben Island’s gay travel promoter conflates time and space to produce a “gay history” of Robben Island. That the category of the homosexual did not exist in Holland or on Robben Island of the 1750s and would not exist for at least another 100 years is irrelevant. Instead, buggery is politely equated with gayness and the rape of slaves is made to stand in for love and desire. Erased from modern apartheid’s history are the accounts of homosexual desire (and love) between men that Moodie (1994) and Harries (1990) described and documented in spaces ranging from the regulated to the banal: prisons, hostels, military barracks, public parks, Bantustans, and plain old bedrooms. For example, there is no mention of documented same-sex desire between antiapartheid activists and others in apartheid’s prisons:

[He] (a prison gang leader) did not ask me whether I was “n’ moffie,” [colloquial term for gay man] he discovered it in bed. We had sex for hours; he fucked me, masturbated me. I wanked him and showed him what sixty-nine was. The passages of Pollsmoor resounded with the sound of the guard’s steps; by now all of the men in the cell were either engaged in solitary masturbation, or had found their partners. (Achmat 1993: 94)

Nkoli (1994) also describes “coming out” to his fellow activist while imprisoned during the Delmas Treason Trial in 1984. Like any account of same sex-desire between women, these and other more recent accounts are missing. Instead, the titillating evocations of a revised colonial history informed by racist fantasies lull the tourist into overlooking the recent antiracist/colonial struggle. Why the slight of hand?

These actual more recent accounts might disrupt the polite social fabric of the “New South Africa” and the “fetching” neoliberal account told to tourists. In fact, some promotional material reassures visitors that what happened there is not worth worrying about:

Race is still an issue in modern South Africa, and while it will be a likely topic of conversation for most tourists, it’s not something to fear. It’s amazing how

far things have come in the few short years since the end of apartheid, and not surprising how far things have yet to go. (Out and About 1998: 34)

Chrisman (2000) has argued that marketing of the "apartheid struggle" requires making it resonate with metropolitan white Englishness in the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States. While South Africa, potentially, is the most threatening of contexts to the white metropolitan subject, its repackaging in nonthreatening ways renders the account passively polite. The metropolitan commodification of antiracist, antisexist political movements reminds us that it is always easier to talk about racism than about black emancipation (Gilroy 1987). The same could be said about sexism and the liberation of women and sexual minorities. The translation of black emancipation and gender equality into a consumable commodity involves more than turning black male and female subjects into mutilated or punished bodies; it also involves the partial redefinition of the political itself away from a social to an epistemological domain.

Robben Island and other examples suggest that the Cape Town's queer remapping process is also an exercise that seeks to edit and in some cases erase space and time. What emerges is a city not only suspended and confused in space and time, but more importantly, removed from its immediate context. Suffice it to recall that the final Truth and Reconciliation Commission report described the Western Cape (the region where Cape Town is situated) as a place where a distinct formulation of apartheid policy declared the region a "coloured labor preference area." This declaration gave the area a unique demographic profile with a colored majority and a black African minority. Extreme social and spatial engineering through the Group Areas Act occurred and a significant division between rural migrants and urban residents was and still is evident (South Africa 1998b).

It is onto this landscape that the tourist landscapes and in particular the Pink Map of Cape Town have been imposed. It is on this landscape that we should come to reevaluate the unproblematic incorporation of apartheid scar tissue into the marketing pamphlets of contemporary Cape Town.

In a global context where HIV infection rates and AIDS-related deaths have reached genocidal proportions and their long-term effects remain to be seen, it would seem that present-day South Africa is a timely place in which to ask questions about globalization and sexuality.

The implications are at least threefold. First, we see how the geography of gender and sexuality might inform an emancipatory refashioning of the Apartheid City. Second, a confluence of forces, be they globalization or something else, have come together to produce a different kind of tourism, one set in places as distinct as Sydney, Rio, London, Hong Kong, and now

Cape Town, a tourism made up of a *mélange* of experiences defined by an unmeasurable, unknowable, perhaps imagined “group of people.” Rather than reifying the *in situ* traditions, we see the creation of places to fortify a myth that de-differentiates space and experiences for a selected groups of perceived gay male travelers. The creation of a particular kind of homomale space in this way differs from other kinds of travel/leisure spatial constructions because, in this case, a hitherto unmeasured and arguably unknowable economic entity is courted. The result is that fantasy, stereotype, and “experts” come to produce a set of essentially racist experiences and places. This kind of marketing differs from other, more “mainstream” marketing initiatives because it operates, rhetorically, within the confines of “the closet.” The open secret that licit and illicit gay male sex occurs in many of the listed spaces, such as beaches and bed-and-breakfast bedrooms, represents these kinds of couplings as nonthreatening sexual acts.

Moreover, the lives of gay men and lesbian women who live in Cape Town are, like many in South Africa, at risk *because of* the unproblematized adoption of neoliberal *laissez-faire* economic policies that, Leviathan-like, commodify everything in their path. In so doing, well-meaning urban promoters inadvertently betray celebrated and marketed constitutional protections of sexual orientation. Finally, the marketed creation of homomale space upon the denial of lesbian existence is misogynistic. Extreme levels of public sexual violence against women in contemporary urban South Africa (perceived and real) create a curtailed geography of everyday and nightlife for many South African women of all races. The failure by Cape Town’s marketeers to recognize the geography of fear and create safe space for women and lesbian women in particular is more suggestive of masculinist planning strategies that actively seek to immobilize women. Through rhetorical and spatial strategies, nonwhite male and female homosexual Cape Townians—South Africa’s double Rainbow Nationals, if you like—become invisible urban subjects and the white masculine body becomes the defining presence on the landscape.

NOTES

1. <http://www.gaynetcapetown.co.za> (11/11/00)
2. <http://www.steamers.co.za> (07/13/01)
3. <http://www.gaynetcapetown.co.za> (16/11/00)

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3. Visualizing Homosexualities in Africa—*Dakan*: An Interview with Filmmaker Mohamed Camara

Beti Ellerson

When the film *Dakan* hit the scene in the United States in 1997, it was welcomed enthusiastically in black gay communities. A gay male African friend called me the day after viewing the film expressing his excitement at seeing images that reflected him and his experiences. He felt affirmed and visible as a gay African man. He felt that the film had Africanized gayness, thus showing the specificities of homosexuality in Africa. Many gay film festivals included *Dakan* in their film listings. As a critic of African cinema, I began to take notice that gay communities had given the film another life outside of the general African film circuit in which the majority of African films circulate. The film had become a sort of manifesto or an affirmation of black gay identity, both for gay Africans who live in the West as well as black gays of African descent. I also noticed during the screening of *Dakan* at the Gay and Lesbian Film Festival of Washington, DC, “Reel Affirmations” in the fall of 1998, which was heavily attended by white gay men, that there was a strong identification with the film by the audience as a whole.

While many of those in attendance had never seen an African film before, this one represented more than an “African film” but a “gay film” with which they could identify. There was definitely universality in its subject matter; for instance, the misunderstanding of the needs and intimate feelings of two young men who loved each other, the rejection of their lifestyles, the intervention of the parents to “cure” this behavior. These are the same experiences that many of the gay men and women in the

audience have had or have seen lovers and friends experience. They have seen similar situations where their parents or neighbors did not accept them. They are familiar with familial attempts to “cure” the gay family member of what was considered to be a psychological disorder, in the same way that the parents of the two young men attempted to “cure” their homosexual children in the film. Thus, the sense of homosexuality as taboo was viewed as universal and not as African.

The film was screened several times in Washington, D.C., during filmmaker Mohamed Camara’s tour in the United States in 1999. A film screening was organized by the Black Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Coalition and held at Howard University in February 1999. The majority of the audience was comprised of black gay men. The question-and-answer session definitely revealed both the level of interest that black gay men from the diaspora had in getting more specific information about homosexuality in Africa, and it also showed the level of affirmation that African men experienced. In one instance, a gay Senegalese man came to the open microphone to express his pride in being a homosexual from Senegal and stated that it was the second time that he had seen the film and was overwhelmed by it. Receiving applause from the audience, he further stated that the entire gay population of Africa thanked Camara and that by making the film, he had pulled back the curtains of hypocrisy and this was the first time that he had seen this done.

Several of the diasporan¹ men recounted specific details that they had heard about homosexuality in Africa and were looking for even more information from Camara. After the screening, several friends and I continued some aspects of the discussion brought out in the question-and-answer session. I sensed a certain frustration that some of the men experienced because Camara was not able to give them a deeper understanding or perhaps more detail about homosexual life in Africa during the discussion. For instance, they wanted to know if in fact the scene at the end of the film was realistic, that a homosexual couple could go away and live their lives together. Could two people in a homosexual relationship really live openly together, at least in Guinea? Another person wanted to know about homosexual experiences beyond the “fete divas” and “party dandies” that Camara described as his knowledge of homosexuality in Africa; that “effeminate men” were accepted in some circles—especially among women—as entertainers.

For instance, during the question-and-answer session one man said to Camara:

You stated that the first time that you met or saw a homosexual was when you were in Europe at the age of twenty-three; I wonder if you could tell us

a little about your earlier years back home in Guinea, what you experienced in the way of stories that you heard, or any other type of information you received about homosexual life or homosexuality in Guinea or other parts of Africa for that matter.

He further stated that he had a friend from Africa who told him stories when growing up that revealed a rich life, perhaps not equivalent to homosexuality or homosexual lifestyles as known in U.S. culture, but showing that there was the existence of homosexuality and that there was mention of these experiences during the generation of his parents and grandparents. Camara replied:

It is true that gay relationships or homosexuality presented in the film is not the way that it is viewed by the great majority of people in my country. Homosexuality is very much accepted in the community. The reason is simple: in people's view a male homosexual is someone who is very feminine and who imitates women; they are the friends of women or they are close with women. So when there is a party or a social gathering it is the homosexuals who come to make the party alive. Because they know how to do the traditional dances, they dance well and they make people laugh. So in that sense homosexuals are very accepted and integrated into society. But the minute that you say that a homosexual is a man who makes love with another man or a woman who makes love with another woman that is when the problem starts. Because they don't even understand how that is possible. So there is a certain level of confusion in people's understanding about the situation.

Two days after the screening at Howard University, I arranged an audiotaped interview with Camara. Some of the issues brought out in the interview may be more apparent to those familiar with the debates in African cinema around the questions of the targeted audience of African films and the subjects that African filmmakers address in their films. Some African filmmakers resist a sense of duty that they feel is imposed upon them: to focus on African realities, to teach African people about their history and culture through film. While Camara may appear a bit too relativistic in his insistence that because he is an individual he should be allowed to film what he likes, the statement is made within the context of African filmmakers' sense of responsibility, which may also put an undue burden upon them. Also in the interview, I attempted to give a bit of background to Camara's evolution into filmmaking. The interview was conducted in French. Below is my translation of the interview.

Beti Ellerson: The three films that you have made present a trilogy with a focus on themes considered taboo in Africa. In your first

film, *Denko*, there was an incestuous relationship between a mother and son, in the second film, *Minka*, a child commits suicide, and in the third film, *Dakan*, two young men show their love for each other. What brought about the choice of these themes? Did you think initially that you wanted to do a trilogy, or that your work would touch on taboo subjects? Why these choices?

Mohamed Camara: I did not actually choose them. I write. Later I realize that I have written something that people are not used to seeing in the cinema. Afterward it is labeled taboo. For me a taboo exists because people name it as such. A problem becomes one when people view it as such. For me, a subject is a subject; what counts is the manner in which it is treated as it relates to the image, the sentiments, the sound, the emotions. This is what interests me. I am a filmmaker. My purpose is to show, or to share the emotions I have with another person and my feelings regarding the society in which I evolve. I lived in Africa up until my early adulthood. I also have the chance to live in Europe. Thus, I have the possibility to have a different perspective on my continent. I was born and raised in the city in Africa; thus, I speak about life today. I speak about the period of my lifetime.

BE: Of course, you are bringing out situations that other filmmakers before you have done. Their work has also been criticized. Thirty years ago, Ousmane Sembene's *La Noire de . . .* was criticized for its presentation of suicide. Also, his short story/film *La Genese blanche/ Niaye* treated the taboo subject of incest. More recently, Safi Faye's *Mossane* brought out incestuous feelings that a brother had toward his sister. So, yes, these subjects are visualized by filmmakers and have been from the beginning . . .

MC: In any society, you will find this taboo. People do not want to talk about incest, child suicide, or homosexuality either. But these are things that may occur or situations that do exist. What interests a filmmaker is to attempt to show these things; he is the spokesperson for the people, and he puts the finger on these things. When one speaks of the essential things in life, generally people talk about them and try to find solutions. That is the role of a filmmaker in any society. There are, of course, people who do not want to take

on this responsibility, while others do. I am among those who want to take on this responsibility, to talk about things so that people will stop closing their eyes to things. Still, in 1999 people continue to say that homosexuality does not exist in Africa. We must be courageous, go inside of ourselves, and say that we need to take responsibility to do what needs to be done.

BE: I get the impression that you are caught in crossfire. It has been said that the things that you present in *Dakan* do not exist,² although you certainly have an artistic license to present non-actual situations in a fiction film. There appears to be some level of hostility toward you from Africans who ask why you made this film. On the other hand, you have the gay communities in the West that have given the film another life outside of the general African film circuit and identify very strongly with the film. What I meant by your being in crossfire is that at the same time, the gay communities that have embraced this film want to know more. I felt in the discussion that took place more recently at the screening at Howard University of mostly gay black men that this film has opened another level of interest in terms of the manifestation of homosexual lifestyles in Africa. I felt that there was a certain frustration because you were not able to give them a deeper understanding or perhaps more detail during the discussion. I don't know if that is exactly where you are located, in crossfire, but, at any rate, there are these two worlds: those who are hostile and those who hunger for more.

MC: Those who are hostile think that one must stay within the confines of what has already been done. In other words, the usual subjects, the themes that take place in the village. I think it is important to focus on themes around the village environment. But it is not good that everyone always does the same things. The more we are able to treat diverse perspectives on African cultures, the more we will be able to further African cinema. We must not be confining. That is why our cinema is called "tapioca cinema," because there is a predominance of themes around folklore and the village. We even admit to ourselves that there is no evolution in our cinema. Yet we are the first, at least among the "pseudo-intellectuals," to say, "well, it is not a subject characteristic of Africa, it should not be treated, because it does not exist in Africa." People with these attitudes set up the obstacles. They do not allow filmmakers the freedom to create. We Africans reject a certain inventiveness in our cultural producers, but at the same time, we want our cinema to advance. How is this possible? What a contradiction. Artists must be able to create what they envision, or what is in their imaginary; they must be able to foresee what could happen. So many of the other filmmakers around the world do this, so why not African filmmakers? We have the possibility to reflect, create,

imagine, to satisfy our audiences, so we should be allowed to do our work.

BE: Do you think that there was a homophobic aspect to the responses to this film or a purist attitude that views your interpretation of the events that took place as noncredible or not possible in the way that you constructed them? Of course, as we just discussed, there are those who say that it does not exist at all in Africa, homosexuality.

MC: To me it does not matter whether homosexuality exists or does not exist to do a fiction film about it. In the present day, one cannot deny its existence, unless the person is a hypocrite. Each African has her/his notion of Africa. I am as different from others as they are from me. Why am I not allowed to treat a subject in Africa in the way that I want to do so. I am not obliged to accept the vision of another. Otherwise, I would be a mere clone of that person. I have my perspective of Africa and I am presenting it according to that vision.

BE: It appeared that the gay audience at the recent film screening at Howard University was somewhat disappointed when you announced that you were heterosexual. Perhaps they found it difficult that you could make a film about same-gender intimacy in Africa and are not homosexual.

MC: There was a similar reaction by my African compatriots when the film was screened at Cannes. My wife accompanied me to the screening. The response was, "Camara does a film about homosexuality and then he brings his wife to hide his homosexuality. Does he think we are fools by showing up with a woman, when we know that he must be homosexual?" I will say that I am not threatened by this kind of attitude. I have nothing to prove to anyone. I am free to be homosexual or to not be homosexual. And still at another question-and-answer session after the screening of *Dakan* I also found that the audience was disappointed that I was heterosexual. They would have preferred that I was homosexual. The question was asked how could someone not homosexual do a film about homosexuals. The same question could be asked how could a homosexual filmmaker make a film about heterosexuals. We certainly know that there are many gay filmmakers who do so. There are antiracist organizations that are run by white people, yet they attempt to understand the situation of the black person. How will there be progress if each person stays in her/his world?

BE: This leads to my question: where did the idea come from to focus on this subject, and also, could you talk about the scenario?

MC: Each person has her/his life, journey, and way of seeing the world. I remember when I first came to the theater I encountered a French woman who appeared to like me a lot; however, when I flirted with her, she became annoyed and I did not understand. At some point, she responded by saying, "in fact, I am not attracted to men."

I responded, "neither am I." Later my brother explained to me that there were women who liked women, and men who like men. You do not have to have the same lifestyle as theirs to work with them.

Ten years later, I was in Burkina Faso shooting my first short film, *Denko*. I was sitting with my producer having a bite to eat. We noticed two teenage boys hugging and kissing each other as they entered the courtyard. They asked a man who lived there the whereabouts of his wife. He told them that she was in the bathroom. It was a bathroom at the same time open, but there was an enclosed area where she was bathing. Though we could not see her body, it was clear that she was nude. The two boys entered and began washing her back, scrubbing this part and that part. I was stunned; the people around me noticed my amazement and explained, "anyway they are girls." When I returned to my hotel, I began writing the first lines of *Dakan*.

BE: Thus, these two separate experiences, ten years apart, were the catalysts for the film.

MC: Yes, since this subject is never talked about.

BE: While I understood the scene with the two boys being a stimulus for an idea about the theme of homosexuality, I must admit that I did not quite understand how your experience with the French lesbian was a catalyst as well. Are you saying that before meeting her, you had never heard of homosexuality and that this introduced you to this lifestyle?

MC: Never, the first time that I had ever heard of homosexuality was when I went to France.

BE: You must have heard about homosexuality in some context when growing up in Africa?

MC: No, homosexuality is viewed differently in my country, in my society. I would say that 90 percent of the people in Guinea think that a homosexual is an effeminate man who likes to imitate women. Thus, he is someone who has a high social place. He is the women's friend. Every time there is a wedding, baptism, or a happy occasion, they are the ones who come to entertain. They are completely integrated. People are entertained, amused, they laugh. The homosexual is viewed as such. But as soon as it is revealed that, in fact, a homosexual is not that at all, but rather a man who sleeps with another man, or a woman who sleeps with another woman, then of course, people do not want to talk about it.

BE: You stated that a homosexual man is considered effeminate; what is the attitude toward a lesbian?

MC: Generally, in my society, women are married. They are obliged to marry; thus, their status is somewhat different. When a woman is married, that changes people's attitude toward her. There are women who have a succession of marriages and divorces. They are viewed as being possessed by a spirit that does not like men. The question that

is not posed is, "Is it the spirit that does not like men or is it the woman who does not like men?" However, our society is constructed in such a way that those questions are not posed. When one is viewed to be possessed by a spirit, no further questions are asked.

BE: So her homosexuality is accepted, but as an abnormality, and thus, she is viewed as being different?

MC: Yes, but she is not defined as a homosexual, but rather someone possessed by a spirit. There are cases where a widow decides that she does not want to remarry because she does not want to replace her deceased husband with another man. Is it that she does not want to replace her deceased husband with another man or is it that deep inside, she knows that she does not want to be with a man? Those questions can be asked but are not. Because the response would be difficult to accept. Also, the pressure of the family is so strong that at one time or another she marries. Of course, there is a similar problem for men. For instance, in a certain neighborhood everyone knows that someone is a homosexual. Bad things are said about him when he is not around: "he is a homosexual, he engages in acts that are not good," and so on. However, when he comes around, he is respected, because he has a wife and child, he has a family. Thus, people's attitudes change according to the social status of the person.

BE: At the same time, a person cannot live openly with a person of the same gender . . .

MC: No.

BE: So the end of the film, when the two young men go off together as lovers, comes from your own imagination of how this story could end?

MC: It is fiction.

BE: It is this sense that I felt in the audience at the Howard University screening. They wanted to know if in fact the scene at the end of the film could actually happen, that a homosexual couple could go away and live their lives together.

MC: But they did not ask me this question!

BE: This was one of the main questions posed by several of the black diasporan men during a discussion we had.

MC: But they never posed this question to me during the discussion at the screening.

BE: Well, I will ask it now. Is it a reality that two people in a homosexual relationship could live openly together, at least in Guinea? Well, in fact, we really don't know what happens since in the end they go off together, leaving Sory's wife and child behind. Where they go we do not know.

MC: Me either, I don't know where.

BE: Then what did you want to have the viewer feel or think?

- MC: I can't really say. I only know that when two people love each other, when one chooses among thousands of things, it takes a certain amount of courage to assume it. When one takes charge and attempts to resolve one's problems, one remains true to oneself, and that is often when one is happiest. Thus, it is a hope that I wanted to show through the experience of this young man. This is also for Africa as well. The day that Africa looks at its own problems face to face, it is then when things will evolve.
- BE: This hope in the end of the film remains vague; we don't know what will happen . . .
- MC: There are several possibilities, perhaps they will go live in the bush and stay there together. Perhaps Sory's father will come. Perhaps their love will cease. One does not know what will happen. When one goes in search of Eden, one does not know if it will be found.
- BE: You played the role of Sory's father in the film; could you talk about your role and your choice to be the father in this film? I was struck by your role as the father so vehemently opposed to his son's homosexuality. Here the filmmaker writes a film that gives hope, but at the same time, he plays the role of such a hostile father. Interesting!
- MC: Well, it is a question that I haven't been asked before, and that I find very interesting. However, I did not write the role for myself. I wanted to play Manga. I think that an actor who can play the role of a homosexual can have a powerful experience. Unfortunately, when I finished writing the script I realized that I was too old for the character. I was obliged to find another person. The only role that would be suitable for me was the role of the father. In fact, the producer suggested the role for me. He saw that I was set on playing the role of Manga and told me that no matter how well I acted I could never be convincing in the role of an eighteen-year old.
- BE: Did you feel a level of contradiction playing the role as a hostile father toward his homosexual son while at the same time as a filmmaker you wanted to reveal a certain reality in Africa, that of homosexual love.
- MC: He was a universal father; there is no contradiction. Most fathers and mothers feel opposition. That is what this film is trying to show, that despite the differences in human beings, there are things that are universal, people make love, there are families. In any society, we know that when one's child is homosexual there are problems. Thus, this problem exists in Africa as well. The African father is no different from any other.
- BE: Could you talk a bit about the actors? Were they gay?
- MC: No.
- BE: What was it like for them as actors and what was the general ambiance during the shooting of the film? Was it shot openly? It was announced during the Gay and Lesbian Film Festival of Washington, D.C. that

the shooting was done clandestinely. There was a lot of discussion around the fact that this was a courageous act because it was done with a great deal of censure.

MC: No, this was not true. In fact, it was done with the government's moral support.

BE: To return to the question regarding the actors, though they are not gay, they openly kissed each other and seemed comfortable in their role. How did you choose them?

MC: I went to over 50 high schools in Guinea, and in each case the high school students said that while they would like to act in my film they did not want to play the role of a homosexual. I tried to get them to understand but to no avail. After realizing how discouraged I was by the fact that I could not find an actor for the role of Manga, my colleagues suggested that I approach my younger brother. I never thought about him. I told him that I would like him to play the role of a homosexual in the film and I tried to explain to him what that meant. He did not understand. I explained further and he refused. I decided that it was okay if that is how he felt. However, he saw how truly discouraged I was since I could not find a person for the role, and feeling that he was doing me an injustice by refusing, he decided to play the role. I asked him if he realized the implications of playing this role and told him that I would not oblige him to play if he really did not want to. He accepted the role, though he still did not quite understand the character. At that point, it was easy to find the second actor who would play the role of Sory, since there was already the actor for the role of Manga. Nonetheless, they both insisted that their girlfriends be present during the shooting. Each time they completed a scene they kissed their girlfriends and everything worked out fine. The members of the crew who generally work with me were initially surprised, but then they did their job. They said, in any case, it is cinema, and we are doing our job. Now and then during the shooting, motorists would stop to look to see what was going on. They were told that a film was being shot. When asked the subject of the film, they expressed surprise and then asked who was the filmmaker. When they were told it was Mohamed Camara they would reply, "Oh Camara, he is a nonconformist anyway."

BE: As you describe the actors, there seemed to be a sense of taboo in playing the role of gay lovers to the extent that they wanted their girlfriends to be present so that they would not doubt their heterosexuality.

MC: No, I think it was to prove it to themselves.

BE: In the film, there is an explicit kissing scene where the two young men show a great deal of passion. This was especially daring in a film where the two actors were hesitant to play the roles. We also find that in African films in general, although heterosexual couples show

affection, and it is clear that they love each other and are attracted to each other, there are often not explicit scenes where physical affection is shown. Why this in your face kissing scene?

MC: Because homosexuals kiss each other. I am not talking about an Africa 50 years ago; I am talking about Africa today, and people kiss each other.

BE: Of course, we know that homosexual and heterosexual couples kiss each other. But the physical act of kissing is not often shown in African films.

MC: But that depends on the choice of the person making the film. It depends on whether I want to go all the way, or if I don't. If I had used adult actors in the film, I would have had them go right to the sexual act. Why not? Either I treat a subject or I don't. I am not obliged to treat any particular subject, but if I decide to do so, I will go all the way. Everyone knows that men make love with men, make love with women, and men and women make love with each other. Why not show it?

BE: Of course, you are right, if one were to look at more recent African films, we do see a more explicit display of sexual intimacy. Another point, you have also said, is that it is a love story, which means that it could be a love story about a woman and man who love each other or two men who love each other, as is the case in this story. However, do you think that because it is a story of two men who love each other that there is a different angle from which this story must be told? It is not simply a love story, at least in the way it is considered conventionally.

MC: Of course, it changes many things since people are not used to seeing this in our films. This definitely changes everyone's point of view. It also has a shock effect. But people know that this exists. I think what is not good is to have to do things in hiding. If things are done clandestinely there is a certain kind of unhealthiness about it. Thus, if one wants something it is better to talk about it and attempt to find a solution to live better. For instance, there are support groups for people who want to withdraw from drug abuse. Talking about their problems, attempting to find solutions to them, provides relief; it is a healthy way to overcome it. I think no matter what the problem is, if there is no way to discuss it openly, it will get worse. I made this film so that there could be an open discussion, so that people may begin to discuss among themselves and that the entire community may gain from it.

BE: When I look at this film, in the context of generational conflicts between parents and children, it reminds me of other African films where parents are opposed to their children's choice of love interests because of longstanding differences between two ethnic groups, or conflicts in class and castes, or arranged marriages, and so on. At the same time, the children refuse to accept the partners designated by their

parents or society. These conflicts are often brought out in African films. I saw the theme in *Dakan* as an example of another situation where the young people of this generation want to love who they please and live freely and openly another lifestyle, different from their parents or perhaps the community in which they live. I don't know if for you too it was a vision toward a more open society where people may be able to refuse the choices of their parents or society in general . . . ?

MC: My main objective is to have people talk.

BE: About homosexuality in Africa?

MC: Yes.

BE: Why this issue, why have you taken on this fight?

MC: The issue is about those who suffer because there is so much silence around this subject. They cannot be open about their lives, they are not able to talk about it and this is a problem both for them and for our society in general. What is important for me is, as I said before, that the film facilitates a discussion in Africa.

BE: So, you think that when this film is released in Africa, it will facilitate this kind of discussion regarding homosexuality.

MC: But it already has.

BE: I was under the impression that the film has not yet been released.

MC: The film has already been discussed among the press in Africa and thus it is already known in some sectors of the African population.

BE: You envision the discussions to take what kind of form?

MC: I don't have any one particular discussion in mind. The point is that people discuss it, whether they think that homosexuality is a good thing or that it is abnormal is beyond the scope of my responsibility. My role is to get a discussion started.

BE: As a critic of African cinema, I have been following this film and have noticed how it has taken a life of its own beyond the usual audiences of African film; it has a life within the gay circuits of the West. Did you have any idea that the film would be embraced by the gay communities?

MC: I had no idea. I was very surprised.

BE: Why?

MC: I made the film without any particular audience in mind. I made the film because I thought it was a subject to be brought out in the open and I thought that now was the time to do it. It has taken on, as you stated, a particular significance for gays. So much the better if it has been able to solicit such passion. While I am very surprised, I am also very pleased.

BE: Since you are not homosexual and do not live a gay lifestyle, do you find that within this world of gays who view this film as a kind of manifesto of homosexuality in Africa, that you are not able to really explore this lifestyle more deeply in the film?

MC: Well, I am not an anthropologist, ethnologist, nor a sociologist.

BE: And since you are not gay either, it appears that you have not been able to further the conversation regarding homosexuality in Africa in terms of giving details beyond the scenario of your film, and I sense that is what was sought from you.

MC: The film says what I think. Through the film, viewers are able to sense what I think about the subject. I think that the film had a certain force that provoked gay viewers to want to know more. Perhaps it is because I am *not* gay that the film was able to succeed. Perhaps as a homosexual, I would not have been able to treat the subject with such compassion. Perhaps as a homosexual, I would have been too forceful in wanting to make my point and it would have been overdone. Perhaps another frustration for the viewers is that there is not a continuation. It ends the way it ends. I was asked, would there be a sequel?

BE: Will there be?

MC: I don't know, life may tell what happens one day in the future.

BE: In fact, in all of your films the viewers are left to contemplate what will happen afterward . . .

MC: If the viewer is not allowed to think, then we filmmakers think of ourselves as more intelligent than the viewer, but in fact it is the reverse. Of course, you had your idea about the ending of the film and perhaps you would have liked it to end differently. But, had it ended as everyone expected, then I would not have left you the choice. What is interesting is what you think you want from the film, after following it from beginning to end. Of course, what you experience will be different from the next person, and so on.

BE: What has been the general feedback or reaction to the film?

MC: There has been a bit of negative feedback about the film, especially from my colleagues. But, on an international level, I would say it has had a great deal of visibility. People find that the film was done with much tenderness, it was a courageous act, and that the film merits applause. At the same time, it has brought me many problems. However, I do not make films for an immediate success but rather, films for the future.

NOTES

1. "Diasporan" is used in this article to describe people of African descent in the Americas.
2. After the screening of *Dakan* during the 1997 African Studies Association Conference, there was a heated debate among Africanist scholars from North America and Africa, some saying this does not and could not ever happen, and others saying yes, it does.

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4. Hausa Concepts of Masculinity and the ‘*Yan Daudu*’

Frank A. Salamone

There has long been an argument between advocates of nature and nurture regarding the function each has in shaping human behavior. Recently, sociobiologists such as Chagnon (1988) and Fox (1997) have had particular influence in shaping the argument regarding the inherent, or biological, nature of masculinity. The significance of the cultural construction of masculinity and femininity and of gender roles in general has been relatively neglected in the elevation of biological theories in the social sciences and their employment to explain cultural issues. I am not denying the importance of biology, simply stressing the manner in which culture gives meaning to it in its social landscape. (For relevant works on sociobiology see Barkow et al. 1992 and Boyd and Richerson 1994.)

Specifically, this chapter examines the manner in which the Hausa people of Nigeria define ideal masculinity. That definition has a role to play within the complex ethnic sociocultural framework of West Africa in which the Hausa operate. Much of what it is to be a Hausa is inextricably bound up within the Hausa concept of masculinity. Challenges to that concept, and reinforcements of it, come from “men who talk like women,” the ‘*yan daudu*’.

Ideal masculine behavior and challenges to it flow from a cultural definition of masculinity shaped to permit the Hausa to gain success as rulers and traders within their cultural landscape. Maintenance of ethnic identity toward other groups is essential in structuring daily interaction in the West African landscape. This maintenance of ethnic identity is particularly crucial at the borders of the area, where groups can and do switch

ethnic identities to gain favorable positions. Therefore, although the Hausa are concerned with guarding their concept of masculinity throughout their territory, they are exceptionally careful in safeguarding their concept of the ideal masculine role at the borders where new recruits to the Hausa identity are made.

THE HAUSA IN THE CONTEXT OF WEST AFRICA

There are about 50 million Hausa speakers in West Africa, primarily in Northern Nigeria and southern Niger. A common language masks immense variation from community to community, a variation made greater by the process of "becoming Hausa," in which minority groups change their ethnic identities to gain various privileges reserved for the ruling class.

The "Hausa" consist of the Hausa-speaking population of Northern Nigeria and those areas of Niger in which Hausa is spoken plus those Hausa who have emigrated for trade or other purposes to other countries such as Ghana, Mali, Burkina Faso, and other lands. In addition, indigenous people often apply the term to strangers who speak Hausa and practice Islam. This is a departure from the original use of the name to denote the Habe people's language. The Habe established seven independent but related states in the area: Biram, Daura, Kano, Katsina, Gobir, Rano, and Zazzau or Zaria.

The Fulani conquered these states in the early nineteenth century, waging a war against them for not being Muslim enough. Under Usman dan Fodio, they established the Sokoto Caliphate, incorporating fifteen states headed by Fulani Emirs. The Habe set up states at Abuja and Maradi, successors to those of Zaria and Katsina. They also established a new state at Argunga. These states have preserved Habe customs, largely independent of Fulani ones.

At the same time, the Fulani rulers of the conquered Hausa states increasingly incorporated the Habe customs, blending them with the Islamic Fulani customs they had brought with them. Inter-marriage further complicated the picture, mixing peoples and customs. Thus "Hausa" now refers to the original Habe population and the mixed Hausa-Fulani population of rulers. Moreover, it is often extended to other people such as the Kanuri, Taureg, and other West African people who have assumed Hausa language and culture to gain some kind of political or economic advantage in their interactions with other ethnic groups.

The term Hausa applied to pagan Hausa speakers scattered in the middle of the Hausa area. Although these people are called Maguzawa, or

magicians, most people consider them Hausa as well. Many of the '*yan daudu*' and shamanic practices that challenge Islamic hegemony and Hausa masculine concepts are rooted in Maguzawa religious practices.

The coming of British colonialism offered a further set of challenges to the ever-evolving mix of gender and political concepts. The relative gender equality of the Maguzawa and Habe was challenged by the more rigid male dominance of the Fulani and their eventual partners, the British. Christianity and Islam agreed on the appropriateness of male dominance, for the good of the weak female. Men had to shelter and protect women, while women tempted men from their duties. No matter what the orthodoxy, the older virtues kept emerging from the margins of society in the form of alliances of women and '*yan daudu*' with parishioners of the older religion.

HAUSA WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF WEST AFRICAN HISTORY: ETHNICITY AND GENDER

Gender relationships and concepts of masculinity must be understood within the context of Hausa history and ethnic relationships. The Hausa have been in the process of expansion for many centuries. Much of that expansion has been peaceful, based on their skill at statecraft and commerce, a great deal of which is built upon family relationships and negotiations. Patrilineal family ties are the strands that tie the web of relationships together.

Business is conducted with handshakes and one's word. The system of markets, traders, and families binds together the various parts of the state and subsequently the state itself is bound to outside units. For example, village markets in rural areas meet periodically, on three- or four-day cycles. These markets are tied to those in larger settlements that have daily markets. In turn, the larger markets are bound to a still larger central market in the regional capital. Officials tied similarly to the central authority govern each of these markets.

Similarly, Muslim Hausa social organization is stratified. Occupation, wealth, and patron-client relationships play a part in the system, but birth is at its root. Family is perhaps the key factor in the hierarchical ladder. Sons are expected to follow their father's occupation and his wishes. Society, in theory and ideally, is held together by filial loyalty. The patron-client relationship is patterned on the father-son relationship, and loyalty to the Sultan and emirs, indeed to all officials, is that of family members to one's father.

Although less complex in social organization than the Muslim Hausa, the Maguzawa are also organized along patrilineal lines. Their villages are

composed of exogamous patrilineal kin. Both Muslim and “pagan” Hausa form their organizations around male figures. The Maguzawa, however, retain greater privileges for women to go out in public, usually exposing their breasts with no reproach. The Maguzawa do not hold to wife-seclusion in any circumstance. For the Muslim Hausa, wife-seclusion is an ideal put into practice by those who can afford it. It helps distinguish them from their neighbors and serves as an ethnic boundary marker. Moreover, patrilineal kinship provides the fulcrum on which marriage alliances are formed, with men seeking marriage with their patrilineal parallel cousins, further emphasizing the male tie.

Men serve as household heads and are responsible for agriculture, collecting activities, marketing, sewing, laundry, repairs, and transportation. Women are responsible for cooking, house cleaning, childcare, and also follow craft specialties and carry on trade, often through young daughters. Women are expected to be modest and to stay within the household unless accompanied by male relatives or older postmenopausal women.

Historically, the Hausa and Hausa-Fulani ruled over local tribes, appointing village heads. These local communities were held as fiefs to feudal lords. Again, this system emphasized male rule and a particular image of masculinity in which calmness and male solidarity were essential. The subject tribes often were not Muslim and their women were allowed greater freedoms. Therefore, control of Hausa women was essential in structuring ethnic relations and maintaining ethnic boundaries. Position within the social structure and the cultural landscape determined gender relationships and cultural definitions.

British colonial rule, beginning in the early twentieth century, changed the system. In general, however, the British system of indirect rule simply strengthened the central authority while pretending to rule through local rulers. The British relied heavily on their Hausa-Fulani allies to maintain control of Northern Nigeria. In Niger, the French made no pretext of indirect rule and simply centralized the system openly. The result was a greater emphasis on male rule as personified in the dual mandate of colonial and native authorities.

Finally, the Hausa became more identified with Islam under colonial rule. The British found it necessary to strengthen Muslim leaders who were their allies against “pagans” who sought to resist the imposition of colonial rule or Hausa hegemony. The British perpetrated the fiction that Northern Nigeria was mainly Islamic. The truth was different in 1900. Allegiance to the West African Fulani Islamic ethos of male dominance helped unite Hausa and distinguish them from surrounding “pagan” peoples such as the Gungawa, Kamberi, and others (Michael Smith 1955; Salamone 1998).

HAUSA ISLAMIC PRACTICES

Given the landscape in which the Hausa exist, the Islam of many Hausa groups is syncretic. Faulkingham (1975) notes that the Muslim and “pagan” Hausa in the southern Niger village he studied believed in the same spirits and in the same origin myth for these spirits as well. According to the myth, Allah called Adama (“the woman”) and Adamu (“the man”) to Him and bade them to bring all their children. They hid some of their children. Allah asked them where their children were. They said that they had brought all their children to Him. He then told them that the hidden children would belong to the spirit world.

The Hausa, therefore, share the common Nigerian practice of maintaining systems of belief with ancient roots in the area alongside the universal religions of Islam or Christianity. These beliefs combine family spirits with relationships to the primordial spirits of a particular site, providing supernatural sanction to the relationships between claims on resources. Indigenous theology links dead ancestors to the spirits of place in a union that protects claims and relationships to the land. Spirits of place include trees, rock outcroppings, a river, snakes, and other animals and objects. Rituals and prayers dedicated to the spirits of family and place reinforce loyalty to communal virtues and the authority of the elders in defending ancient beliefs and practices. In return, the spirits offer protection from misfortune, adjudication, and divination through seers, or shamans. Evil is appropriately punished, for shamans or diviners work with the spirits to ensure good and counteract evil.

The continuation of traditional religious rituals and beliefs among the Hausa is not incompatible with counting oneself as a Muslim, for among the Hausa, individual participation in Islam varies according to a number of variables, including wealth and power. The more wealth and power one has, the greater the strict adherence to Islam. Furthermore, traditional Hausa religion, which the Maguzawa (“pagan” or “traditional Hausa,” considered “people of magic”) continue to practice, has attracted a number of Muslim Hausa at one time or another.

This religion is spirit-centered. Following Islamic Hausa hierarchical principles, the spirits form hierarchies of good and evil. Sacrificial offerings and spirit possession are prominent characteristics of the worship. This family-centered religion has a number of diviners who serve as curers. Moreover, the majority of Muslim Hausa, who participate in the spirit possession cult, or Bori cult, are women and members of the lower classes.

Jacqueline Monfouga-Nicolas (1967) states that most members of the spirit possession cult are women and prostitutes. In other words, they are

socially marginal people. Michael Onwuejeogwu (1969) argues that Bori cults have a homogeneity of organization and meaning throughout Hausaland. Moreover, they are, in his opinion, vestiges of Habe religion. Faulkingham (1975) disagrees with these findings, noting that there is more diversity in Hausaland than Nicolas and Onwuejeogwu grant. Muslims and *arna* (pagans) believe in the same spirits, but Muslims claim that they do not need to perform rituals to these spirits. However, many do perform them, depending on the occasion, and many consult the bori doctor for aid.

One finds the '*yan daudu*' in these marginal areas of religion. In this system, men who are more or less exclusively homosexual (not always, but often transvestite or at least effeminate males) have sexual relationships with men not culturally distinguished from other men. These "men who talk like women" form a link between the old non-Muslim Hausa and the Muslim Hausa, indicating where stress lines still exist between the old and new Hausa identities, for the coming of Islam to West African societies necessitated a rethinking of numerous cultural and social arrangements, not least of which were the relationship between men and women and the organization of family life.

Muslim Hausa social organization is highly stratified. Not only is stratification based on occupation, wealth, birth, and patron-client ties; it is also based on seniority and gender, even within the family. The system is one also marked by patronage. Wealth and power confer great prestige on men, who form patron-client ties. The stress on power and dominance permeates society, except in its marginal area. One's status is also determined by the status of one's family, and within the family, males, at least theoretically, are dominant.

Both traditional and Muslim Hausa form patrilineal ties, building their ties on a patrilocal extended family that occupies a compound. The head is a male who directs cooperative activities, and compound members cooperate in agriculture and share in its products. Occupational specialties are pursued on a more individual basis. There is a great deal of formal respect and prescribed avoidance behavior among Hausa. The *mai gida* (compound head) expects great deference. Women generally are secluded whenever finances allow.

The participation of women in the bori cult among the Muslim Hausa, however, is not necessarily a sign of their lack of power. Kabir (n.d.) states that the status of women in early Hausa society was high. In his words, they were "not confined." They interacted freely with men, marrying at a later age than is now common among the Muslim Hausa. They were able to own their own farms. They were also important members of the Bori cult. Furthermore, they had a significant role in domestic and clan religious

rituals. Interestingly, some Hausa groups had matrilineal inheritance and it was not uncommon for elite women to be queens or titleholders. The famous warrior queen Amina was but one of many Hausa queens. The Hausa even had a title for women in charge of the bori, Bori Magadjiya.

Diviners foretell the future and deal with personal problems. They fit into the scheme of religious specialists, one that includes priests and magicians. The boundary among the categories is a shifting one at best. Diviners continue to play an important part in determining the causes of luck, both good and bad fortune. This includes the nature and cause of disease. Among the Hausa it is necessary to point out that many of the Muslim holy men are themselves types of diviners who make amulets, which include decoctions of the ink in which pious texts have been written. They also manipulate sand patterns or use the stars to tell the future.

Significantly, there is some discussion of males who attend Bori rituals as being homosexuals. The Bori rituals among the Hausa appear to be rituals of inversion, and among the Hausa, homosexuality is considered an inversion of appropriate male heterosexuality. The Bori cult is widely understood as a refuge from the strongly patriarchal ideal of Hausa Islam. Thus, both women and effeminate males find some respite there. Although ranked low in official Hausa hierarchies, Hausa males are not only strongly attached to their mothers and sisters, they also have a fear of the mysterious power of women, a fear found in many male-dominated societies.

Although the Bori cult may be a "survival" from pre-Islamic Hausa religion, it differs among the Muslim Hausa from that practiced among related peoples, such as the Gungawa, or among non-Muslim Hausa, such as the Maguzawa. It has a different meaning for these Hausa. Thus, when Besmer (1983) states that the spirit rides the possessed and that this is somehow a symbol of homosexuality, it does not mean that it has the same meaning for the Maguzawa, Gungawa, or other non-Muslim groups who have the Bori cult. Among the Muslim Hausa, homosexual transvestites, or '*yan daudu*, play a prominent role. *Daudu*, a praise name for any Malidoma, or ranked title, here specifically refers to the Prince, a bori spirit who is a handsome young man.

The '*yan daudu* sell various foods at ceremonies, mainly luxury foods such as fried chicken, and serve as pimps for prostitutes. Women who attend Hausa Bori rituals are deemed to be prostitutes. Renee Pittin (1979) lists three activities for the '*yan daudu*: procuring, cooking, and prostitution. She argues that there is a close tie between prostitutes and '*yan daudu*. Moreover, in combining male and female roles, the '*yan daudu* mediate between men and women, occupying an ambiguous category.

Living among the prostitutes further provides a disguise for men seeking homosexual activity. The Bori cult provides a niche for marginal people of all kinds, not simply women or homosexuals. Butchers, night-soil workers, musicians, and poor farmers are welcome there.

MUSLIM HAUSA CONCEPTS OF MASCULINITY AND GENDER RELATIONS

Muslim envoys, originally merchants and wandering teachers and later government sponsored and trained teachers, believe that Islam is the proper religion for men. Islam, they teach, is compatible with the nature of man. It does not ask the impossible of converts. Human nature needs guidance but it is not depraved.

Man by nature is concupiscent. Instead of condemning this concupiscence, Islamic teachers among the Hausa have stressed the wisdom of allowing four wives and as many concubines as one can afford. In Nigeria, wife-seclusion is an Islamic ideal found only among the wealthy Hausa. Its idealization as a goal, however, is an indication of the sex role specificity that Hausa Muslims cherish.

There is a cultural ideal of masculine superiority in which the *maigida* (household head) is the complete master of his home. Reinforcing this ideal is the cultural emphasis on wife-seclusion. Any type of seclusion, even the milder forms among most Muslim Hausa, conflicts with pre-Islamic custom and practice. Therefore, Barkow (1971: 60) argues that Hausa Muslim women frequently turn to courtesanship to escape the confines of married life, seeking to return to the carefree period of their adolescence.

Hausa Muslim men look with disdain on the practice of other groups, which permits the relatively free mixing of men and women in public. They do not like to have women near men even when women have withdrawn to a nearby area to carry on their own activities. There is a great fear of being polluted by the too close presence of women. Moreover, there is a fear that women will betray their husbands, given the opportunity. Since Hausa men expect to betray their wives, it is not difficult to see the origin of their concerns.

Hausa Muslim men have a strong double standard regarding nonmarital sexual intercourse. It is legally impossible for a married man to commit adultery with an unmarried woman. If his wife catches him, he expects her to condemn and attack him, but she cannot divorce him. Indeed, she cannot divorce him if he has sexual relations with a married woman. On the other hand, a woman may have sexual relations only with her husband, but

if she is still nursing a baby, she may not even have sexual relations with him.

A married man has the obligation to treat each of his wives equally. That restriction requires that he have sex with each of his wives, and provide them with children, in turn. Only when a woman has a child is she fully an adult, and only when she has a grown son is she fully secure and protected. Thus, the pressure on men to perform sexually is great. It becomes even greater when one realizes that only wealthy men can have four wives and that wealth generally comes to a select few who tend to be advanced in years. These men tend to fear that their wives are liable to commit adultery if they do not satisfy them sexually and also provide a child, preferably a son, to them.

Thus, there is tremendous pressure on Hausa males to play a difficult masculine role, one that puts a great deal of pressure on them to provide quiet, calm leadership while proving their sexual prowess daily. Their failures are “taken to the public” by their wives who harangue them in the loudest possible manner, throwing their sexual shortcoming in their faces for public amusement. Similarly, failure to provide a wife with a child can lead to further insults and public humiliation. It is a pressure from which many Hausa males seek escape in various ways.

CONCLUSION

Imam has written that there is no single Islamic view of sexuality. He offers a cross-cultural view of Muslim practices over place and time. He writes that the “honor–shame” complex is rare in sub-Saharan Africa. For instance, in Hausaland “honor” killings are unknown, even as a bad joke. Men marry prostitutes eagerly and women may be known to be prostitutes by their families. It is not a favored profession but women are not killed for it either—much less for suspicions of non- or extramarital affairs (Imam 1994).

He also notes that cliterodectomy is not found in all Islamic countries. It varies according to the customs of the area and the interpretation of Islam given in the region. Thus, although found in a number of areas, female genital mutilation in other countries with Muslim communities (e.g., Algeria, Tunisia, Pakistan, Singapore) is unknown or (as in Northern Nigeria) not common among Muslims and considered to be a pagan practice (Dorkenoo and Ellsworth 1992). By contrast, in Northern Nigeria a baby girl may be made to undergo hymenectomy to ensure she can be easily penetrated, although this is apparently a disappearing practice.

Muslim discourses of sexuality vary not only by community, but also over time. For example, Northern Nigeria has been dominantly Muslim at

least since the eighteenth century, some argue the fourteenth century. But, even in the last sixty or seventy years there have been changes in the discourse of sexuality such that *tsarance* (institutionalized premarital lovemaking or sexual play that stops short of actual penetration), which used to be a common and unremarkable practice up to the 1940s and 1950s (Smith 1981), is now considered to be un-Islamic and “rural.” At the other extreme, girls are frequently now not being allowed even to dance at the *kalangu* (drumming and dancing held each market day—Imam 1994).

There is thus some dispute about what constitutes legitimate Islamic practice as opposed to local Muslim interpretation. Even in Nigeria among the Hausa Muslims, there is a continual change in response to colonialism, outside fundamentalist pressure, and modernization. The pressures of Muslim Hausa masculinity, therefore, are increased by the confusion that change generates. There is a marginal area of doubt and old traditions. The ‘*yan daudu*’ occupy that marginal zone between old and new definitions of Hausa and male and female relations. They form a liminal category that subverts general views of Hausa masculinity and gender relationships. As Gaudio notes (1996), study of the ‘*yan daudu*’ sheds light on the manner in which masculine and feminine identities are constructed in Hausa society, and the ways people use language to reproduce and challenge those constructions. Susan O’ Brien’s “Pilgrimage, Power, and Identity: The Role of the Hajj in the Lives of Nigerian Hausa Bori Adepts” (1999) suggests the position the ‘*yan daudu*’ inhabit, a category betwixt and between and therefore sacred. She notes, “host populations have consistently attributed to them other-worldly powers that have marked them as different from the local Muslim populace.” Bori practitioners, including the ‘*yan daudu*’, have played a great part in promoting these otherworldly powers, emphasizing their sacred and dangerous position on the margins of Hausa society.

Given the Hausa position as a category on the margins, since it unites so many disparate peoples and ideologies, it is to be expected that those in power seek to control its meaning. New recruits to the Hausa must prove their adherence to the identity. Within the landscape of West Africa in which they operate, the Hausa occupy a unique niche. Males must be able to predict what other males will do. Family determines position and men provide the means for identifying with family. Gender behavior is rigidly defined for the Hausa Muslim. Women and men who act like women, the ‘*yan daudu*’, threaten the operation of the system and provide a source of instability.

The presence of the ‘*yan daudu*’, neither men nor women, offers glimpses into possibilities of alternative realities, as anomalous categories are meant to do. Moreover, the ‘*yan daudu*’ have sexual relations not only with homo-sexuals but also with heterosexual men, offering a possibility for

at least a temporary escape from the rigid demands of Hausa Muslim masculinity. Their presence, protected by traditional religion, offers a comment on the arbitrary nature of cultural definitions and the mutability of even rigid definitions.

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II. Representing Masculinities

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5. To Be a Man: Changing Constructions of Manhood in *Drum* Magazine, 1951–1965

Lindsay Clowes

Manhood, as represented by the early *Drum*, was achieved through the social recognition of the male roles of husband and father, brother and uncle, son, grandson, and grandfather. In portraying a “man,” the early *Drum* acknowledged the complex and mutually supportive relationships centering on family members inside and outside the home, and provided public recognition of a social “manhood” rooted in a wide variety of domestic obligations inherent in these roles. Over the course of the 1950s this began to change such by the 1960s it was a man’s relationships with his colleagues and bosses that were privileged in the pages of the magazine. At the same time, *Drum* recognized fewer familial commitments to the point that, by the middle of the 1960s a man was represented as having little or no domestic obligations beyond that of financial provider. By the middle of the 1960s, *Drum* was producing images of males that established manhood primarily through relationships with apparently independent and autonomous interactions with non-kin men outside the home, and through sexual relations with women (Clowes 2002).

The first edition of the *African Drum*—later to be known simply as *Drum*—appeared on South African streets in March 1951. The post–World War II society into which the magazine was born was one in which the twin processes of industrialization and urbanization had seen a significant change in South Africa’s racial demography. Replacing the migrant labor workforce upon which white industrialists had previously relied, the 1940s had seen the emergence of an urban black working class that was both “settled” and “permanent” according to a government commission of 1948 (Fagan n.d.: 7). In the 1950s this urban black population was to become *Drum*’s main audience.

Getting off to an uneven start in the first half of 1951, sales of *Drum* rapidly increased to the relief of the magazine's white owner and editor, reaching approximately 100,000 by early 1954 (Sampson 1956: 198). Growth in sales was matched by rising numbers of employees: employees who were, almost without exception, black and male. Even when stories were attributed to women, men were frequently the authors (Driver 1996; Nicol 1991). The audience too, was imagined to be largely male because, as an early editor noted, it was urban black men "who were the main buyers because they had the spare cash" (Sampson 2000). Edited and owned by white men, *Drum* magazine was written and produced by black men for an urban black male audience. These men produced images of other men: local and international black sportsmen, politicians, entertainers, businessmen, and even the criminals who competed with the images of white Hollywood gangsters that, as Fenwick (1996) notes, had been so influential in shaping the urban South African gang cultures of the postwar period.

The political climate of the time was marked by the growth of authoritarianism, political repression, and racial segregation. Intimately touching the lives of producers and consumers of *Drum*, these racially charged conditions infused black and white notions of sex and gender and helped shape the particular images of manhood and masculinity produced by the magazine. Continuously protesting against racist legislation, the magazine alerted readers to the appalling impacts of the unequal power relations between black and white South Africans. But as hooks notes, "[s]ince competition between males is sanctioned within male-dominated society, from the standpoint of white patriarchy, black masculinity must be kept 'in check,' and 'black males . . . made subordinate in as many cultural arenas as possible'" (1995: 99). Thus if apartheid is imagined to be—at least in part—an attempt to construct and maintain a subordinate masculinity defined by race, then *Drum's* challenges to the apartheid state can be seen as repeated attempts to assert the manhood of black men. Growing increasingly intolerant of opposing voices, the patriarchal white state made a number of increasingly successful efforts to limit these challenges, and *Drum* found itself and its writers in court again and again over the 1950s and 1960s (Merrett 1994).

MANHOOD IN THE EARLY *DRUM*

The ways in which the early *Drum* treated men as males whose lives were shaped in important ways by kith and kin, hearth and home was in marked contrast to accounts in magazines such as *Outspan* and *Femina* aimed at

white audiences. Articles in *Drum* about soccer stars, musicians, and community leaders acknowledged both that mothers and wives played significant roles in men's public lives, and that men, as husbands, fathers, and sons, also had domestic roles to fulfill. *Drum* seemed to see nothing extraordinary in the photograph of well-known local musician Wilson "King Force" Silgee of the Jazz Maniacs cooking bacon and eggs for his wife (February 1955: 38). Or that Marshall Zibi, whose claim to fame was his newly acquired status as husband of cover girl, Priscilla Mtimkulu, washed dishes after meals and helped hang out washing (April 1956: 40, 41). *Drum* casually observed that a rising soccer star lived "with his parents and his elder brother, Lucas, at Moroka Section JX, Johannesburg. His brother and he are the only children at home, and as he is the youngest, he does most of the domestic work. With mother's help Steve does the cooking, cleans the home and washes and irons the family's clothes" (November 1955: 39).

Articles about older men frequently observed that, as young boys, they had been expected to fulfill their share of the domestic chores. As a child the ex-mayor of Benoni location had received a "thorough spanking for forgetting to wash the pots and pans for his mother at home" (November 1955: 61). The young Ezekiel Mphahlele had, said *Drum*, been responsible for several chores including fetching and carrying washing for his mother (January 1956: 6). Photographs of local heroes reinforced the idea of men as males intimately connected to the home. Golfing champion Simon "Cox" Hlapo, for instance, was snapped washing dishes in his parents' house, another photograph captured a defeated boxer engaged in the task of reading to his grandmother, while yet another depicted writer Peter Clarke hugging his mother on receiving the news that he had won *Drum's* short story competition (February 1955; June 1955; April 1955).

Privileging family in another way, an article about Oom Piet Gwele entitled "Old Man Cricket" began with the words:

We found the Gwele family cuddled around a glowing fire on a chilly evening: parents, children and grandchildren. Mama Nancy Gwele had a bad 'flu, and eldest daughter Edna Mnguni had left her boxing promoter husband in Germiston to nurse her—and contracted the 'flu too. (November 1954: 21)

The *first* mention of Oom Piet himself occurred only in the *second* paragraph. Readers were informed of the successes and ambitions of each of Oom Piet's offspring, while photographs of his extended family framed the text. In stark contrast were the articles constructed by *Femina* and *Outspan*,

which had little, if anything, to say about the home lives of their subjects. Even when white readers were promised something more than a simple account of someone's public life, they were disappointed. Despite promising that "we [will] tell you about the man few people know," a feature on Dudley Nourse, Captain of the national cricket team was nothing more than a discussion of Nourse's cricketing career. Nourse's father was awarded a mention simply because he too had been a cricketer and that young Dudley had equaled "his father's record as the country's most prolific runner" (*Outspan* May 18, 1951).

In contrast it was boxer Jake Tuli's children who took center stage in *Drum's* coverage of his fights. "Jake loses crown, kids comfort him," declared the headline when Tuli lost the Empire flyweight title, and two of the three pictures published featured his children (December 1954: 41). Similarly it was two daughters and a niece who accompanied King Edward Masinga in the photograph attached to an article lauding his position as the first black radio broadcaster to be employed by the South African Broadcasting Corporation, an article which further emphasized the large debt he owed his mother (April 1955). Likewise, Israel Alexander, hailed by *Drum* as "South Africa's richest African," was photographed with his daughter, Joy, at work, and with his family at home (December 1954: 21). Even political and traditional leaders—as the coverage of future Botswanan President Seretse Khama, his wife and children made clear—were portrayed against the backdrop of their families, while at another end of the social scale it was "husbands" and "fathers," not "men," who were the victims of homicide attacks (July 1955; June 1955).

Even the investigative journalism of *Drum* centered men in their families and communities. *Drum's* exposure of harsh conditions on farms and the dangers of the "tot" system (by which laborers were paid with alcohol), while critical of the country's racist laws, focused primarily on the destruction of family life. Of the seven men whose views were sought, four expressed concern over its effects on family life. One "had all too often seen home-life spoilt," another argued that "people who have tots don't care a hang for the family." A third believed it led "to the breakdown of families," while a fourth complained that drink played havoc with domestic life (June 1952: 8).

Advertisements, too, suggested that husbands and men generally, were intimately acquainted with mundane household matters and household cleaning products. "I tell my wife she must always use Rinso for the washing," declared a black man in a sparkling white shirt (March 1954: 4). Advertisers' assumptions that fathers were concerned for and involved with the well being of their sons, if not their daughters, were demonstrated in

various advertisements in the early to mid 1950s. Perhaps constructing the black male breadwinner as guardian of the family purse, these advertisements also tapped into notions of black fathers' pride in their sons to sell products. Advertisements featuring black men and babies but not mothers (which were almost unthinkable later on, and which did not appear in magazines aimed at white audiences) clearly privileged the role of father, suggesting that at least some advertisers believed the route to a man's pocket lay through his male offspring. "Your baby is a fine healthy son," declared a female nurse to a solitary man in an advertisement for the antiseptic liquid, Dettol. "How happy a father feels when he hears those words," commented the text (see figure 5.1; September 1952: 12). In portraying one man congratulating another on "a healthy childbirth—and such a fine baby" another advertisement for Dettol erased both the female nurse *and* the mother who had given birth (see figure 5.2; October 1952: 30).

Such advertisements constructed an explicit emotional link between black fathers and sons. A father's happiness was linked to the health of his son, which was in turn implicitly connected to a man's involvement in preparing for his child's birth. But beyond this, manufacturers evidently believed that black fathers continued to involve themselves in child rearing. Ovaltine, a hot milky drink, was marketed to men on the basis that, amongst other things, it gave tired fathers the strength to play with their children (September 1955). As early as April 1952, an advertisement for baby food had appeared in which father rather than mother seemed to be holding the child (see figure 5.3; April 1952: 32).

Similarly, and, in contrast to the kind of advertisements for baby foods placed in both *Outspan* and *Femina*, which used only white women and white babies, the manufacturers of Nutrine employed both black and white fathers of sons to sell their product.

Utilizing the racialized hierarchies so familiar to South African audiences, and tapping into local working class aspirations of upward mobility, Stanley Msomi, a skilled mechanic and new father is confronted by his white male boss about the deterioration in his work. Msomi reveals he is preoccupied with the health of his baby boy who is "thin and weak and always crying." His superior's response—as another knowledgeable and concerned father—is to identify with Stanley's worries: "[m]y son was thin and weak too till Nutrine made him strong. *You* should try Nutrine." The next frame shows Stanley educating his wife Rose of the necessity of Nutrine, followed by a penultimate frame in which Rose informs us that the product works and a final frame in which the reader is presented with a smiling Stanley Msomi who "works better than ever now" (see figure 5.4; November 1952: 44).



**“Your baby
is a fine, healthy son . . .”**

How happy a father feels when he hears those words! This father was wise. Before the baby was born, he made certain of having a bottle of ‘DETTOL’ in the house. Doctors and nurses will tell you how important it is to guard against infection. ‘DETTOL’ is used everywhere, in hospitals and homes, to prevent infection which is a danger to mother and baby.

NOTE: Always look for this bottle when you buy ‘DETTOL’



**Do as the Doctor tells you —
and use **DETTOL****

Small size 1/1, Medium 1/11, Large 3/4. REGD.

Reckitt & Colman (Africa) Ltd., P.O. Box 1097, Cape Town.

33 5693-5

Figure 5.1 Advertisement in *Drum*; September 1952: 12

P(N)50-4R



*“A healthy childbirth—
and such a fine baby...”*

This father is happy now, because he was wise before the baby was born. He kept a bottle of 'DETTOL' in the house, and when the time came the nurse used it to prevent infection. 'DETTOL' is used in homes and hospitals everywhere to guard against the danger of infection at childbirth.



NOTE: Always look for this bottle when you buy 'DETTOL'

*Do as the Doctor tells you —
and use* **DETTOL**

Small size 1/1, Medium 1/11, Large 3/4. REGD.

Rockitt & Colman (Africa) Ltd., P.O. Box 1097, Cape Town.

Figure 5.2 Advertisement in *Drum*; October 1952: 30

**“What makes our baby
so healthy and strong?”**



**“We feed him on Incumbe—
The Complete Baby Food”**

Babies fed on Incumbe are healthy and *very* strong. Often ordinary food is not nourishing enough and babies become thin and cry a lot, but Incumbe is a *complete* food and gives babies all the nourishment they need to make them fat and well. You do not have to add anything to Incumbe except water. Incumbe contains *everything*, including milk powder and sugar.

If you want *your* baby to be well and strong feed him on Incumbe. Doctors and Nurses recommend Incumbe—the *complete* food that is specially made for African babies.

FREE—The makers of INCUMBE will send you a **FREE BOOK**, with pictures, which will tell you how to use INCUMBE. Write to Dept. (A), Hind Bros. & Co. Ltd., Umbilo, Natal. In your letter say whether you would like your book in Zulu, Xosa, Shona or Sesuto language.

**INCUMBE IS A
COMPLETE FOOD**
and contains MILK POWDER
and SUGAR
**IT IS VERY EASY
TO MAKE**



INCUMBE HAS MILK



INCUMBE HAS SUGAR



ADD WATER ONLY



BOIL FOR FIVE MINUTES
and baby's food is ready



INCUMBE COMPLETE FOOD
FOR BABIES

1853-7

32

Figure 5.3 Advertisement in *Drum*; April 1952: 32

Stanley Msoni was worried about his son—now he's happy and carefree

Stanley is a Mechanic.

"YOU USED TO BE A GOOD WORKER, STANLEY. NOW YOU STAND AROUND DOING NOTHING. WHAT'S WRONG?"

"I'M WORRIED ABOUT MY LITTLE BOY. HE'S THIN AND WEAK AND ALWAYS CRYING."

OFFICE

"MY SON WAS THIN AND WEAK TOO. TILL NUTRINE MADE HIM STRONG. YOU SHOULD TRY NUTRINE."

"ROSE, THE BOSS SAYS NUTRINE IS THE MOST NOURISHING FOOD FOR BABY. WE MUST GET IT."

"NUTRINE CERTAINLY IS NOURISHING. IT HAS MADE BABY FAT AND STRONG IN ONLY 3 MONTHS."

STANLEY WORKS BETTER THAN EVER NOW. HE IS NO LONGER WORRIED ABOUT HIS SON—THANKS TO NUTRINE."

BABIES NEED NOURISHING FOOD
 Very often ordinary food, even mother's milk, does not give babies enough nourishment and they become thin and weak and cry a lot. Parents who are worried about their babies should feed them on Nutrine. Nutrine is a very nourishing food and soon makes babies fat and healthy. That's why Doctors and Nurses recommend it.

NUTRINE

BABY FOOD

If your child is not breast fed give him Nutrine, the food next best to Mother's Milk.

FREE!

Write us once for FREE Simplified Diet Chart showing you how to mix "Nutrine" and the best time to give it. Available in English, Xosa, Zulu or Sesuto. State language preferred. Write to Hind Bros. & Co. Ltd., Dept. 13N, Umbilo, Natal.

1850-4

Figure 5.4 Advertisement in *Drum*; November 1952: 44

The few advertisements drawing attention to white fathers published in magazines aimed at white audiences identified a narrow financial obligation as the province of men. Old Mutual life insurers, for example, which did not advertise in *Drum* at this time, also drew on the discourse of “the family” to sell insurance. But the images used tended to portray children and weeping women, or solitary children whose futures had been “smashed,” to draw attention to absent men (*Outspan*, March 9, 1951: 56). In stark contrast to those published in the early *Drum*, advertisements for cleaning products in both *Outspan* and *Femina* employed only women and children.

In the early *Drum*, males were portrayed through the strong social and emotional ties they had with the home, through their intimate involvement in domestic matters, household chores and child raising, as males inside nuclear and non nuclear households where members relied on each other through a fluid gender division of labor. In the early *Drum*, it seemed that males became men through the social recognition of their richly complex roles as sons, grandsons, fathers and husbands, brothers and uncles, a recognition rooted in a wide variety of domestic obligations inherent in these roles.

CHANGING IMAGES OF MANHOOD FROM THE LATE 1950s

As the 1950s wore on, however, articles and features about important men contained fewer details of their domestic lives. Photographs of men busy with household chores or playing with their children grew scarce. Advertisements for household products tended to portray women and children rather than men. Although men were often still acknowledged to be husbands, they were seldom acknowledged as sons, brothers or even fathers. And even where men’s marital status was proclaimed, the chances of pictures or texts revealing them sharing their lives with wives diminished.

One of the first cases in *Drum* where the importance of the family in men’s lives was dismissed was recorded in a story of the lives of Jeremiah Mofokeng and a Durban gangster in 1956 (April 1956). In 1959, a feature article on gang leader and ex-boxer King Kong made no reference to his family circumstances. The same edition saw a profile of a young black South African athlete who had beaten the world champion make no mention of his domestic arrangements—in marked contrast to the sorts of coverage of young sportsmen earlier in the decade (February 1959). Similarly, not a word was written about the family of Hastings Banda, future president of Malawi, in an account of Banda’s achievements (March 1959). The

following year, when *Drum* ran a three part biography of black South African cricketer, Basil D'Oliviera, both text and images more closely resembled *Outspan's* article about Dudley Nourse in 1951 than they did *Drum's* article about Oom Piet in 1954. In this three part series, the magazine remained entirely silent about D'Oliviera's mother and siblings, mentioning his father *only* in his capacity as his son's first cricketing coach (*Drum* June 1960; July 1960; August 1960).

Two months later, boxing champion Kangaroo Mado appeared, according to *Drum*, to have made it to the top unaided by any family members, while the domestic background and relatives of another boxer, Enoch "Schoolboy" Nhlapo were passed over for details and pictures of his actions and deeds in the ring (October 1960; March 1963). In attempts to identify "the man of Africa 1959," no mention was made of the wives, children, or parents of the men short listed for the title, and when the photograph of a woman accompanied those of the male contenders, she was neither named nor discussed in the text (January 1960). Anonymous children and unnamed wives might be the justification for the demand for higher wages which "would bring immense benefits to a majority of below breadline workers" and let "the black man . . . stand on his own two feet," but this was a construction that, like those in magazines aimed at a white audience, emphasized a masculinity built around financial commitment *only* (July 1960: 33).

Advertisements demonstrated similar trends. Although the range of baby foods promoted in *Drum* increased, the number utilizing the image of involved fathers decreased, and by the mid-1950s, black fathers had vanished from such advertisements. Instead, emulating advertisements placed in white magazines, it was almost always women (or occasionally white male experts) who exhorted mothers, not fathers, to buy the products (*Drum* May 1956; August 1956). The mid-1950s also saw concerned black fathers disappear from the advertisements for Dettol. Replaced by solitary black men dabbing the liquid on themselves, treated for injuries by anonymous women, nurses, or white male doctors, the ties and obligations of kinship amongst and between black men, women, and children seemed to have evaporated. If women still regularly nursed men in these advertisements, the care they took was seldom reciprocated, and although the manufacturers of Dettol still marketed the product to children and babies, they did so through black mothers, rather than black fathers.

Numerous products were advertised with images of crowds of men, women, and children watching other men win races, score goals, thrash opponents, and so on. Producers of canned milk goods Nestlé and Gold Cross ran a series of advertisements in *Drum* in which goalkeepers, cyclists,

and laborers were set apart from their team members, competitors, or coworkers. But there was little hint that winners or achievers were the product of anything other than individual effort and the canned milk promoted by the advertisements. Such men, it seemed, owed little to their teams, their competitors or their colleagues, let alone the invisible members of their families (February 1960; March 1960). Advertisements focusing on women in contrast usually retained either children or babies, a division symbolized by an advertisement for Gold Cross Milk in 1960, which, while reuniting the family in one sense, clearly segregated men from women and children (see figure 5.5, August 1960: 12).

As the decade wore on, advertisements portraying men with problems of one sort or another were increasingly likely to see the problem resolved through the help or advice of a male friend, male colleague, or male professional rather than their mothers, sisters, grandmothers, or other family members as had been the case in the early 1950s. By the end of the decade, it was women and children, rather than men, who marveled over sparkling sheets and shirts in advertisements for Rinso and Surf. By the early 1960s advertisements for products such as Persil, Omo, and Fab washing powders, Javel bleach, and Jik, like their counterparts in magazines aimed at white South Africans, were almost always peopled by women. And while the magazine continued to publish far more stories, articles, and features about men than it did about women, it seldom acknowledged them to be husbands, fathers, or sons, consistently downplaying or disregarding the roles of family members in men's success. Instead, on those rare occasions when images of men did appear with their wives in a domestic setting, it was to demonstrate just how low they had sunk. "Downfall of the Playboy Prince," for instance, was an article illustrated by a photograph of the prince in question helping his wife wash dishes in their home in Johannesburg (June 1964: 24).

By the late 1950s and early 1960s, a much clearer and more consistent division had emerged between public and private in *Drum's* construction of gendered urban life. While there were obviously exceptions, the articles and advertisements in the magazine generally constructed men as solitary and autonomous individuals who inhabited a public world away from the home, with vulnerable women and dependent children occupying a private world inside the home. Men were breadwinners; women, housewives and nurturers. Yet, *Drum* had constructed men as breadwinners and women as financially dependent housewives from its earliest days (January 1952). What had changed was the meaning *Drum* ascribed to the term "breadwinning." Consistently imagining breadwinning to be primarily a man's burden, the early *Drum* had portrayed it as an activity shaped by intimate

We all go for

GOLD CROSS MILK

because it's

extra rich

extra sweet

extra creamy

The happiest, healthiest families are those who always use Gold Cross Milk. They know they get *extra goodness* and *extra value* from Gold Cross Milk. Gold Cross is made from the richest, creamiest dairy-fresh milk and the purest, sweetest sugar. The milk helps to build healthy bodies — keeps you strong. The sugar gives you energy — makes your work easier. You — and your whole family — should use Gold Cross Milk for every meal. No other milk will do . . . only Gold Cross Milk. Get a tin *today!*

2 SIZES
EXTRA-LARGE & TABLE SIZE

Make sure you get

GOLD CROSS

extra creamy
sweetened condensed milk

Figure 5.5 Advertisement in *Drum*; August 1960: 12

relationships with numerous others in a social context where domestic chores were everyone's business. But as the changes discussed above indicate, breadwinning became increasingly a simple financial obligation.

ACCOUNTING FOR CHANGE

It is difficult to explain why these changes occurred, and this short chapter can only speculate about what is probably a multifaceted and complex set of causes. First of all, it needs to be noted that *Drum's* shift away from portraying families as central to black men's lives was qualitatively different to the kinds of changes taking place in the material world. The rapid industrialization of the pre-World War II period had continued after the war, and had combined with deteriorating conditions in the rural areas to propel increasing numbers of wives to join husbands in towns (Bonner 1990; Mager 1998). It was in this context that some urban couples "were remarkably Western in form," and that "increasingly large proportions" of urban Africans on the East Rand, for instance, "were living 'in family circumstances'" (Bonner 1988: 394; Bozzoli 1991: 238). In contrast to the images produced by *Drum*, political changes after the National Party's election victory in 1948 saw the possibilities for men and women to live together in towns as husband and wife (let alone as breadwinner and housewife) increasingly undermined by the apartheid measures of influx control, pass laws, forced removals and the Group Areas Act (Bozzoli 1991).

According to one source, the 1950s and early 1960s had seen the "number of men living with their wives and children in urban areas . . . drastically reduced" while the only family life for by far the greater proportion of African men and women in the country is the short period they are at "home" in the reserves (Wollheim n.d.: 6, 8). Surveys in the 1960s indicated that around 30 percent of children did not live with their mothers (and presumably fathers) in towns (Market Research Africa 1968: 27, 28). In contrast, while *Drum's* representations of men as solitary and autonomous increasingly removed them from the social context of their extended families, the assumption that a wife remained in close physical proximity to a husband underpinned *both* sets of images. In opposition to the continuities and changes occurring in material reality, by the late 1950s, wives were increasingly constructed as a largely invisible—but highly essential—presence in the lives of urban men. Furthermore, despite recording that "the transformation from a society based on kinship to one based on association is complete" such studies also emphasized that although "kinship ties have weakened, they are more evident than among the majority

of whites in the cities of the Republic" (Wilson and Mafeje 1973: 174, 175; Hellmann n.d.: 21). And Bonner notes that the ties of kinship were further maintained in town through the clustering of urban residents with others from their home region (Bonner 1995).

The shifts in *Drum's* representations of men thus seemed to follow the pattern set by representations of men in white magazines, where the archetypal nuclear household with breadwinning fathers and home based housewives was much more common, rather than changes in the daily lived existence of urban men. In other words, while *Drum's* representations of black men in the 1960s suggested that both women and children were silently and invisibly present, the material reality of apartheid tended to limit this possibility. But if not a simple reflection of socioeconomic change, how else can these shifts be accounted for? There are some possible answers, or parts of answers. First, there were two entirely different sources for the material that ended up in *Drum*. For the most part, advertisements were drawn up and placed by white men, while the articles, stories, and photographs were produced mainly by black men. That both photographs and advertisements changed suggests either a link between them, and/or wider change that affected both in similar ways.

According to Chopra, twentieth-century Western discourse has by and large written fathers out of families and fathering. By the late 1950s and early 1960s, *Drum* seemed to demonstrate what she has described as a "muting" of "the figure of the nurturing father within the gendered discourse of childcare" (Chopra 2001: 445). Critiquing contemporary feminist scholarship that has sustained a discourse around motherhood and mothering as a single role and practice, Chopra suggests that "fathers have been written out of the picture" and that "the 'absent father' as the hegemonic ideal eclipses any alternative versions of fathering and care provided by them." For Chopra "the presence of the father is posited as an absence, in contrast with the hands-on vital involvement of the mother" (Chopra 2001: 447).

The early *Drum's* recognition and celebration of fatherhood and the family man was perhaps connected to the unfamiliarity of *Drum's* black employees, most of whom had no experience of writing with the "proper" Western discourse, combined with editorial inexperience. Jim Bailey, owner of *Drum*, is on record for noting how the editor appointed between 1951 and 1955 was an outsider with no journalistic experience who "knew nothing whatever of Africa," and that this had permitted him to allow South African writers to write what they wanted (Bailey in Caccia 1982: 124). "[I]gnorance," recalls Sampson, "had its advantages. I had to let the black journalists tell their own stories with a vigor and freshness that broke all the

rules, but that expressed the true spirit of the townships” (Sampson 2001: 13). Sampson’s departure and the appointment as editor of the experienced South African journalist Sylvester Stein coincided with the first signs of change. Thus change of editorship might well have played a role in changing the discourse around men and families, especially if subsequent editors—all of whom had experience writing for white audiences, and all of whom were themselves white—adopted a more hands on approach.

At the same time, it is possible—and perhaps more likely—that black journalists themselves subtly adapted their writing to embrace the “modern” (i.e., Western) narrative of white writing that, even within the nuclear family, treated men as isolated, autonomous, and independent of women and children. Perhaps, early on, the social importance of fatherhood, and the recognition of a black manhood built around social relationships and responsibilities outweighed the more “modern” discourse of individualism. Hall has claimed that the idea of modernity, and its celebration of civilization, progress, and rationality, is predicated on difference (Hall 1992). As Hodgson puts it, “the modern not only presupposes but requires the existence of the traditional to acquire its meaning” (Hodgson 1999: 144). At the same time, feminist scholars have argued that the discourse around colonialism is characterized by “a common pattern of regarding the colonized country and the colonized people as ‘feminine’ ” in opposition to the colonizers, set up as masculine (Markowitz 2001; Moane 1999; Sinha 1997). Although it would be simplistic to argue that these two dichotomies of traditional/modern and feminine/masculine can be superimposed onto each other so that feminine/traditional are set up in opposition to modern/masculine, it is possible that representations of black men *with* women and children (in opposition to white men without them) were understood by some to imply the absence of modernity. Given that early-twentieth-century biomedical discourse in South Africa had already established “Hottentot women” as representing “the least advanced human life form,” and given the context of apartheid, it may well have been deemed advantageous for black men to be distanced from black women (Burns 1996: 8). As Ferber notes in relation to white supremacist discourse in the United States: “[t]he more pronounced degree of differentiation between white men and women is offered as one factor separating whites from other races and signaling their superiority” (Ferber 1999: 77). In the context of editorial change, as the journalists of *Drum* grew more familiar with their trade, as they themselves perhaps aspired to the trappings and trimmings of the “modernity” described by Driver (1996: 232) as a “Western future” where texts about white men remained silent about their intimate relationships,

it may be that the ways in which black writers positioned black men in their writing also changed.

But these ideas can offer only a partial and limited explanation of the changes that took place in *Drum's* representations of men because the other key purveyor of masculine images, advertisements, was changing at more or less the same time and in more or less the same way, and journalists and editors had little to do with their construction. The South African advertising industry however was itself in a state of flux. The 1950s saw it professionalize by setting up the Society of Advertisers in 1951, establishing the first industry wide journal in 1953, and supporting research which explored the changing relationships between black consumers and advertising in the postwar period (Sinclair 1997: 236). The late 1950s saw a government commission (in which *Drum* had participated) express its "shock" at images of women appearing in advertisements in magazines aimed at non-Europeans and advertisers were also having to take stock of this. At the same time, advertising organizations had taken the dramatic step of recruiting black men into white-owned firms as advisors on how to approach the black market. Nimrod Mkele, with an M.A. in psychology, had been appointed head of the African market division of J. Walter Thompson and, by 1959, was making conference presentations discussing the nature of the black market from his unique involvement in both worlds (Mkele 1959). In 1960, Dan Chochco, ex *Drum* staffer, was appointed first as an advisor and then as the manager for the African Research Division of a local agency (*Selling Age* March 1960; May 1960). In 1959, Mkele argued that:

The most important values that influence African buying behavior—and this includes advertising reactions—derive from European standards, which the African has come to accept as the yardstick with which to measure his own integration into the society whose ideals he has come to accept as his own. (Mkele 1959: 23)

Given the absence of family men from advertisements in white magazines, alongside input of this nature from Mkele, it is possible that advertisers simply reworked their focus in the mid to late 1950s to treat black and white men in more similar ways. If Mkele was right, then it made sense for advertisers to recognize this. On the other hand, another black advertising executive, J. E. Maroun, believed that rather than wait for blacks to "come to accept" European standards, it had been and still was the role of advertising to "change culture." "The only African markets that do exist," he claimed in 1960, "are those that have been created, those that have been made through the efforts, conscious or otherwise, of manufacturers and

marketers" (Maroun in Burke 1996: 127). The increased emphasis on marketing directly to black women was apparently precisely because by the late 1950s local advertisers had come to believe that, as in the West, "it is [women] who determine what shall or shall not be bought" (Mkele 1959: 25). But whether black consumers "naturally" aspired toward these kinds of values, or whether they learnt to aspire to them, it seems likely that advertisers opted to reflect the values portrayed in advertisements typically aimed at white consumers. Values, which as one analyst was later to claim of advertisements in American magazines, "conjure a world of objects detached from people and of people disengaged from others" (Masse and Rosenblum 1988: 132). So, while it is possible that changes in the advertisements reproduced in *Drum* reflected the influence of the black men asked to advise on how best to attract black customers, it may also have reflected broader changes in advertising representations of gender emanating from the industrialized world.

CONCLUSION

Most men experience their lives surrounded by a web of relationships with women: mothers and wives, daughters and sisters, grandmothers and aunts, friends, lovers, and neighbors. Relationships between men as fathers, sons, uncles and brothers, colleagues and opponents are also an integral part of most men's lives, and the evidence suggests that, despite the rigors of apartheid, urban South African men of the 1950s and 1960s lived lives intertwined with a wide variety of men and women. Yet the texts published in *Drum* between 1951 and the mid-1960s display a trend, albeit uneven and erratic, that increasingly distanced men from all but a few of these relationships. Representing manhood as intimately and inextricably rooted in personal relationships with a wide range of family members in the early 1950s, the magazine was comfortable publishing images and texts that publicly demonstrated men's proximity to and interactions with the private space of the home. From the middle of the 1950s, as the result of the complex interplay between a variety of factors, this began to change. Within a decade, urban black men were (like urban white men) constructed as autonomous and isolated individuals, having little or no emotional or physical legacies from—or attachments to—parents, grandparents, siblings, children, or even wives. Instead of parents, children, and wives, significant others for men were narrowly constructed as (male) bosses, colleagues, and opponents. Thus the more "modern" man of the 1960s was constructed as largely self made in the pages of *Drum*, in marked contrast to the males of

the early 1950s whose manhood was portrayed through a variety of complex relationships with (at the very least) children, wives, parents, and colleagues.

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6. Of Masks, Mimicry, Misogyny, and Miscegenation: Forging Black South African Masculinity in Bloke Modisane's *Blame Me on History*

Meredith Goldsmith

INTRODUCTION

From the 1960s to the early 1990s, a series of autobiographies was released chronicling the frustration of black South African intellectuals of the 1950s. The authors, most former journalists with the popular South African publications *Drum* and *Golden City Post*, included Bloke Modisane, Lewis Nkosi, Can Themba, Todd Matshikiza, Don Mattera, and Nat Nakasa.¹ Their work had its emotional center in Sophiatown, a township outside of Johannesburg known for its racial mixing, after-hours culture, and larger-than-life gangsters. Beyond its cultural cosmopolitanism, Sophiatown was one of the few townships in which blacks were allowed to own homes. Between 1955 and 1958, however, the black community was ousted and the township was razed according to the Native Resettlement Act to make way for a white working-class community ironically named "Triomf." From exile in Europe and the United States in the early 1960s, the Sophiatown writers penned their autobiographies, most instantly banned in South Africa and quickly to go out of print.²

This essay focuses on Sophiatown writer Bloke Modisane, whose autobiography *Blame Me on History*, first published in 1963 and reprinted in 1990, illuminates the anguish of black male intellectuals of the era. Modisane made the bitter ironies of life under apartheid into his calling

card, dressing in European fashions, entertaining guests with the latest jazz imports, and studying dramatic monologues in his one-room Sophiatown shanty. Modisane inhabited a liminal space and made it his own; however, as his autobiography demonstrates, the empowering quality of such liminality is temporary at best. Modisane gains partial empowerment from ironic imitation of white screen and literary heroes, claiming the autonomy denied him through a self-consciously theatrical mode of selfhood. However, while appropriating these masks protects him from the daily physical and psychological brutality of white racism, Modisane perpetuates his own oppression by willfully reducing women, both black and white, to objects. More than any other Sophiatown autobiography, *Blame Me on History* answers the question Steven Biko posed in a manifesto of the Black Consciousness Movement: "What makes the black man fail to tick?"³

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER/IN THE NAME OF THE SON

The work of Martinican psychoanalyst Frantz Fanon and postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha provide entry points into both Modisane's self-division and that of the Sophiatown cultural moment. In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon examines the psychological fragmentation inherent in the colonized black male subject. According to Fanon, the black man only claims an identity through approval from the world of whites, which creates a destabilizing double-consciousness. Only the mastery of white colonial discourse affords escape, but simultaneously necessitates "the death and burial of [the colonized country's] local cultural originality."⁴ Faced with precisely this dilemma, black South Africans in the 1950s were trained by popular culture and mission school education to esteem white heroes and devalue their own; Modisane's work and that of most other Sophiatown writers evokes tribal culture only through offhand references to outmoded traditions and rituals.⁵ The process both Fanon and Modisane describe ends in the effacement of black masculinity: compelled to don a mask of whiteness, the black intellectual never fully claims a place in either colony or metropole.

While Fanon argues that the white gaze forces black men into self-alienating mimicry, postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha responds by refashioning mimicry as a form of qualified resistance to colonial authority. Bhabha reads mimicry and ambivalence as paradigms for resistance, in which irony and parody become sources of psychological empowerment. The educated, colonized middle class, in Bhabha's readings of colonial texts, mediates between the white elite and the black or Indian underclass,

and thus mimics the white ruling classes. However, Bhabha reinterprets colonial mimicry as “the signs of a double articulation: a complex strategy of reform, regulation and discipline, which ‘appropriates’ the Other as it realizes power.”⁶

According to Bhabha, as the colonial subject mimics the dominant discourse, “what emerges . . . is a mode of representation that marginalizes the monumentality of history, simply mocks its power to be a model, that power which supposedly makes it inimitable.”⁷ As the colonial subject ironizes the dominant discourse, mimicry disrupts colonial authority by revealing its anxiety about its own power. As Modisane attempts to appropriate identities for himself through the processes of naming, imitation, and ironization of his liminal status, such behavior appears empowering. But as postcolonial feminist critic Anne McClintock has noted, Bhabha’s privileging of the realms of language and the unconscious as sources of resistance “effectively elides messier questions of historical change and social activism.”⁸ Modisane oscillates between the two poles of this debate: *Blame Me on History*, whose title itself corroborates McClintock’s point regarding the overwhelming force of colonial power, simultaneously charts Modisane’s complicity in his self-destruction.

Modisane conjoins his symbolic death and the death of life in South Africa with the destruction of the township: “Something in me died, a piece of me died, with the dying of Sophiatown,” the narrative begins.⁹ Defying the conventional organization of autobiography by beginning with death rather than birth, the text refuses to mimic the European tradition of the *Bildungsroman*. Both Lewis Nkosi and Mark Sanders have underscored the difficulty of discussing Modisane’s autobiography without the language of individuation and linear development; writers whose culture actively denies such possibilities risk the misinterpretation of their work.¹⁰ While calling attention to persistent themes of identity formation risks casting Modisane’s text in a narrative of progress, Modisane alerts us to his work’s faintly palpable structure in his references to jazz: he notes the “repetitive persistency” of his anguish, the “pyramid of monotony” of his daily life, and sadness as a “rhythm unchanging in its thematic structure” (Modisane 117). Modisane’s spiraling requiem for both Sophiatown and himself distorts linear narratives of identity construction as if through a splintered mirror, offering only shards of identity, family, and community.

Modisane links the key events of his life through the tropes of facelessness and naming, drifting back after each reverie to the image of the razed Sophiatown. Shortly before recounting his father’s death in a moment of random township violence, Modisane recalls his father’s humiliation by a white policeman. After the Afrikaner constables bully Joseph Modisane

into showing his pass, according to Modisane:

My hero image disintegrated, crumbling into an inch high of ashes; I could not face it, could not understand it, I hated the young constable for destroying my father; questions flashed through my mind, I wanted to know why, and I think I resented my father, questioned his integrity as a man. (24)

This episode marks Modisane's separation from his father, and ironically then, the beginning of his development of independent subjectivity. Shortly afterward, however, Modisane returns home from school to find his father murdered, a "faceless" and unrecognizable victim of street violence (26). Modisane's own identity is threatened by his father's death: as the coffin is borne out of the house, the author notices that his own name has "been inscribed on it in error. The shock of seeing my name and not my father's on the coffin confused and frightened me, but it seemed symbolic somehow; I was officially dead, something I was later to exploit emotionally" (31). Once Modisane's identity has been "officially" eradicated, he is free to adopt masks and to mimic forms of power no longer offered to him within the structure of his own community.

Significantly, Modisane gives almost no attention to the period of his life between his father's death and his adulthood. By ignoring that period, he deflects attention from the traditional moments in the autobiographies of the Sophiatown writers in which masculinity is appropriated (the loss of virginity, for example), and emphasizes his efforts at claiming adult masculinity through other means that ironize his dehumanization under apartheid. The first is the name "Bloke," a signifier more evocative of the working-class Britain of 1950s films than Modisane's South African reality. Modisane suggests the limitations on his own agency when he describes how the name chose him:

Solly, Simon and I slid into calling each other Bloke . . . of course everybody around us was also called Bloke, and thus it happened that Solly and Simon managed to crowd this label around me; people began to assume this label for my name, and gradually this label became a part of me I could not discourage; it began to overwhelm me, to become a piece of me, to impose a life of its own on me; finally I was to accept it for a far deeper significance than I at the time realised. (167)

While Modisane claims the name in an empowering alternative to "William," the identity killed at his father's funeral, Modisane's rendition of the scene suggests the restrictions of this effort at self-determination. In its British character, "Bloke" counters the demeaning "kaffir," as blacks are labeled in

Afrikaans; however, the passivity of Modisane's language, evident in the verbs "slid," "crowd," and "assume," denies his agency in the acquisition of his new name.

If Modisane's father's death constitutes his own symbolic demise, his daughter's birth offers him a possibility of qualified redemption. Modisane's representation of the birth of his daughter Christine is double-edged. As his wife goes into labor, he self-consciously "mim[es] the histrionics of the anxious white husband, as parodied—I hope—in Hollywood films" (71). Modisane characterizes the entire experience as a performance, congratulating his wife in affected British speech. However, using his child's face to construct his own image through resemblance, Modisane realizes the extent of his own objectification:

Suddenly the features of her face began to blur, there was something undifferentiated about them, they were more red than black and the indefiniteness disturbed me; I was looking at a neutral face, possibly black, just a representative facsimile of millions of faceless masks; those who had seen her remarked that she looked like me, implying that our features were similar . . . here was a mask of millions of black faces, but I determined that this was a face they shall not deface, I will define all its particularities. (74–75)

Through resembling him, the child resembles no one; even as a newborn, Christine's identity as a black child, without hope, is already formed. However, with the claim that his daughter will not be nullified by "the jackals of South Africa," Modisane attempts to give his daughter, a voiceless and defaced entity, both speech and a face (74). However, this act of naming simultaneously suggests the stifling of his authority. As Modisane explains, on the basis of a sympathetic magazine article in the United States, the wife of an American psychologist writes to Modisane to offer him work; in an act of appreciation, Modisane names his daughter after her. In choosing to honor a white woman he has never met, Modisane unself-consciously suggests the depths of his own dispossession. Significantly, he never considers an African name for his daughter, like that of his wife, Fikile.

To counter such disenfranchisement, Modisane turns to the cinema and popular fiction for the projection of images of power. As Rob Nixon observes, "Hollywood offered a mixture of transport and recognition" for the Sophiatown writers, "a reprieve from apartheid's suffocating prohibitions but also an entry into a land of celluloid gangsters that could confirm and inspire South Africa's criminalized non-citizenry in their shadow-lives beyond the pale."¹¹ Modisane's fascination with film evolves from a combination of affinity with the characters on screen and the possibility of

“losing” himself in the anonymity of darkness; as he explains, “[T]here was sanctuary in the cinema, and even though I was segregated in the Indian-owned cinema I managed to lose myself into the darkness, and in the dark I could not see my hand” (Modisane 171). Isolated in the dark from others in the cinema, the male viewer, in feminist film theorist Laura Mulvey’s account, may engage in identification with the men and scopophilic objectification of the women on screen.¹² As with his “acquisition” of the name Bloke, Modisane’s discussion of film’s influence on him emphasizes his own passivity: “If Hollywood had intended to influence the development of a particular kind of person, I am that product; the tinsel morality, the repressed violence, the Technicolor dreams, these are the things I absorbed in the name of culture. They were available” (172).

While film provides a temporary respite, Modisane demonstrates how its false identifications fail to protect him from the realities of township life. For example, a moment of identification with B-movie heroes allows him to outrun a hostile gang: “I was Buck Jones racing Silver across the plains, pursued by the crooks, moving rapidly, thinking fast; I was running up Gold Street towards the dark passage running behind the Diggers Hall, I knew every turning in the passage” (65). Shortly after, however, he is attacked by the rival gang. Modisane casts his identity to merge with that of his father, a man “emasculated” and disempowered by racism:

I resigned myself to my fate, the fate which was linking my destiny to that of my father; this was a communion with him, we would switch back our identities, my coffin would carry his name as his carried mine. The beating continued, they struck at my head through the shielding hands, my feet were beginning to weaken; I was sinking and I surrendered myself to my father, committed my life into his hands. (66)

Endowing his father with power in death that he never attained in life, Modisane acknowledges the extent of his own disempowerment. While Sophiatown culture was unquestionably captivated by celluloid fantasies, one might consider this passage as an indictment of film’s power as a source of identification. American popular culture, while appearing to provide an alternative to Sophiatown life, actually prohibits him from grasping his more powerful identification with his father, whose “mask of deference” to the Afrikaner police spelled survival within a racist milieu.

While cinema offers Modisane faulty sources for identification, literature offers him a different means of self-reflection. Modisane yearns for access to high culture, noting that he is “well into [his] thirties and has yet to see a full production of ballet or opera” (172). Before working for *Drum*,

Modisane briefly works in a bookstore run by progressive whites, where he experiences a respite from the daily reality of South African blackness. Developing his first “transcolour friendship” with a white employee, his ambitions to “make literary criticisms . . . against the injustice of [his] society” increase (86). Importantly, the bookstore provides a setting in which identities develop interrelationally but do not blur, whereas Modisane’s experiences in the cinema engender self-negation. Modisane finds another source of empowerment in the detective fiction of popular British novelist Leslie Charteris, author of “The Saint” novels. Like Modisane, *The Saint* resorts to anonymity as a shield. However, Modisane’s identification with *The Saint* escapes the passivity and loneliness of voyeurism: “We were enchanted by ‘The Saint’ and the author could not write them fast enough for us; . . . our habit was to exhaust an author, then spend hours discussing the books” (166). Through reading, Modisane becomes part of an active, communal audience. *The Saint* affords him a possible self that triumphs through his wits, not violence: “I adopted his carefree attitudes, and behind the shell of these nothing could touch my life: not the police raids, the violence of Sophiatown, not the injustice and humiliation of being black in white South Africa; I could defy South Africa by flashing on that cynical ‘Saintly’ smile” (166). Modisane’s parodic emulation of *The Saint* forges a middle ground between Bhabha’s theory of mimicry and McClintock’s critique thereof. Extracting *The Saint*’s cynicism and “carefree attitudes” from their context, Modisane adapts them as a way of responding to racism. As Homi Bhabha notes, colonial contexts overturn conventional understandings of Western texts, rendering “the *founding objects* of the western world . . . the *objets trouvés* of the colonial discourse.”¹³ While “*The Saint*” novels are admittedly hardly “founding objects” of Western culture, they are texts whose function in Western culture is clearly defined—escape literature for a middle-class readership. Modisane supplants the purely escapist reading of “*The Saint*” with ironic emulation, using this mask as a form of empowerment, rather than defacement.

“AS FOR THE WOMAN OF COLOR, I KNOW
NOTHING ABOUT HER”: OR, BLAME ME
ON MASCULINITY?

In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon discounts the specificities of the Antillean female condition, claiming, “As for the woman of color, I know nothing about her.”¹⁴ As Rob Nixon has noted, Sophiatown writing was characterized by an “aggressive mixture of paternalism, misogyny, and the

absence of female writing,” casting the “public sphere as masculine while the private sphere was feminized.”¹⁵ Perhaps due to the relentless misogyny of Sophiatown writing, critics have failed to sufficiently analyze its gender politics. While Modisane participates in the tradition that Nixon describes, he self-consciously exposes his manipulation of women. As he moves into adulthood, Modisane recounts his increasing use of sex as a similar means of escape to that of the Johannesburg cinema, mobilizing the tropes of facelessness to figure his sexual encounters. Modisane relegates the collapse of his domestic life and his self-admitted poor treatment of his wife to a few short pages of the narrative, emphasizing instead the consistent frustration of his own personal goals. Like Fanon, Modisane argues that white women provide a temporary salve to the anguish of disenfranchised black masculinity. However, Modisane complicates Fanon’s paradigm through his self-consciousness of the realms of domesticity and tradition. Modisane elides black women because women represent tradition and indigenous culture in a black South Africa grasping at Americanized technological and popular culture, casting the conflict between tradition and modernity in gendered terms.

The collapse of women into tradition emerges in almost all of Modisane’s interactions with his family. Modisane uses more indigenous words in his discussion of his female relatives than elsewhere in the text, and notes his mother’s speaking in Sesotho and his difficulty understanding the many languages at his father’s funeral (Modisane, 28, 30). The irruption of indigenous African languages into Modisane’s Europeanized and Americanized writing style suggests an essentialist link between women and the tribal past, but simultaneously marks the connection the women in the text hold to something Modisane has lost. At his father’s funeral, Modisane is “surprised to notice that the *girls* on the benches were not looking into their hymn books, they knew by heart the entire range of hymnals” (30; emphasis added). As Modisane matures, he resents any intrusion of indigenous traditions into his everyday life, but profits from the traditions of male privilege in his family. For example, Modisane provides his mother’s name: Modisane’s mother evolves from “Ma-Willie” in the course of the narrative to “Ma-Bloke.” Modisane, so sensitive to language in its deployment in the white world, seems unaware that his mother is named solely in terms of her maternal status. Despite her independent identity as a worker after Modisane’s father dies—to support the family, Bloke’s mother becomes a shebeen queen, brewing her own illicit beer—we never learn her given name. Modisane is content to define the women in his family solely in relationship to him.

To compensate for his emasculation in the political realm, Modisane turns to sex with both black and white women as a salve for his wounded

sense of manhood. Like most of the Sophiatown writers, Modisane performs a delicate balancing act between wife and lovers, writing of his many casual and long-term affairs during his marriage. Modisane's descriptions of the black male body are strikingly in accord with Fanon's, who suggests that the black man is placed in a "real dialectic between my body and the world."¹⁶ This dialectical relation is a function of the objectifying racist gaze, which, as Fanon argues in "The Negro and Recognition," sees a black body and nothing more. Like Fanon, Modisane finds himself "overdetermined from without"—"the slave not of the idea that others have of me but of my own appearance."¹⁷ Images of masks and facelessness mark Modisane's references to sex: in describing the New Year's Eve debauch that ultimately leads to the death of Henry Nxumalo, he calls himself and his friend "two solitary black masks intent on exploding the old year with the violence of noise" (262). In the aftermath of this episode, Modisane's internalized self-control is shattered by the news: "My mind vomited into my stomach" (265).

Modisane's analysis of what he calls "sex apartheid" clarifies how the personal and political merged for black male South African intellectuals. Through his self-fashioning, Modisane struggles to counter the stereotype of black sexual aggression: as one of his friends puts it, "Natives have a rape-utation" (214). Arguing that anxieties over miscegenation drive much of white prejudice, Modisane also demonstrates how apartheid culture enhances the lure of miscegenation. Sexual boundaries between the races, as Modisane points out in his discussion of the refusal of his Indian colleagues to introduce him to Indian women, militate against collaborative political effort. Yet Modisane fantasizes about affairs with white women as acceptance by white South Africa: "in a tedious succession I thought myself to be—of course, always for the first time—lyrically in love with every white woman I met" (220). Modisane's romanticizing of white women shows the effects of Hollywood's "tinsel morality," but it also shows his devaluing of black women, representative of the pull of family and tradition.

Modisane's halting discussions of the decline of his marriage point toward the nexus of race, class, and gender ignored in analyses of the Sophiatown writers' relations with women. Modisane went into exile alone after his wife returned to her family, in contrast to Todd Matshikiza, whose 1961 memoir *Chocolates for My Wife* demonstrates his sense of marital and family responsibility despite his infidelities. Modisane casts his marriage as a failed effort to defy the racist forces of apartheid and the equally compelling forces of tradition and insularity. Modisane notes the differences in class and racial designation that help to fracture his marriage with Fiki: "her mother was Coloured, her father was a court interpreter, the son of the famous author, Sol T. Plaatje. There was a snobbishness about Fiki which

was perhaps responsible for the relationship with Ma-Willie, who was a shebeen queen" (45). Despite her family's relative comfort, Fiki spends her marriage with Bloke in a one-room Sophiatown house. When most urban black women were employed, Fiki appears not to work: Modisane outfits her in fashionable clothes on his own modest salary, treating her as a signifier of his own achievements. Modisane begins the narrative with Fiki's retreat to her mother's house; in its penultimate section, as he prepares to flee, he narrates the story of their meeting. At the beginning of their romance, Fiki provides an alternative to his obsession with white friends and romances, which threaten to "dry [him] up like 'a raisin in the sun'" (255). Modisane's allusion to Langston Hughes's "A Dream Deferred," is telling: without Fiki, the author suggests, he might have exploded. From the beginning, Modisane underscores Fiki's challenge to convention and tradition; she proposes to him and together they "conspire" to "subvert" the ritual of bride-price (255). Fiki rejects the conventions of African wife or daughter-in-law, suiting Modisane's Europeanized ideals. However, their marriage begins to falter because of his increasing hostility and frustration. Modisane notes the manifestation of Fiki's unhappiness on her body: "instead of a thaw our relationship was deteriorating like a festering sore, she retreated into a silence, began to lose weight," finally asking him for a divorce (47). Transposing a reversed marriage plot onto the requiem for Sophiatown and his own stunted life, Modisane transforms beginnings into endings, showing how the apartheid system extinguishes hope even, or especially, in the face of love.

However, Modisane's erstwhile recording of the failure of his marriage allows him to address issues of culpability often skirted in *Blame Me on History*. As he ponders Fiki's absence, he realizes that:

I cannot blame the hurt I have caused her to suffer on history; I had learned, but too thoroughly, to disregard the attention to others; when I should have understood, I was callous and vindictive; I have never learned to accommodate her, because if there was anybody I deserved to have loved it was Fiki; I wish to God I had learned to love her before it was too late, I was essentially concerned with the problems of living with my colour, and at times I behaved as though I were the only black person in South Africa; I persecuted Fiki for her colour as viciously as the white man did. (219)

The beginning of an alternative narrative of Modisane's gender politics emerges. Modisane acknowledges his complicity in the oppression of black women; unable to rid himself of the need for power, he perpetuates it, in his own words, against the person "he [most] deserved to have loved."

CONCLUSION

Shortly before his flight from South Africa, Modisane practices Stanislavski's Method exercises in front of the mirror (290). In the latter section of the narrative, Modisane gains modest success as an actor, performing in and coauthoring Lionel Rogosin's film *Come Back, Africa*, even as he documents his loss of his marriage, his community, and his hope for the future. Having attained a temporary sense of empowerment through the performance of masculinity, Modisane's self-analysis emerges as he "analyse[s], and utilize[s]" the techniques of the male actors he watches in Hollywood films (290). Through autobiography, Modisane strives to understand his own actions through the fractured vision of memory. At the conclusion of *Blame Me on History*, as Modisane prepares to leave "everything I had known, loved and hated" behind, the metaphorical mirror reflects a splintered self. Modisane's ambivalence on leaving South Africa—" [T]here was no victory or solution," he writes, "the compulsive agony was still with me"—suggests that even exile will not permit him to stitch together the torn fabric of his identity (311).

Steven Biko might have been looking back at Bloke Modisane when he wrote "the only vehicle for change are these people who have lost their personality."¹⁸ The futility of Modisane's performance of popular cultural roles and ironizing of his second-class citizenship anticipates Biko's warning that displaced urban blacks forge "a bastardised culture that can only thrive at the rate and pace allowed it by the dominant culture."¹⁹ However, the lessons of Black Consciousness movement arrived a decade too late for Modisane and the other writers of the *Drum* period. Biko argued that the key to arresting this pattern of self-effacement lay in reclaiming the African cultural past, which for Modisane, in his position as an urban black intellectual of the 1950s, was impossible. Modisane's performance of masculinity brought him to the threshold of resistance, but it prevented him from taking the next step.

NOTES

A longer version of this essay appeared in *The Journal of Men's Studies* 10, 3 (2002): 291–307.

1. For an introduction to the period and its writers, see Michael Chapman, *The Drum Generation: Stories from the 1950s* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1989). Anthony Sampson, the white British editor of *Drum*, offers a counterpoint to the Sophiatown writers in *Drum: The Newspaper that Won the Heart of Africa* (Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press, 1957). Sampson's account,

perhaps because of Modisane's feuds with his editors over the salaries of black journalists, elides the subject of this study.

2. On the importance of autobiography as a literary form for South African writers, see Lewis Nkosi, "Autobiography: Bloke Modisane," *South African Review of Books* (February/May 1990): 11–13. For an analysis of some of its consistent patterns, see James Olney, *Tell Me Africa: An Approach to African Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973).
3. Steven Biko, "We Blacks," in *I Write What I Like*, ed. Aelred Stubbs (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1978), 28.
4. Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 1967), 18.
5. Despite his penchant for primitivism, Sampson analyzes the effects of migration to urban areas more thoroughly than any black Sophiatown writer. Karla Poewe also analyzes Modisane's writing in terms of its dissociation from the indigenous past: "From Dissonance and Prophecy to Nihilism and Blame: A Look at the Work of Modisane in the Context of South African Writing," *Literature and Theology: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Theory and Criticism* 7 (1993): 381–387.
6. Homi Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 86.
7. *Ibid.*, 87–88.
8. Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 65.
9. Bloke Modisane, *Blame Me on History* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1990).
10. See Lewis Nkosi, *Home and Exile* (New York/London: Longman, 1965), and Mark Sanders, "Responding to the 'Situation' of Modisane's *Blame Me on History*: Towards an Ethics of Reading in South Africa," *Research in African Literatures* 25 (1994): 52–67.
11. Rob Nixon, *Homelands, Harlem, and Hollywood: South African Culture and the World Beyond* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 31.
12. See Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," in *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, ed. Gerald Mast, Marshall Cohen, and Leo Braudy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 746–757. Despite Modisane's obsessive fetishization of women and almost equally obsessive cataloging of his film viewing, he never discusses images of women on screen.
13. Bhabha, "Of mimicry and Man," 92.
14. Fanon, *Black Skin White Masks*, 180.
15. Nixon, *Homelands*, 20.
16. Fanon, *Black Skin White Masks*, 111.
17. *Ibid.*, 116.
18. Biko, "We Blacks," 29.
19. Biko, "Some African Cultural Concepts," in *I Write What I Like*, 47.

7. The Troubled Masculinities in Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*

Kathryn Holland

Much of the criticism on Tsitsi Dangarembga's 1988 novel, *Nervous Conditions*, has focused on its dense network of female characters and feminist concerns. In her 1992 study, Flora Veit-Wild links the women of *Nervous Conditions* by arguing that they constitute a female spectrum offering "points of reference" for the central character as she moves beyond her family's homestead into a larger world, and begins to shape her own identity. At one end of the spectrum is Tambu's defeatist, nearly destitute mother, Mainini. Next is Tambu's educated yet often submissive aunt, Maiguru, followed by an uneducated yet unorthodox and ambitious aunt, Lucia. At the far end of the line is Tambu's brilliant and rebellious cousin, Nyasha.¹

Though these women are central to the narrative, they do not operate in isolation. Crucial to their development are experiences with a range of men, who yet warrant the reader's attention apart from their relationships to the narrator and the women around her. These include Tambu's father, brother, uncle, and cousin, who illustrate and enrich comments that Dangarembga has made elsewhere about colonized women and men. When asked in a 1994 interview about the unequal treatment of Tambu and her brother Nhamo within their family and larger communities, Dangarembga replied, "The easy answer in the West is the Patriarchal system. I have become increasingly more reluctant to use this model of analysis as it is put forward by Western feminism, because the situation in my part of the world has one variable, which makes it absolutely different: the men are also in a position of powerlessness."² This essay explores the range of masculinities, powerful and otherwise, represented by the characters

of *Nervous Conditions*. Running beside and often intersecting with the female continuum suggested by Veit-Wild is a masculine spectrum, with the novel's major male and, sometimes, female figures representing the effects of colonization on understandings of masculinity and femininity. First, I examine Jeremiah, Nhamo, Babamukuru, and Chido; then I consider the implications of their encounters with both African and Western expectations of manhood, such as those fostered and reflected by the "good native," "native intellectual," and "Big Man" archetypes. Through these treatments, the author encourages us to explore the transhistorical elements of Zimbabwean patriarchal orders, and how the added pressures of colonial contacts modify and often inhibit the authority of native masculinities. And by focusing a critical light on the text's male characters, we further enrich our understanding of their female counterparts, including Nyasha, who manipulates notions of masculinity in her exploration of surrounding power structures.

AFRICAN MASCULINITIES IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

Before examining the men of *Nervous Conditions*, I wish to outline the gendered forms through which they operate. In pre- and early-colonial Rhodesia, and elsewhere in Africa, the "Big Man" archetype offered an established and highly desirable mode of masculinity. Critiquing Ghanaian traditions, Emmanuel Akyeampong observes that the lifestyle of the *obirempon*, or Big Man, was peppered with "imported drinks, rich cloths, gold ornaments, and a large number of wives, children and dependents."³ The success of the Big Man was measured not only by material wealth, but by the appearance and loyalty of familial and other followers, as Karin Barber demonstrates in her look at Yoruba groups. Barber notes that though there may be "a lot of scope for self-aggrandisement. . . the [Yoruba] self-made man, much like the Big Man of New Guinea, is only 'big' if other people think so."⁴ The Big Man's followers performed multiple tasks in return for his financial and social support.⁵

Even for those not specifically designated as Big Men, "[m]aturity in the colonial Rhodesian context tended to be rooted in material, social, and political characteristics."⁶ The adult man worked for himself, rather than a patron; his wife or wives and children deferred to him; he spoke for himself when appearing before his social superiors (Summers 76). Considering precolonial and colonial Shona cultures (to which the Siguake family belongs), Janice Hill charts their clearly paternal ranking systems.

Subordinate to their male relatives, most women gained status only as their brothers and sons ascended the family hierarchy, while all maintained silence and obedience to those of higher rank.⁷ Also, within the Shona family unit and society, the show of physical fecundity by men indicated a successful negotiation into adulthood and social worth. Marc Epprecht states, "a married person who remained for long without [offspring] was 'an object of ridicule and disgrace He is not doing his primary duty to the nation, to marry and have children.'" ⁸ Provisions were ready if a man failed to perform this duty: the practice of "*kupindra or kusikira rudzi* ('raising seed')" allowed for a covert understanding between husband and a friend charged with impregnating his wife.⁹ In addition to those of the Big Man, specific masculine performances were required at numerous social levels.

A modified version of the Big Man survived the colonization of Africa. As Timothy Burke argues, the consumption of Western goods and economic values in Rhodesia succeeded in large part because British officials such as Harold Jowitt and Neville Jones classified native men and women as unclean and thus undesirable, able to make some progress on the colonial chain of being only by buying into European ideas on sanitation and luxury.¹⁰ Akyeampong considers this from a more empowering perspective, asserting that European commerce made the Big Man status available to a wider group of people. He draws the reader's attention to a movement that persisted from the late nineteenth century through to the mid-twentieth, in which Ghanaian men in colonial towns understood success in both indigenous and Western terms: social drinking, generosity among friends, money, European clothes and gestures, a wife (or wives). Akyeampong acknowledges, however, that the imbalance of low wages and high costs of living, among other difficulties, rendered the goal of becoming a Big Man increasingly difficult to achieve.¹¹ Thus, the characteristics and authority of the Big Man began to change, melting into Western standards of manhood.

Such changes were accompanied by newer, though problematic, modes of African masculinity, including that of the native intellectual. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon asserts that the

passionate search for a national culture which existed before the colonial era finds its legitimate reason in the anxiety shared by the native intellectuals to shrink away from that Western culture in which they all risk being swamped. Because they realise they are in danger of losing their lives and thus becoming lost to their people, these men, hot headed and with anger in their hearts, relentlessly determine to renew contact once more with the oldest and more pre-colonial springs of life of their people.¹²

As Rob Pattman notes, Fanon remains critical of these actions, warning that the native intellectual may both idealize and diminish the earlier indigenous culture he imagines. The native intellectual “sets a high value on the customs, traditions, and appearances of his people; but his inevitable painful experience only seems to be a banal search for exoticism.”¹³ Working through Fanon’s *Black Skin, White Masks*, Biman Basu detects other problems for the African intellectual. Basu observes that for this man, colonialism brings “‘difficulties in the development of his bodily schema’ [which] arise out of a ‘corporeal malediction’ inflicted on him by the colonizer, who had ‘woven [him] out of a thousand details, anecdotes, stories.’”¹⁴ We can link Basu’s suggestions back to a phrase from the Introduction to *The Wretched of the Earth*, which also forms Dangarembga’s title and epigram: “[t]he condition of native is a nervous condition.”¹⁵

In “Of Mimicry and Man” (1994), Homi Bhabha explores both the limitations and authority of colonial subjects molded by programs established by Lord Macaulay and other nineteenth-century colonial administrators. In his 1835 address on “Indian Education,” Macaulay proposed, “[w]e must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect.”¹⁶ As Bhabha explains, the training that emerged from such suggestions, reflecting “the desire for a reformed, recognizable other,” generated figures who were “almost the same but not quite,” able to ingest and enforce colonial rule but different (ostensibly inferior) enough to warrant surveillance, regulation.¹⁷

Some, certainly, desire and accept this “partial representation” in hopes of becoming “authentic,” of gaining comparable status to the colonizer (Bhabha 88). But constituting an always-incomplete repetition, the act of mimicry also provides strategies for resistance to colonial projects: in the “slippage (and) excess” of partial representation comes space for questioning and altering the “modality, normality of dominant discourses” (86, 88). Bhabha figures this form of mimicry as a kind of *trompe l’oeil*, a subtle but highly disturbing process in which things are neither what was intended nor what they may appear to be “the look of surveillance returns as the displacing gaze of the disciplined” (85, 88). “[A]lmost the same but not quite,” the colonized reveals “a difference that is almost total but not quite,” pointing to unsettling similarities to their ruler (88–90). The lines between the colonizer and colonized are thus blurred; the rules and means of colonial subjection are challenged.

The impacts of subversive colonial mimicry emerge in Carol Summers’ 1999 study of indigenous married men in southern Rhodesia from 1920 to

1945. Citing histories of native men involved in mission systems, Summers demonstrates the ways in which their handling of European, Christian expectations of marriage enabled them to acquire powers defined on both mission and local terms. A man educated and employed in a mission was able to ensure his public status by establishing “a recognizably Christian domestic life” through marriage with “a respectable, skilled, Christian woman.” In contrast to their unmarried counterparts, such a couple could expect increased salaries, land and housing packages, and a measure of prestige within the mission.¹⁸

But these benefits allowed for the endurance of the Big Man archetype as well. Summers observes that “African men’s marriages were key to their ability to combine mission approval and community power” (Summers 81). With land requiring laborers, and a responsibility to other members of the community (such as extended family members, or unmarried female teachers assigned to their supervision by the mission), the African husband became a family patriarch, with a household as large and complex as those of polygynous families. And because white missionaries did not want native families to join white communities—no matter how successful they were in mission terms—segregation, though intensely demeaning, yet offered psychological and physical distances from the dominant discourse of the mission, enabling the concealment of supposedly inappropriate activities. Summers notes that the communities that grew in these instances, while assuaging European concerns about successful African men, not only brewed beer and built patron–client arrangements out of colonial sightlines, but also developed the Zionist Church. Through the partial representation of Christian marriage and domesticity, the mimic men of Southern Rhodesia forged models of authority legitimate on both European and African terms.¹⁹

MEN AND MASCULINITIES IN *NERVOUS CONDITIONS*

Dangarembga’s characters often test the range of masculine models available in colonial Rhodesia. With his life centered on the homestead, Tambu’s father stands for the early colonial native condition along the novel’s masculine spectrum. Prominent during the local, rural scenes at the opening of the novel, Jeremiah reinforces numerous tenets of local patriarchal traditions. When “excited by the thought of possessing a woman like Lucia, like possessing a thunderstorm to make it crackle and thunder at your command,” Jeremiah tries to secure the family’s permission to take Lucia as his second wife, grouping her and Mainini together as his servants and sisters (Dangarembga 127). Later, calling for traditional doctors to rid his

extended family of its woes, he gives credence to the notion that Lucia is a witch, sending the message to other women that her unorthodox choices are dangerous.

The most striking manifestation of Jeremiah's values emerges when Babamukuru, his brother, "father and benefactor," makes a return visit to the homestead. "[B]randishing a staff like a victory spear, [Jeremiah] bounded over the bumpy road, leaping into the air and landing on one knee . . . pos[ing] like a warrior inflicting a death wound. 'Hezvo!' he cried. 'Do you see him? Our returning prince. Do you see him? Observe him well'" (36). Certain that his brother fulfills the requirements of the Big Man archetype, Jeremiah tries to establish himself as a necessary member of an indigenous African community, the Big Man's supporter. As Karin Barber notes, "[r]ecruitment of people was crucial in a Big Man's rise" (728).

The weaknesses and disadvantages of Jeremiah's position are readily apparent, however. Displaying a simpering pliability, he is ready to obey every command issued from his brother's mouth whether or not it contradicts what he himself has said. Not only does Jeremiah submit to his brother's decrees, but his own words are also markedly empty, often rehashing clichés, predictable arguments or excuses, and punctuated by the unclear "ha-a-a-a" or "I-I-ih" (Dangarembga 15, 147). And he is highly theatrical: considering her parents' Christian wedding, Tambu states, "My father always enjoyed a bit of play-acting, the chance to make a show" (163). Returning to Jeremiah's welcoming display for his brother, Tambu suggests its emptiness: "[t]he spear aimed high and low, thrust to the right, to the left. All was conquered" (36). Rather than phallogocentric triumphs asserting a continuing masculine authority, the scenes demonstrate Jeremiah's impotence, his uselessness within the family and wider community.

Dangarembga reinforces the undesirability of Jeremiah's social position through his physical and material surroundings. When Tambu returns to the homestead after some time with Babamukuru, she catalogs in uncomfortable detail the crumbling roof, walls, and especially the latrine, overrun by flies and "[g]listening pale maggots" (123). At the same time, her sisters are "more naked than dressed in their tattered frocks, their legs and arms and even their hair and faces grey with shena" (124). Though Tambu's perceptions are colored by her experiences in Babamukuru's ostensibly ultra-hygienic environment, the homestead's markedly decrepit state remains an apt indicator of Jeremiah's failing standards. Figured in this way, Jeremiah demonstrates the shortcomings of the mid-level man within an African patriarchal system.

To a greater extent than his father, Nhamo becomes a hybrid figure, determining which traditional values to retain and which to discard as he

enters the European roles and spaces offered by Babamukuru. It is by these acts, then, that Nhamo moves further along the novel's spectrum of colonized masculinities. Back from the mission, he recalls the beliefs Jeremiah espouses when Nhamo whips his younger sister Netsai and orders her to fetch his luggage. Remembering this and other moments, Tambu confirms, "in reality he was doing no more than behave, perhaps extremely, in the expected manner. The needs and sensibilities of the women in my family were not considered a priority, or even legitimate" (12).

Still, Nhamo yearns to make a complete break with his father's world. Unlike Jeremiah, he conveys a sharp (and perhaps exaggerated) disgust for village living, lumping people and animals together: "the women smelt of unhealthy reproductive odours . . . the men gave off strong aromas of productive labour . . . the various kinds of produce [are in] suspicious stages of freshness, with frightened hens, with the occasional rich-smelling goat" (1–2). Eager to escape, he turns to Babamukuru's world, genuflecting before its educational processes and material rewards. His transformation appears complete upon his return to the homestead, when he is figured as a sophisticated, urbanized student. During his stay, he seems to have forgotten what he "knew before going to the mission," including his duty to "help in the fields and with the cattle and be pleasant to people" (15). Tambu describes her brother's appearance as "fit and muscular, shiny and smooth" (52). She adds, "his hair was no longer arranged in rows of dusty, wild cucumber tufts but was black, shiny with oil and smoothly combed" (52). In these ways, Nhamo begins to move toward the tidy colonized ideal, the image of the good native glorified by Howitt, Jones, and Burke's other subjects.

Though Nhamo attempts to assert his legitimacy in both his father's and uncle's realms, he fails to create a secure base in either. While he establishes some authority on the homestead by controlling his younger sister, he neglects his work in the fields, sweating amongst the crops only to make a show of industriousness and gratitude to Babamukuru. Yet his move to the colonial is also incomplete, for while he horrifies Tambu by seeming to have forgotten his native tongue, he slips out of English whenever he pleases. As she realizes, "[t]he more time Nhamo spent at Babamukuru's, the more aphasic he became and the more my father was convinced that he was being educated" (53). His behavior at these moments shows a troubled, troubling form of hybridity.

Nhamo's death is itself provocative and open to multiple interpretations. Tambu begins her story with the announcement, "I was not sorry when my brother died" (53). In a rare moment of critical attention to Nhamo, Deepika Bahri notes: "[t]hat the novel opens with the prefiguring of her

brother Nhamo's death to make way for Tambu's tale is a poignant reminder of the symbolic starting point of the female narrative."²⁰ Tambu pragmatically notes that if her brother had not died, she would not have found a place in her uncle's home and the mission school. But by dying suddenly and without medical explanation while in Babamukuru's care, Nhamo also seems to collapse under cultural strain. Anguished, Mainini confronts Babamukuru: "[y]ou pretend. You are a pretender, you. First, you took his tongue so that he could not speak to me and now you have taken everything . . . for good. You and your education have killed my son" (54). The passionate outburst raises the question of what a proper education may be. And even when he is physically absent, Nhamo influences the narrative's living characters. Despite Tambu's attempts to clear her mind of him, he haunts her throughout the text, calling her own skills and the larger value of educating women into doubt. Tambu dreams of him during her first night at Babamukuru's, when "[h]e was laughing at me, as usual" (90). With his fall through the gap between African and Western masculine ideals, his strange death and disruptive afterlife, Nhamo raises questions about the viability and worth of forcing two cultures' norms together.

HYBRID MASCULINITIES

Dangarembga considers the problems of hybridity more extensively through the dominant male presence in Tambu's narrative: her uncle. Embracing colonial ideals more fervently than Jeremiah or Nhamo, Babamukuru stands further along the novel's masculine spectrum as a highly affected colonial subject.

Initially, Babamukuru appears to triumph in both traditional African and British realms, bearing a superficial resemblance to the men studied by Carol Summers. Though he has had extensive experience with British culture, he remains, like the Big Man, the *muera bonga* of the Siguake family, performing the role of the generous, responsible head of the extended household, prompting shows of great appreciation.

But Babamukuru's eyes are turned to explicit signifiers of colonial success, certainly. His authority is developed through his relationships with his immediate family: he defines which principles his son and daughter will absorb by taking them with him to England, schooling them in its language and history; when his daughter threatens to grow beyond his control, he reigns her in by condemning her reading choice of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, previously declared obscene by British magistrates. Babamukuru's ardent admiration and desire for Western masculinity also clearly emerge through

his religious outlook. As one of the headmasters at the mission school, he glories in his position by standing proudly outside the church, a pillar of the Christian community. Later, Babamukuru insists on an elaborate Christian wedding for Jeremiah and Mainini, swathing the bride in virginal white satin. Frequently referred to as "God," and as "nearly as divine as any human could hope to be," he attempts a departure from the apparent confines of his body and circumstances (70, 164, 190, 199).

Babamukuru's colonial accomplishments are also measured by his material possessions. As Tambu notes, his home is almost brimming over with markers of Western economic success. Even more glamorous than the technology-rich kitchen is Babamukuru's living room, featuring deep carpets, "the four-piece lounge suite upholstered in glowing brown velvet, the lamps with their tasseled shades, the sleek bookcases full of leather-bound and hard-covered volumes of erudition" (68). Indeed, Babamukuru seems to move among and even beyond most whites in the community. Describing his new surroundings to Tambu, Nhamo praises Babamukuru's apparently pristine, deluxe accommodations: "'Not even the Whites . . . not even the Whites could afford it!'" Upon her own arrival at her uncle's house, Tambu agrees: "Babamukuru was indeed a man of consequence however you measured him" (61, 64).

The food in the house serves as another metaphor for the kind of sustenance Babamukuru provides, for it appears to offer much satisfaction once the consumer develops a distaste for all things African. When Tambu first enters the dining room, she thinks, "That table, its shape and size, had a lot to say about the amount, the calorie content, the complement of vitamins and minerals, the relative proportions of fat, carbohydrate and protein of the food that would be consumed at it. No one who ate from such a table could fail to grow fat and healthy" (69). Taking on foreign traditions while neglecting most of those of his village, Babamukuru becomes Macaulay's ideal subordinate, African in blood, but British in taste, opinions, and morals. The apparent success of this metamorphosis is captured by Tambu's suggestion that "[y]ou never thought about Babamukuru as being handsome or ugly, but he was completely dignified. He didn't need to be bold anymore because he had made himself plenty of power. Plenty of power. Plenty of money. A lot of education. Plenty of everything" (50). Rising up slowly through the colonial society, Babamukuru attempts to shed his skin for another.

But Babamukuru is unable to develop a completely colonial image, just as the red dust from passing buses clings to the bookshelves and armchairs in his white mansion. Babamukuru is unable to find solace in the work of the native intellectual, for though he sidesteps the glorification of a

troubled past cautioned against by Fanon, he shows little interest in preserving traditional African practices. Instead, he recalls the men studied by Burke and Epprecht, who strove for achievement “in the white man’s terms,” by subscribing to notions of natives living outside of the increasingly commodified, colonial society as dirty and diseased.²¹

Babamukuru’s imposition of all things British is in fact overwhelming for himself and those around him, and Dangarembga emphasizes this at several moments in the text. The fight between Nyasha and Babamukuru, for instance, is a key moment from which a series of contradictions emerge. Though Nyasha is permitted to wear an extremely short dress around her African relatives, she is forbidden to do so around whites. Wanting to suppress her bodily self, Babamukuru pulls her into an intense confrontation: accusing Nyasha of being a whore, he also refers to her resistance as manly; though he tries to represent himself as the epitome of masculine authority, he is able to inflict little physical damage upon his young daughter, and only squeaks with fury. Through the episode, weak spots and fissures in his authority appear.

Problems around Babamukuru’s masculinity can be linked to other characters’ reactions to various foodstuffs. During one Christmas celebration on the homestead, the meat that symbolizes Babamukuru’s generosity and vitality turns green and rots while his wife is criticized by the family for her apparent ineptitude, suggesting that Babamukuru is not in touch with the needs of his relatives. Later, when Tambu prepares to leave for the convent school, Mainini starves herself, refusing any more of Babamukuru’s assistance and recalling the moment she accused him of cutting out Nhamo’s tongue, of having left her son disembodied and unable to consume and articulate what he pleased.

Nyasha’s eating disorders are strongly influenced by her relationship with her father. She recognizes that Babamukuru is merely one link in a much larger chain of power: “‘They put him through it all. But it’s not his fault, he’s good.’ Her voice took on a Rhodesian accent . . . ‘He’s a good boy, a good munt. A bloody good kaffir’ ” (200). Still, her anxieties about losing her African heritage, troubled though it may be, are taken out on her father and his property. Refusing to place potatoes or bacon and eggs docilely into her mouth, ingesting colonial signifiers, she wants to protect herself from their effects. Her rage then builds into a physical attack on the broader colonial scaffolds which shaped her father, herself, and their community. “[S]he rampaged, shredding her history book between her teeth (‘Their history. Fucking liars. Their bloody lies’)” (201). Pushed into extreme change, the bodies around Babamukuru’s central figure start to break down.

Such scenes may prompt us to focus on Nyasha, Tambu, and their mothers as ones suffering from nervous conditions, but Babamukuru is deeply tormented as well. As Derek Wright suggests, “Babamukuru is the real hysteric of the novel He is the center of neurosis in his Western nuclearized family, the sick one who stays well by making the well ones sick.”²² Not unlike his teenage daughter, he often skips meals or distances himself from others at the dinner table. During one dinner conversation late in the novel, he tells Nyasha that he and her mother have been “killing” themselves to provide for her and Chido (189). And just as the boundaries of his vulnerable, not quite Westernized masculinity are shaken by his struggle with Nyasha, his sickly patterns of consumption anticipate the ways in which he becomes further subordinate to colonial influences beyond his control. In one of his last scenes, Babamukuru parks his Ford at the Sacred Heart convent, “politely” addresses a nun, and is soundly dismissed along with his family as just another group of blacks—any social prestige he may have held, or believed he held, eradicated in a flash. Despite his attempts to conform to the colonial patriarchy, to be an obedient mimic man, he falls to the bottom of the mission and larger social power structures (193–194).

As Babamukuru’s son and heir apparent, Chido appears fleetingly in the text but raises some important questions. Juxtaposing him with Maiguru and other female characters, Rosemary George and Helen Scott briefly note, “Nyasha’s brother seems quite comfortable in post-colonial Zimbabwe.”²³ Focusing on Chido in relation to other male figures especially, we may query whether this statement is ultimately supported by the text.

Chido does seem, at times, to move past his father’s failing ideals and sense of self. First, he balances an awareness of his sexuality with other aspects of his personality and his intellectual pursuits, for though he is “innocuously if smartly dressed in shorts and socks and shoes,” the girls around him see him as “cool and debonair and exciting” (33, 120). Looking back at his interaction with girls and young women, Tambu describes Chido as calm and effectively flirtatious. He also maintains a deference to his elders and yet speaks out in defense of certain persons or ideals, as he demonstrates on the evening of Nyasha and Babamukuru’s fight. At such moments, Chido appears to assert a confident physical and psychological masculinity, one working free from restrictive understandings of the good native.

But as Chido appears more frequently further into the novel, his strengths become increasingly questionable. Often refusing to return to the homestead or spend time with his relatives, he aligns himself with the Baker family. Because the Bakers are at first figured as a socially progressive

missionary family, and because Babamukuru's anxieties are clear and somewhat contagious, we may read Chido's preference as a reasonable escape from negative influences. He may be following his father into a split, unhealthy existence, though, for following Nyasha's scathing judgment of the situation, Tambu notes that Chido's scholarship (in which Mr. Baker "had a hand") was awarded in exchange for a promise, "a peaceful promise, a grateful promise to accept whatever was handed out to them and not to expect more" (106). And through Mainini's comments on the second last page of the text, greater strain is predicted. "That boy Chido can hardly speak a word of his own mother's tongue, and you'll see, his children will be worse. . . . You'll see. And himself, to look at him he may look all right, but there's no telling what price he's paying" (202–203). Superficially moving toward a kind of postcolonial independence and peace, beyond the troubles of his uncle, cousin, and father, Chido is left with a range of impending pressures, both internal and external.

MASCULINITIES, FEMININITIES, AND STRENGTH

The spectrum I have outlined is wound up with the novel's female characters and the spectrum described by Flora Veit-Wild, for though it is masculine, it is not exclusively male. In addition to influencing the shape of the narrative, the work taken up (or failed to be taken up) by Dangarembga's men is assumed by her women. And it is by an exploration of those characters' actions that we can further measure the efforts of their male counterparts.

Socially prominent women, even Big Women, took a regular presence in indigenous African cultures. Barber explains that because status was gained by the building and show of wealth, often through successful weaving, pottery making, and other craftwork, Yoruba women and men "could make themselves big" (Barber 727). Chenjerai Shire emphasizes the significance of women's work in his study of traditional Zimbabwean customs. He asserts "[w]omen constructed masculinities right through the lives of men, from birth to adulthood."²⁴ Central to this process was the *vatete* (paternal aunt) who taught young boys about sex and contraception, and taught wives how to celebrate and/or contest their husbands' lineages. Women married to the *vatete*'s brothers were understood to be her "wives," under her influence and power. Some aunts, unmarried themselves, became *mbonga* (spiritual leaders and heads of households). Looking back at his own childhood, Shire concludes, "[i]t was the *vatete*, more than anyone else, who reinforced the myth of maleness" (Shire 153–154).

This role is filled in *Nervous Conditions* by Tete Gladys, who makes brief but suggestive appearances in the text. “Because of her patriarchal status,” she is offered the fewest chores, along with the best room and food at the homestead (132–133). As part of the family’s patriarchal council, she works to resolve the issues around Lucia’s pregnancy and Jeremiah’s desire to take her as his second wife. In front of the other family patriarchs, Gladys’s judgment of Lucia and Jeremiah is on its surface vague and reserved. However, the discussion does not evolve much further than her own comment and later in the kitchen, she shakes with amused superiority over both Jeremiah and Babamukuru’s performances, exclaiming, “‘Those men, aiwa! Those men!’” (148). Because she emerges comparatively rarely in the narrative, it is difficult for us to form any extensive conclusions about her life’s work. But at the moments our attention is drawn to her, we find a character more comfortable and successful in her social role than any of her male relatives.

Ultimately the most powerful masculine figure in the novel, male or female, is Nyasha. She turns determinedly from multiple markers of femininity through her statements and actions, particularly her starvation. Deepika Bahri explains, “Nyasha’s pathology and her belief that ‘angles were more attractive than curves’ [135] . . . is not simply rooted in her desire for slimness (which it might be) but also in a rejection of the rounded contours of the adult female body primed for the Shona matrimonial and social economy.”²⁵ Bahri also proposes that Nyasha’s first refusal to eat is sparked by her father’s banning of *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*, as she is “[a]ppalled at this invasion of her rights, and what might be seen as a persistent barrier to her development into sexual agent rather than sexualized commodity.”²⁶ Yet Lawrence’s text—which drops from the narrative and, perhaps, from Nyasha’s favor shortly after the dinner scene—itself contains many descriptions of Connie Chatterley’s rounded contours and her possession by Mellors. Engaged with these texts—images and words—Nyasha resists certain Zimbabwean and European expectations of women.

By positioning her behavior alongside Bhabha’s statements on the agency of the colonial mimic man, we can judge Nyasha’s abilities in the masculine realm. Strategic mimicry experiments with understandings of the unsaid, not only the taboo, but also with what is safely assumed: it is “a discourse uttered between the lines and as such both against the rules and within them.” Throughout the text, Nyasha stands at what Bhabha marks as “the crossroads of what is known and permissible and that which though known must be kept concealed” (Bhabha 89). Not smooth and steady, her messages often emerge as frenzied babbling, or as veiled, ambiguous statements. After her physical conflict with her father, Nyasha asks no one

in particular, “‘What about me? . . . Does anyone care what I need?’ ” This prompts Tambu’s comment, “[o]f course, we thought she was sulking” (117), which is clarified by Tambu’s later thinking on Nyasha’s attempted communication.

Also central to the force of partial representation is the concept of “the play of a power that is elusive because it hides no essence, no ‘itself’ ” (90). We find a manifestation of this emptiness in Nyasha’s words to her mother, just after her attack on the mission texts she had tried fervently to consume: “Look what they’ve done to us . . . I’m not one of them but I’m not one of you” (201). Unexpectedly, but appropriately, her final triumph is her emptied, wasted body, showing her refusal to be a good native or obedient mimic. Bhabha observes that subversive mimicry “articulates those disturbances of cultural, racial, and historical difference that menace the narcissistic demand of colonial authority” (88). Nyasha’s form fiercely contests African and European notions of identity and authority, forcing a deeply unsettling vision on all around her. Contrasting with Babamukuru, who quietly allows his body’s implosion, Nyasha resists a gradual, subtle death and forges her body into a tool of aggression. Her starvation is a form of self-destruction, but from this devastation, she creates a vivid symbol of protest. Nyasha negotiates her available options, and exploits the gaps within mimicry in ways her uncle, cousin, father, and brother do not.²⁷

CONCLUSION

The last words of Tambu’s narrative—“the story I have told here, is my own story, the story of four women whom I loved, *and our men*, this story is how it all began” (204; emphasis mine)—reaffirm the significance of the male characters and turn us back to several male figures running consecutively through the book: Jeremiah and the early colonial; Nhamo stretching toward the colonial, already inhabited by Babamukuru; and Chido facing the late- and postcolonial. Through this continuum, enriched by the contributions of female characters, Dangarembga explores the sometimes intersecting, sometimes competing cultural discourses shaping understandings of Zimbabwean masculinities. In a 1998 interview, three years after the publication of his *Masculinities*, R. W. Connell suggests that the deconstruction of discursive representations of repressive masculinities may yield up small utopias in which conventionally gendered responsibilities are transcended.²⁸ In *Nervous Conditions*, with colonial structures still firmly in place, native men remain bound to various restrictions with little respite ahead. The story of their transcendence has not yet been told.

NOTES

1. Flora Veit-Wild, *Teachers, Preachers, Non-Believers: A Social History of Zimbabwean Literature* (London: Hans Zell, 1992), 332–333.
2. Kirsten Holst Petersen, “Between Gender, Race and History: Kirsten Holst Petersen interviews Tsitsi Dangarembga,” *Kunapipi* 16:1 (1994): 345.
3. Emmanuel Akyeampong, “‘Wo pe tam won pe be’ (‘You like cloth but you don’t want children’): Urbanization, Individualism and Gender Relations in Colonial Ghana c. 1900–39,” *Africa’s Urban Past*, ed. David M. Anderson and Richard Rathbone (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1999), 223.
4. Karin Barber, “How Man Makes God in West Africa: Yoruba Attitudes Toward the *Orisa*,” *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 51:3 (1981): 724.
5. *Ibid.*, 724.
6. Carol Summers, “Mission Boys, Civilized Men, and Marriage: Educated African Men in the Missions of Southern Rhodesia, 1920–1945,” *The Journal of Religious History* 23:1 (1999): 76.
7. Janice E. Hill, “Purging a Plate Full of Colonial History: The ‘Nervous Conditions’ of Silent Girls,” *College Literature* 22:1 (1995): 79.
8. Marc Epprecht, “The ‘Unsayings’ of Indigenous Homosexualities in Zimbabwe: Mapping a Blindspot in an African Masculinity,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 24:4 (1998): 634.
9. *Ibid.*, 634.
10. Timothy Burke, *Lifebuoy Men, Lux Women: Commodification, Consumption, and Cleanliness in Modern Zimbabwe* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 35–44.
11. *Ibid.*, 223.
12. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1968), 209–210.
13. *Ibid.*, 221; Rob Pattman, “Learning to be Men at a Teachers’ College in Zimbabwe,” *Jouvert* 2:1 (1998), <http://social.chass.ncsu.edu/jouvert> (March 8, 2001).
14. Biman Basu, “Trapped and Troping: Allegories of the Transnational Intellectual in Tsitsi Dangarembga’s *Nervous Conditions*,” *ARIEL* 28:3 (1997): 8.
15. Tsitsi Dangarembga, *Nervous Conditions* (Seattle: Seal Press, 1989), n.p.
16. Macaulay, Lord Thomas Babington, *Macaulay: Prose and Poetry*, ed. Rupert Hart-Davis (London: Soho Square, 1952), 729.
17. Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 86–87.
18. Summers, “Mission Boys,” 75–76, 79, 88–89.
19. *Ibid.*, 79, 88, 90.
20. Deepika Bahri, “Disembodying the Corpus: Postcolonial Pathology in Tsitsi Dangarembga’s *Nervous Conditions*,” *Postmodern Culture* 5:1 (1994), http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/postmodern_culture/v005/5.1bahri.html (April 21, 2001).
21. Burke, *Lifebuoy Men*, 35–39; Epprecht “Indigenous Homosexualities,” 642–643.

22. Derek Wright, *New Directions in African Fiction* (New York: Twayne, 1997), 120.
23. Rosemary Marangoly George and Helen Scott, "An Interview with Tsitsi Dangaremba," *Novel* (1993): 314.
24. Chenjerai Shire, "Men Don't go to the Moon: Language, Space, and Masculinities in Zimbabwe," *Dislocating Masculinity: Comparative Ethnographies*, ed. Andrea Cornwall and Nancy Lindisfarne (London: Routledge, 1994), 153.
25. Bahri, n.p.
26. *Ibid.*, n.p.
27. In "'Of Mimicry and Woman': Hysteria and Anticolonial Feminism in Tsitsi Dangaremba's *Nervous Conditions*" (1993), Michelle Vizzard explores Nyasha's perspective and actions against Fanon and Bhabha's gender politics—specifically, their silence on the conditions of women in colonial states. Interpreting Nyasha's hysteria through her anorexia, her physical and psychological breakdown, Vizzard argues that Nyasha is not "a fundamentally powerful figure"; rather, she emerges as a "female form of Bhabha's mimic, exhibiting an overcompliance with the power of the masculinized West, and thereby creating a rupture which may be read by others" (209). Vizzard notes that through her rupture, however, Nyasha facilitates Tambu's (and the reader's) awareness of central racial, economic, and gendered aspects of colonialism (209–210).
28. Lahoucine Ouzgane and Daniel Coleman, "Cashing Out the Patriarchal Dividends: An Interview with R. W. Connell," *Jouvert* 2:1 (1998), <http://social.chass.ncsu.edu/jouvert/v2i1/Connell.htm> (March 8, 2001).

8. (Dis)Enabling Masculinities: The Word and the Body, Class Politics, and Male Sexuality in El Saadawi's *God Dies by the Nile*

Sally Hayward

ELITE MASCULINITIES: THE MAYOR AND ILLEGITIMATE IMAGES OF GOD

Set in the small Egyptian community of Kafr El Teen on the banks of the Nile, *God Dies by the Nile* focuses on the Mayor's exploitation of Zakeya, Kafrawi, and their families. Forming a complex relationship between words, images, and lived experience, El Saadawi makes visible a version of reality that privileges those who can utilize words, images, and material practices to create and sustain a position of power. Ruling "the government of Kafr El Teen" (El Saadawi 1995: 9) as if it were his own personal empire independent of the national government in Cairo, the Mayor uses the word and the image to displace God as the ultimate ruler in the eyes of the community. Superficially, the most "able" man in the village, a "representative of Government" and a "responsible official" (8), the Mayor appears at first to have a privileged sense of identity and a privileged physiognomy. His "deep blue eyes," which speak of his mother's Englishness, and his "prominent high forehead" allow both himself and the villagers to imagine him as one of the "[rulers] of [the] country" (12).

El Saadawi, however, is quick to complicate this representation. As a hybrid character, the Mayor identifies not only with his English upper-class mother, but also with his "ignorant peasant" Egyptian father. Physically, his upper half is refined and arrogant, possessing the qualities of an "English

gentleman accustomed to command" (8), while his lower half, formed by the "upper regions of the country in the south," is "unrefined, like that of an Upper Egyptian peasant" (8). Rather than according him a privileged space in which he can relate to the colonizers and the peasants, the Mayor's hybridity causes him to fear his position as the male God-like ruler of Kafr El Teen is illegitimate: secretly he believes he is "just a [nobody]," and is driven by "[feelings] of inadequacy" and failure (11).

Feeling inferior to his brother, "one of the people who rule this country" (12), the Mayor, nevertheless, imagines his own kingdom, his own government expanding to the village of El Rawla and beyond to a vision of the city of Cairo (10). His imagination, being inspired largely by private interest and by his desire for his brother's success, results in a rule that finds its power and satisfaction in the violent oppression of the lower classes. The feeling of being superior to the peasants enables him to use "his position to exploit the peasants, and to spend the money he squeezes out of them on his extravagant way of living, and his extravagant tastes in food, tobacco, wine and women" (13). Tyrannically ruling the people of the village, the Mayor confiscates the people's land for no good reason, arrests and has innocent people killed, and routinely rapes the young peasant women of the village. It may come as no surprise then that the villagers "don't fear God. What they really fear is the Mayor" (106). Ironically, as an emissary of the liberal and democratic "postcolonial" Egyptian government and as the responsible and concerned leader of the village, the Mayor reproduces the conditions of the colonizer to be both ruler and oppressor of his people.

Working with the help of his three enforcers—the Imam of the Mosque, Sheikh Hamzawi; the Chief of the Village Guard, Sheikh Zahran; and the local barber/"doctor-healer" (16), Haj Ismail—the Mayor enforces the law and his position as the political and religious leader of the village by establishing a violent connection between religion, politics, sexuality, and class. In *God Dies by the Nile*, we see these violent interdependent connections at work in a conversation Sheikh Hamzawi has with the Mayor. Speaking "as though he was quoting from the Holy Koran on the sayings of the Prophet Mohamed" (15), Sheikh Hamzawi affirms for the Mayor's "appreciative ears" that "[a]ll peasants steal . . . they are nothing but accursed, cunning, unbelieving, impious sons of heretics . . . [they] might even commit murder or fornication" (15). Stigmatizing Kafrawi (and, by extension, all male peasants) as a dishonest, murdering, fornicating atheist, and a deviant allows Sheikh Hamzawi and the Mayor to exploit Kafrawi, indicting him for a murder he has not committed so the lustful Mayor can acquire Kafrawi's daughter. As El Saadawi states, the manipulative use of these "three taboos: religion, sex and politics" (El Saadawi 1992: 33) is what traditionally allows

the elite “political regime [to impose] the will of men upon women and [to impose] poverty and slavery upon the poor and the destitute” (El Saadawi 1997: 2). As powerful elites, Sheikh Hamzawi and the Mayor manipulate and abuse the peasants for their own ends. Strategically and systematically, ruling in the name of the patriarchal God as the ultimate higher authority, the Mayor and his accomplices work with words and images to physically and psychologically disable Kafrawi and other men in the village so as to have uncontrolled access to the women and the land.

OPPRESSED MASCULINITIES: THE POWER OF THE WORD

According to El Saadawi, this “pervasive, autocratic, parasitic, and corrupt apparatus living on the back of people” is typical of the Arab neocolonial countries and stems both from a feudal and tribal “slave-agricultural era” (35) and colonial oppression. Within this “patriarchal slave or class system,” lower-class men and women “[struggle] against all kinds of oppression” as they resist “local dictators and oppressive governments” (166).

Functioning at the level of material practices and at the level of the spoken or written word, these oppressive tactics effectively disable lower-class men and women. Using words as if they are swords (168), the ruling elite control the people by grounding their discourse in the villagers’ lived reality. In the small neocolonial community of Kafr El Teen, words, or at least the words spoken by the Mayor, have the ability to bring into form and life, images and ideas that could not previously be expressed. While Kafrawi is indicted for murder because he does not seem a “natural” man (63), Galal, labeled an “idiot” (126) and a “thief” (129) by the Mayor and a number of “witnesses,” has his “high-esteem as a soldier” tarnished and becomes, in everyone’s eyes, a criminal (130). Similarly, it is not until the Mayor echoes the name of Elwau, indicting him for impregnating Nefissa, “[pronouncing] the name again as though to ensure that this time it was transformed into indelible fact” (42), that the Mayor’s son is able, in turn, to put a name and a crime—the crime of not attending the Mosque and the crime of impregnating Nefissa—to the “face he had seen only once before,” watching it in his mind, change “from a hazy memory, to a reality in life” (42).

Moreover, it is only because the Mayor and Sheikh Hamzawi are able to negatively label the peasant Kafrawi that it is possible, later, for the courts to believe that Kafrawi is not an honorable man (63), and convict him of the crime of murder. At his trial, Kafrawi’s simple declarative sentences and innocent silence are read by the prosecuting judge as deceit. Kafrawi’s only guilt, however, is that he is unable to understand and respond to the

manipulative syntax used by the lawyer as he attempts to convict him for Elwau's murder. Kafrawi's indictment makes it clear that by consciously or unconsciously appropriating the "word" and conventional frameworks of thought and language, a masculine elite creates the harsh reality of lower-class men and women by psychologically and physically controlling their voices and their lives.

It would be wrong, however, to conceive of this elite as a monolithic, unified construction. Within the elite, there is a hierarchical structure that privileges certain men over others. For example, Sheikh Hamzawi, Sheikh Zahran, and Haj Ismail as authoritative, elite males have a voice, but one that recognizes and concedes to the cajoling, oppressive voice of the Mayor who wields the greatest amount of regulatory power in the village. All the Mayor has to do is "say the word" and he can have any woman brought (or bought) to his bed, and any man in the village imprisoned, exiled or killed. As the local, all-powerful "god" of Kafr El Teen, the Mayor "has all the power of both the word and the sword and is always the winner" (168). The other men may have significant authoritative voices, but their voices are always contextualized within this elite, hierarchical structure.

As El Saadawi implies in both her political nonfiction and in her fiction, the power of the word often disguises the "truth" of lived experience. If we are not careful

[w]e find ourselves lost in an avalanche of words which appear very dissident, and which multiply and reproduce themselves endlessly, breeding more and more complex words. We drown in these words, we are suffocated by them. It is a zero-sum game of words in which you lose your power to understand. (163)

In *God Dies by the Nile*, a man's worth and autonomy, measured by his potency and by how much power he can wield, is dependent upon his ability to understand and manipulate words for his own use. Kafrawi becomes a victim of the oppressive system because he has no material wealth and because he is unable to understand or use the "dissident word . . . in real life" (169).

IMPOSSIBLE TRANSGRESSIONS: SHEIKH HAMZAWI

It is possible, though, that El Saadawi's focus on bodies—her implied reflection that in the beginning there is not the word, but the body, not spoken words or written words, but bodies and images of bodies and their excesses—reflects her belief that a liberatory and "feminist" politics must

“[reduce] the importance of established theories and abstractions and [increase] the importance of living, experiencing, observing, listening, learning and concretizing” (34). It is also possible that she is pointing to a paradox which claims that while these peasants’ bodies are powerless and easily appropriated because they exist outside of the dominant discursive system, they also have a certain power precisely because they exist in the margins, in silence or in a pre-linguistic state outside of the dominant system. If this is the case, El Saadawi’s portrayal of the peasants’ reality must be read in terms of the embodied peasants’ ability to resist and challenge the dominant cultural system. By considering how and to what extent they can solicit a liberatory politics able to challenge the hegemony, we can see where “hope” lies in this novel.

At first glance, one hopeful moment may be when Fatheya’s child, her “son of fornication,” urinates on “the book of Allah” (108). Drawing her reader’s attention to the agency of the body, El Saadawi appears to be commenting on the way in which the abject excesses of the body can be put to political use. However, it is precisely because the child’s act of urinating on the Koran is seen as a subversive act, an act of sacrilege, that Sheikh Hamzawi can confirm that the child is the cause of all his troubles. Not surprisingly, it is the “spoken word” that labels the child a “son of fornication and sin” and results in both the child’s and Fatheya’s deaths. Despite both the child’s and Fatheya’s attempt to cling to one another’s bodies, they are wrenched apart and torn to bits by the vengeful, screaming villagers (115).

Spoken and written words are significant precisely because they produce effects that have severe consequences on the corporeal body. Words, however, are also significant primarily because they show how language interacts with lived experience to create unconscious cultural assumptions, beliefs and values that must *not* be challenged if one is to survive in any given culture (160).

Ironically, it is Fatheya’s husband, Sheikh Hamzawi, who, although sympathetic with his wife’s love for the child, recognizes that his own survival necessitates a compliance with the community’s dominant values and beliefs. When Fatheya asks him, “How can you repeat the same things that people in the village are saying?” (112), Sheikh Hamzawi responds: “Why does that surprise you? Aren’t I like other people? Am I not human? I never pretended to be a saint, or a god” (112). Unable, even after the men of the village have savagely murdered his wife, to speak up, Sheikh Hamzawi “kept his ear to the wall until all sound had ceased, and a deep silence had enveloped the village” (116) before venturing out to bring his wife’s mutilated and dying body back to his bed. Fatheya’s and the child’s murder

illustrates the relationship between language and bodies, while also pointing to the violence performed on bodies in oppressive and/or exploitive situations. Significantly, it also highlights the severe consequences of attempting to have any agency outside of the dominant norm.

EMASCULATED MASCULINITIES: THE POLITICS OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Sheikh Hamzawi's reluctance to challenge the "corrupt, fractious, and often brutal regime" (Chatterjee 1993: 3), that El Saadawi confirms is typical of Arab neocolonial countries (El Saadawi 1997: 35), comes at a cost. Constantly watched and judged by the other men in the village, he lives in fear of emasculation, and has to prove his manhood continually. He knows that in this particular community, a man's sexual potency, connected to his material wealth and social class, is essential to the regard he is held in by the rest of the community. Bowed by his inability to father a son, and by his impotency, the wealthy Sheikh Hamzawi answers the men's doubts about his forthcoming marriage to the youthful Fatheya by boasting, "I can satisfy not only her, but her father if necessary . . . It's only what you have in your pocket that counts where a man is concerned" (28). Verbally conflating the size of a man's penis with the size of a man's wallet and his subsequent "respect and esteem" (30), El Saadawi appears to be saying that "where a man is concerned" what counts is his ability to "give it" to both men and women, to perform his potency and his masculinity, whenever it is "necessary" (28) for him to reinforce his position in the patriarchal system.

In this novel, economic and sexual exploitation work interdependently to oppress both lower-class men and women. This violence, visible on the bodies of the lower classes—Fatheya's body feels the "burning pain" of circumcision and bears the marks of a "woman's finger as it probed up between her thighs looking for blood" (32), while Galal's hands bear the mark of both the hoe and the rifle that, over the "long years" have dug a groove into his skin (121)—is supported by the patriarchal institutions (law, marriage, religion) both within the immediate community and in the outlying towns and cities. Although the women of Kafr El Teen bear a double burden as they are subjected to this violence—working in the fields and the home, being raped by the Mayor (39, 96), and beaten by their fathers and husbands (21, 31, 69)—the men in this community also suffer under this oppressive rule.

In a crude display of uninhibited force, the Mayor sends Galal to war and, on his return, imprisons him under a trumped up charge of stealing, arranges to have Elwau killed, and imprisons Kafrawi for murder. To maintain a potent "brotherhood," Haj Ismail persuades Fatheya's father,

Masoud, to beat his daughter into accepting a marriage with Sheikh Hamzawi. Taunting him with the words, "What can you do? . . . Is that a question for a man to ask? Beat her, my brother, beat her one and twice and thrice. Do you not know that girls and women are only convinced if they receive a good hiding?" (31), Haj Ismail eventually gets his way. Masoud "climbed up on top of the oven, pulled her out by her hair, and beat her several times until she came down" (31). Handing her over to the "pious old Sheikh" in marriage, Masoud consoles himself in silence that "God is going to save [her] from the withering sun in the fields, from the dirt and the dung" (31). It seems as if her virginity is a small price to pay for their economic and material survival and for Masoud's pride. As El Saadawi points out, however, there is no consolation for those subjected to an institutionalized masculinity that forces men to be pimps and women to be prostitutes, and which derives its identity from violent oppressive tactics and shame.

In a parallel scene, Kafrawi also has his manhood shamed. When Sheikh Zahran first goes to collect Nefissa from her father's house, he uses the word of Allah in an attempt to shame Kafrawi into forcing Nefissa to go with him. Failure to comply with the Sheikh's and ultimately the Mayor's desire means that Kafrawi will be frowned upon by Allah, denied "all the good which Allah wants to bestow on [him]," and dismissed by the Mayor himself, upon whom Kafrawi is dependent for his material survival.

Surprisingly, it is neither the threat of religious excommunication nor the threat that he will be labeled bad, dishonest and "[unworthy] of [the Mayor's] confidence" (21) that forces Kafrawi to comply with Sheikh Zahran's wishes. However, when Sheikh Zahran ridicules Kafrawi by insulting his manhood, sneering, "What can you do?! Is that a question for a man to ask?" (21), Kafrawi is shamed into first beating his daughter and then forcing her into concubinage with the Mayor. Ultimately, compelled to surrender in silence, in "despair and . . . profound humiliation" (6), Kafrawi illustrates how male peasants, having no "filled pockets" and no voice, power or agency with which to resist the authoritarian command of the Mayor, are both emasculated and dependent upon the good will of those in power for their material security.

This emasculation and shameful dependence, however, is most visible in the scene in which Haj Ismail remembers his rape as a young boy. When Haj Ismail is watching over Elwau's dead body with the chief of the village guard, he spots the "hairy muscular thigh" of the dead man and is prompted to remember when he was raped by his cousin Youssef:

He dodged this way and that but Youssef caught him in an iron grip holding him by the back of his neck, threw him to the ground face downwards and wrenched his *galabeya* up over his buttocks. He felt the powerful and

heavy body press down on him, and his nose hit the ground so that he could hardly breathe. (51)

When it is over, his father's "heavy fist [landing] on his back" makes Haj Ismail jump up and "meekly [follow] behind his father" to learn how to weigh and measure things and to take, where he can, the goods from "the few old cracked shelves" in the store (51). As an innocent child, Haj Ismail is socialized into a violent masculinity and an authoritarian and sexually exploitive patriarchal system of which he is, inextricably, a part. Pressed to the ground where he "can hardly breathe" (51), Haj Ismail learns that to breathe freely, to have any kind of power for himself, he must rely on his ability to verbally and physically oppress and control those beneath him.

ESTRANGED MASCULINITIES: KAFRAWI'S VIOLENT SUBJUGATION TO "NO-MAN'S LAND"

In another scene in the novel, the peasant Kafrawi is beaten psychologically to the point where his eyes have a "broken look" about them (121) and his body becomes unintelligible even to himself:

He could not tell the difference between the feel of his sweat and his urine, nor could he sense whether his muscles were relaxed, or contracted, still or moving. . . . His body had become a separate part of him, a huge muscle which contracted or relaxed of its own accord, moved or kept still as he stood there watching it, so that he could hardly believe what was happening under his own eyes to this body of his which had always been a part of him. (44)

Kafrawi's body is, by all accounts, falling apart. His arms and legs and muscles are no longer a part of him, and he is no longer in control of himself. Reduced to his function as a laborer, he is nothing more than a "huge muscle" and cannot tell the difference between his sweat and his urine (44). This lack of self-awareness and self-knowledge, stemming from the violent physical and verbal acts performed against him and his family by the ruling elite, is inscribed on the surface of his body until he can no longer articulate a coherent identity. The violent psychological and physical assault on his body and on his mind, beginning when, as a child, he first heard his mother's scream and saw her lifeless "eyes still wide open fastened to him with that same fixed stare" (47), culminates in this moment of unintelligibility because, as a peasant, he and his family are assigned an unintelligible, inferior position on the margins of society.

Not man, nor beast, Kafrawi exists in a kind of no-man's land. His affinity with the buffalo, however, is evidence of his desire for connection and, specifically, for a mother figure in his life:

For ever since he had opened his eyes and taken his first look at the world around him, the buffalo had been somewhere close by . . . Before he learnt to walk, or to pronounce his first words he could see her looking at him . . . When he began to crawl on his belly over the ground, the first thing he started to do was to crawl in her direction. (45)

In the absence of his mother, and in the absence of his ability to identify as a man—having had his manhood taken from him by the Mayor—Aziza, the buffalo, provides Kafrawi with the comfort that he does not get from human relationships:

The buffalo looked at him. . . . She stretched out her neck coming so close that their heads touched. Then she started to wipe her lips up against his neck like a mother fondling a child. (45)

On this particular day, feeling devastated by Nefissa's disappearance, humiliated by the Mayor, and feeling as though his legs and his body were "out of his control" (44), Kafrawi takes familiar comfort in the buffalo's milk, and before he knows it

He felt something fill up, become swollen and erect, like a strange organ which was not a part of his body. He pressed on it with the palm of his hand, trying to push it back, but it refused to yield. He watched it get out, breaking through the limits of his body and his will, like a part of him over which he had lost control. Slowly it crept over the soft udder, breathing in the smell of female, lapping up the familiar wetness, slid up into the inner warmth and was lost in a great stillness, like an eternity, like death. After a while it tried to slip out into the fresh air again where it could breathe more freely, but the hole closed itself closely about it, like strong fingers intent on choking it to death. It fought for its life, jerked with the mad spasm of an animal caught in a trap, erupted itself of all capacity to fight and collapsed, like tired eyelids on tired eyes surrendering to the deepest of sleeps. (47)

Reading this alienating sexual union as an articulation of Freud's Oedipus complex—the sexual desire for the parent of the opposite sex—makes sense. In *Kafr El Teen*, mothers are not allowed to mother. They either have their children taken from them (as in Zakeya's case) or they are killed (as in the case of Kafrawi's mother and Fatheya). In the absence of his mother or, indeed, any nurturing women, Kafrawi's fixation on the buffalo as a mother

figure is evidence both of an unconscious flight from an oppressive or “unsatisfactory reality” (Freud 1984: 80), and a regression into an earlier infantile stage where his association with a mother figure was accompanied by an incestuous “sexual excitation” (78). Kafrawi’s bestiality, then, indicates that his development into manhood has been stymied by a social situation—a physical reality—that has failed to provide him with an image of an appropriate mother figure as well as an image of an appropriate male role model who could have helped him negotiate his transition into manhood and his transition into appropriate sexual relationships with women.

Kafrawi’s final inappropriate choice of a sexual object is an indication, then, not so much of his own sexual perversion, but, rather, an indication of the perversion engendered by a social system that subjugates the sexual lives of lower-class citizens—both male and female—to an infantile stage of sexual development to feed the driving need for power and sexual domination of the elite (male) few. This violent subjugation to an oppressive system has affected Kafrawi’s sense of himself as a man as well as his sense of himself as a human being. Configured as an unfeeling beast by the ruling elite of *Kafr El Teen*, Kafrawi is unable to breathe, let alone speak, and becomes a stranger to himself and his desires.

Estranged from the sexual act itself, Kafrawi operates on instinct as if he has no connection to his own physical experience and no responsibility for his actions. “Caught like a mad animal in a trap,” it is not only Kafrawi’s penis but also his manhood that is being choked to death (47). His orgasm, when it comes, is reluctant and represents not ecstasy, but a tired collapse. Symbolically, this act illustrates the limited extent of Kafrawi’s impotent ability to fight or “erupt” against the Mayor and his oppressive rule. Like Haj Ismail, Kafrawi fantasizes about withdrawing so he can “breathe more freely” (47), but by this time his penis, like the unyielding patriarchal system, has taken on a life of its own, and will not let him. Ultimately, as Alamin M. Mazrui and Judith I. Abala indicate, this act of bestiality shows how “patriarchy mediates class relations of power in a way that ultimately leads to the subhumanization of women as well as of men from the lower classes” (Mazrui and Abala 1997: 28).

UNINTELLIGIBLE MASCULINITIES: MAN, BEAST, OR MACHINE?

Kafrawi, however, is not the only man in this novel transformed from man to beast as a result of his extreme behavior. The policeman, who represents institutional authority and order, is also unrecognizable as a human being. As he chases Kafrawi, causing “[h]is body [to shake] with a strange fear”

(61), Kafrawi thinks that the policeman “could hardly be human, hardly come from a body of flesh and blood and bone” (61). For Kafrawi, this “frightening shadow, moving at a machine-like pace neither fast nor slow, like the hands of a clock moving steadily towards the hour of execution” is a “robot with mental limbs and joints . . . neither man nor devil, neither live nor dead, some evil spirit which was not human despite its human form” (61). The policeman, then, inasmuch as he represents and is a tool of well-functioning, smooth-running state order, has become himself a machine: a microcosm of the state in its nonhuman form.

The Mayor, too, even though configured as the upper class, God-like ruler of Kafr El Teen, does not escape his configuration within and his ultimate subservience to patriarchal structures. The Mayor, who is both a God and a “monstrous devil” (20), is portrayed as having “long white teeth like the fangs of a fox, or a wolf” (17). Using Freud’s analysis of the mythological tale of the god Kronos who “swallowed his children” (Freud 1984: 120), we can understand how the Mayor himself is driven by an insatiable appetite for power in the neocolonial state. Freud claims that the psychological origins of this myth stem from a fear of “being eaten up by their father” as well as the fear of emasculation. Moreover, Freud suggests that this fear of being robbed of either their lives or their sexual organs has a “profound influence on the development of their character” (123).

The Kronos myth, reflected in a “number of fairy tales in which some ravenous animal like a wolf appears” (123), is recognizable because of its connection to the father: the wolf is always the father in disguise (123). Ironically, then, the Mayor, as the wolf father-figure—disguised as the democratic and loving patriarchal God—ravenously devours his own children only to be devoured, in turn, by the fear of his own emasculation by his own (patriarchal) father in the form of his more successful brother. This brother threatens to emasculate him: to “[seize] him by the throat” and choke him even as he attempts to “swallow” his humiliation as an inferior (male) being (12). As El Saadawi suggests, authoritarian patriarchy, disguised as democracy, is itself “a monster with many parents” (El Saadawi 1997: 35). Man is coded as animal/beast or man/machine to disguise patriarchy’s all consuming insatiable hunger, and its desire to reproduce itself in many forms.

POSSIBILITIES OF RESISTANCE: SHEIKH METWALLI

Ironically, only the crippled Sheikh Metwalli seems conscious of the way in which the patriarchal social system demands the transformations/transmutations of manhood. Known by many different names—“the devil” (52),

the “idiot . . . [the stray dog]” (55), “the possessed one . . . the lousy one” (56)—Metwalli is an enigma to the people of Kafr El Teen. Living at the “borders of [his] condition as a living being” (Kristeva 1982: 3), Metwalli, while refusing any easy knowing, clearly “knows” himself: “As far as he [is] concerned, he [is] Metwalli, the son of Sheikh Osman, who used to recite verses of the Koran over the souls of the deceased buried in the cemetery” (56). Consciously posing as “everyman” or as every “abject” persona, Metwalli is subservient and idiot-like in public, but in private, he is a completely different person:

He had a steady gaze which no one had seen in [his eyes] before, and every now and then he turned round cautiously. His lower lip no longer hung down over his chin, and the saliva had ceased to flow out of his mouth. Any of the inhabitants of the village seeing him at this moment would not have recognized him. (56)

Creatively manipulating his own image, he is dismissed by some people as a “nobody” (12) and embraced by others as a savior: “It was said that a woman afflicted with paralysis had touched him and been cured, and that he had helped a blind man to regain his sight. He had been chosen by God, . . . Allah chose the weakest of all His creatures for His purposes” (56). Existing, as he does, outside of the social system, he survives, paradoxically, because he is seen both as an emissary of God and as a weak “nobody”: an abject outsider who “signifies the other side of the border, the place where I am not” (3).

Hovering on the periphery of “normal” society, Metwalli exists, on one hand, to satisfy a social system that demands for its economic and cultural survival, an abject “outside”: something or someone that “disturbs identity, system, order” (4) to the extent that it ultimately reaffirms the “rightness” of the social system it initially disturbs. On the other hand, Metwalli “[deforms] the truth” of the cultural imagination to more accurately reflect what El Saadawi calls the “deadly poison” of a patriarchal cultural neocolonialism that mentally, spiritually, and psychologically subjugates its people (El Saadawi 1997: 199).

Seen in this light, Metwalli’s necrophilia, his unquenchable appetite for sexual consummation with the dead, reflects an albeit aberrant resistance to a society in which “‘god’ has all the power of both word and sword and is always the winner while the ‘devil’—ourselves—is the loser” (168). To resist the forms of “oppression exercised in the name of God, the Father, the husband, [and] the state” (168), Metwalli literally goes underground.

Enacting a strange kind of justice, he fights against a system that denies the living any “life or feeling” (115) by refusing to let the dead who did not resist the oppressive system, rest in peace:

he turned his attention to the still warm body of the dead. If it was that of a female, he would crawl over it until his face was near the chin. But if the body was male, he turned it over on its face, then crawled over it until the lower part of his belly pressed down on the buttocks from behind. (57)

As if the rape of both the dead men and the women isn't enough, the next morning, in a parody of capitalist economic practices, Metwalli exploits his victim by dispossessing the body of its final material possession: taking the body's “shroud of white cloth” (57) to market, “bargaining over the sale of some yards of dusty white sheeting which no one knew had served a few hours earlier as a shroud for some dead body buried quite recently in the cemetery of Kafr El Teen” (58), Metwalli not only profits from the dead, but also—at an unconscious level—makes the people aware of “the dissidence in their own lives” (161).

The only person to escape Metwalli's judgment and punishment is Fatheya, the wife of Sheikh Hamzawi. Fatheya is spared because she is the only person who dares to resist and “ferociously [fight] those who surrounded her in the night” (115). Rejecting the villagers' belief that her child, her “son of fornication and sin” (114), was to blame for the sins of its father(s), she is, along with her child, lustfully “devoured” by the villagers (115):

Male eyes gleamed with an unsatisfied lust, feeding on her breast with a hunger run wild like a group of starved men gathered around a lamb roasting on a fire. Each one trying to devour as much as he can lest his neighbour be quicker than him. . . . In a few moments Fatheya's body had become a mass of torn flesh and the ground was stained red with her blood. (115)

It is no accident that Fatheya is figured as a sacrificial lamb to the dominant patriarchal system or that this murder is figured as a rape of both Fatheya and the innocent male child. Ironically, however, Metwalli, who helps Sheikh Hamzawi bury Fatheya, is moved to tears by Fatheya's resistance, and chooses to leave “Fatheya's body and Fatheya's shroud . . . intact and unsoiled in the burial ground” (117). For Metwalli, only the dead who have resisted, who have succeeded in unveiling their minds in the land of the living, can, in death, remain undisturbed.

CONCLUSION

While it is true that the resistance offered by Metwalli is minimal, at best, I would argue that *God Dies by the Nile* is successful in offering those who live in the land of the living a disturbing window on to a specific neocolonial community and the specific patriarchal techniques and discourses that leave their progressive mark on the minds and bodies of lower-class men and women. Utilizing both the word and the image, El Saadawi focuses on the roots of the patriarchal and colonial problem—the unconscious and conscious construction of a masculinity—to raise questions about the kind of masculinity required by a patriarchal, capitalist neocolonial community. Pointing to a confused and oppressive masculinity that manifests itself through violent material practices and through discourses that encode and validate or disenfranchise different forms of prostitution, rape, and murder, El Saadawi throws the founding class and gender-biased andocentric principles of the patriarchal and capitalist state into question. Showing how an unconscious adherence to a masculine power is, in fact, disabling not only for women, but also for men, El Saadawi exposes a crisis in masculinity that many neocolonial communities and, I would argue, Western communities face.

In *God Dies by the Nile*, El Saadawi encourages her readers to “see with [their] eyes, or feel with [their] senses, or understand with [their minds]?” (199) in order to posit a tentative solution. It is not until we see and feel and experience the violent and violating abuse as if it is familiar to us that we can, like Metwalli and Fatheya, begin to lift the veil and “demystify” the global illusion of a capitalist and patriarchal ideology (160). According to El Saadawi, “hope comes from the power of people who die and do not bend their heads” (El Saadawi 1992: 35); hope lies with those living and able to speak and exist on the margins of what is conventionally acceptable. The reader, then, as the one who occupies the liminal space between what is and what is not known or can only be imagined is, paradoxically, “the one who knows” (64, 136) and can, through his or her accurate and insightful reading, negotiate his or her own vision and form of resistance.

NOTE

1. Although “patriarchy” as a term is used to describe the systemic, cultural, and institutional domination of women by men, I use it to describe the violent economic, physical, and psychological domination that functions in a specific neocolonial community, in concert with traditional values and beliefs and Western capitalist ideology, to oppress both men and women.

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9. The Masculine Subject of Colonialism: The Egyptian Loss of the Sudan

Wilson Chacko Jacob

INTRODUCTION

This chapter represents a larger project that attempts to think masculinity and colonialism together as historically diverse and contested terrains while simultaneously being attentive to the possibility of shared epistemologies and modalities in posing the problem of the modern subject.¹ I argue that modernity was a global phenomenon intimately linked to colonization, which relied on similar yet different logics of producing and governing subjects. Variations in place, time, and state power critically determined what kinds of subjects were (im)possible outcomes.

The inauguration of the modern masculine subject was fraught with multiple contradictions spanning numerous discursive, temporal, and spatial fields. It could certainly be argued then that to speak of some sort of overarching modern masculinity and at the same time to search for its manifestations within discrete contexts is essentially a misguided project; any particular instantiation is sure to disrupt the putative meta-narrative of masculinity. While I recognize this problematic in the study of masculinity, the ways nineteenth-century discourses of masculinity were written and performed attest to an understanding (however variable) of a general script of masculine subjectivity.² This piece focuses on one moment of the overdetermined and contradictory process through which that universalist discourse of Man sought to assert itself in the nineteenth century. Through a close reading of Ibrahim Fawzi's *The Sudan of Gordon and Kitchener*, this chapter attempts to illustrate the colonial dimension of masculinity.³ It argues for an understanding of masculinity grounded in colonial relations in which race and racialization were fundamental concepts.

On the surface, Fawzi's two-volume work (which he had intended to be three volumes) appears as a typical memoir of an army officer providing detailed accounts of military engagements, political intrigues, tribal formations, topography, and so on. But a closer reading reveals a work that is not only a trenchant critique of both the Egyptian *ancien régime* and the new colonial order, but one that also graphs the process by which a man comes to recognize himself as a gendered and raced subject inhabiting conflicting social and political positions.

Fawzi's text represents a rich instance of the multiple transformations experienced by Egyptians in the nineteenth century, through which the very grounds of political discourse and social organization underwent radical shifts. His text can be read as enacting the drama of the creation of a colonial masculine citizen–subject. My particular interest is to demonstrate how this generative process occurs at the intersection of race and gender and thus problematizes the linearity ascribed to that process within nationalist narratives and the mimesis thesis of colonial narratives. In other words, Fawzi's text does not reveal a subject emerging from a state of eternal slumber to a reborn consciousness that was only a poor replica of a masterpiece already painted elsewhere.

A broader aim of this essay is to show that Egypt's encounter with black Africa produced ruling anxieties and new models of masculinity. As Eve Powell has argued, "*bilad al-Sudan*" played a critical role in the figuring of official Egyptian nationalism along racial lines.⁴ *Bilad al-Sudan* (literally, "lands of the blacks") was part of a larger African stage that witnessed in the latter part of the nineteenth century multiple performances of colonial masculinity.⁵ Ibrahim Fawzi's *Al-Sudan bayn yadayy Gordon wa Kitchener* will do the work of engaging nationalist and white myths of becoming while "mark[ing] an ethical moment" in the sense articulated by Michael Uebel:

Racial masculine identities thus describe a process of positioning: they name the ways raced men position themselves in relation to the past that has shaped them and to the future they will shape. They possess a history, but also the power to perform, or transform, that history. The power of transformation, the ways in which power is exercised or undermined, and the choices power necessitates and depends upon, all require a postulation of what *ought* to be, a recognition of the obligation the future places on the individual subject.⁶

The sense of historicity and futurity Uebel refers to as definitive of "racial masculine identities" permeates Fawzi's text in revealing ways.

Even the title, which literally translates as “The Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and the Hands of Kitchener,” signals a temporal, and I would argue ethical, shift in Fawzi’s worlding of notions such as nation, citizen, and Other. General Gordon, officially a servant of the Egyptian ruler Khedive Isma‘il, and General Kitchener, a servant of Queen Victoria, represent different moments in the history of British colonialism in the region.⁷ For Fawzi’s self-narrative, however, it becomes apparent that this was not simply a matter of periodization and geopolitics, but an issue of movement between a free state and an unfree state between the specter of sovereignty and the reality of coloniality.

WRITING EGYPT: HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY

Egypt in the nineteenth century was a formidable regional power.⁸ Under the Great Pasha, Mehmed Ali (1805–1848), Egyptian rule extended to territories in the Sudan, the Hijaz, Syria, Crete, Yemen, and eventually even penetrated into the Anatolian heartland threatening the seat of Ottoman power. The stories of those conquests have been told and retold from multiple perspectives—colonial, nationalist, Marxist, and post-national.

In his careful recent study, *All the Pasha’s Men: Mehmed Ali, His Army and the Making of Modern Egypt*, Khaled Fahmy has demonstrated that those conquests did not make a nation.⁹ Although Mehmed Ali’s reforms—most of which were related in one way or another to the creation of his modern army—significantly transformed the economic and social bases of life for most Egyptians, they did not inspire a nationalist movement or even the façade of a patriotic spirit. Seemingly contradictorily, Fahmy argues at the same time that a modern Egyptian nation-state did emerge through the course of the nineteenth century.

He contends that the process of ordering and disciplining Egyptian society informed by modern notions of space and time—although an uneven process—ultimately altered the relationship between Egyptian subjects and the new Egyptian state. Fahmy captures this fundamental departure in the following eloquent passage:

The Pasha’s army was above all crucial for the rise of the modern nation-state of Egypt by introducing practices that together changed the nature of the Egyptian state and its relationship to its “citizens” and completely transformed the very fabric of Egyptian society. By catching its deserters, punishing its criminals, educating its youth, vaccinating its children, silencing its women, interning its insane, and by doing all this in a subtle, “humane” and

“rational” manner . . . this is how the Egyptian nation came into being in modern times. It was by a process of violence, silence and exclusion that Egyptians were taught the essential truths of the nation.¹⁰

The interpellation of Egyptian subjects into a new nation-state in practical and discursive terms was indeed a violent, and gendered, affair. It was also an affair that spun out in directions unanticipated by the Great Pasha himself.

The Egyptian state-building project was renewed with new vigor under Mehmed Ali's grandson Isma'il, who assumed the new title Khedive of Egypt in 1863. It was also in the latter third of the nineteenth century that one might start speaking of the emergence of an Egyptian national consciousness. This was a process closely linked to another reorganization of the army undertaken by Khedive Isma'il. Fahmy writes: “The deeply felt sentiments of injustice, frustration and animosity that the Arabic-speaking soldiers and their junior officers had towards the Turkish-speaking military elite was a powerful ingredient in forging the rising national consciousness.”¹¹ In short, through the 1860s and 1870s, a certain class of Arabic-speaking Egyptians came to feel a need to spell out the boundaries between an Egyptian Self and its Others. This process would funnel into a formal nationalist movement after the British occupation in 1882. It is in the liminal space between the realization of a national consciousness and the institution of a nationalist movement that I locate the writing of Ibrahim Fawzi. Thus it is with the aim of mapping some of the complicated ways in which a particular subject came to inhabit the gendered and raced positions borne out of the radical transformations involved in the “colonisation” of Egypt that I turn to the narrative of Ibrahim Fawzi Pasha.

LIVING COLONIALITY, AUTHORIZING THE NATION

In the dedication of his book, *Al-Sudan bayn yadayy Gordon wa Kitchener* [*The Sudan of Gordon and Kitchener*], written between 1900 and 1901, Ibrahim Fawzi Pasha puts his combined terms of service and imprisonment in the Sudan at almost 30 years.¹² This means he must have arrived in the Sudan some time in the early to mid-1860s, where he served as a minor officer in the Egyptian army—“slightly above non-commissioned officer and below second-lieutenant” (v. I, 2). It is clear that he was not happy serving under his Turkish-speaking superiors.

In 1874, he enthusiastically volunteered to assist Colonel Charles Gordon, who had just been recruited by Khedive Isma'il to serve as the

governor of Equatoria, Egypt's southernmost province most notable as a place of exile and death. Fawzi's rise through the ranks was stellar and certain to have raised a few eyebrows among the Ottoman-Circassian ruling elite. Before he was dismissed by Gordon under strange circumstances in 1878/1879, Fawzi had served as the governor of Bahr al-Ghazal and Equatoria provinces.

After spending the next few years in Cairo a literally broken man, Fawzi, having reconciled with Gordon, returned to the Sudan in 1884 for his second tour of duty. This time the circumstances were graver. Khedive Isma'il had been deposed, Egypt had just been occupied by the British (1882), and a millenarian uprising in the Sudan threatened Egypt's position there. The British strong-armed the new Khedive, Tawfiq, to agree to a withdrawal from the Sudan. Thus, Fawzi's mission this time was less bound for glory. The planned evacuation failed miserably, and in the end, Gordon was killed and Fawzi taken prisoner. The narrative stops before his rescue in 1898 by General Kitchener on his way to reconquering the Sudan; this account was planned for the third volume, which Fawzi never completed.

FAWZI AND GORDON: THE MORALITY OF MEN AND POLITICS

Fawzi's narrative reflects both his initial excitement about meeting this already legendary figure and the critical—yet ambivalent—nationalist feeling that he adopted in the intervening three decades.¹³ Fawzi clearly respected the strength of character represented by Gordon, but he also resented the increased Europeanization of Khedive Isma'il's army, also represented by Gordon. Fawzi establishes early on in this two-volume work that while his admiration and respect for Gordon were unwavering, he was not convinced by his logic of imperial conquest. He interrogates the liberal notions of civility and justice espoused by Gordon from the margins of a different moral economy; although not explicit in Fawzi's text, it is possible to contend that that moral economy flows from a specifically Islamic tradition.¹⁴ But I posit Fawzi's marginality vis-à-vis an Islamic moral economy because of his demonstrated ambivalence toward the Ottoman Empire, ostensibly the guardian of Islam with the Sultan as its official head.¹⁵

Acts of barbarism are unequivocally named by Fawzi (v. I, 12–14); however, he finds the definition of civility more problematic. In one example, Fawzi leads us to believe that he unquestioningly accepts Gordon's justification for the extension of imperial rule into lands wrecked by war and misgovernment. After having had a run in with an unfriendly tribe,

Gordon and his troops were pleased to finally encounter a tribe that welcomed them. Fawzi tells us that Gordon inquired into their affairs, and the elders responded: “We are in a state of chaos. The powerful devour the powerless. The strong rule the weak” (16). Gordon, Fawzi reports, asks them if they would prefer a leader like himself: with great power and authority, capable of guaranteeing their security and protecting the weak from the strong. The elders replied: “We are of the weak and downtrodden. No doubt we would welcome any authority that would come to make us and our oppressors equal” (16). This situation seems to be one in which the promise of better rule by a stronger outside power is acceptable to Fawzi. A few pages later, however, he questions the universal applicability of such a promise.

Fawzi interrogates the nobility of offers of assistance from the strong to the weak through the staging of an encounter between Col. Gordon and King M’tesa of the Ugandans. After haughtily reproving the king for his people’s refusal to assist his troops in meeting their supply needs:

[Gordon] reminded [M’tesa] that they had come in the name of the Egyptian Government which is strong and powerful. It wants nothing from this country but to spread within it civilization and justice and to open it to the advantages of trade, a system through which people may exchange their produce.¹⁶ So, if King M’tesa wants the sincere aid of the Egyptian Government then he should seek shelter under its green banner. If not, then he will have to face forces the likes of which he has never seen before. (23)

M’tesa calls Gordon’s bluff and rebukes him for his rude behavior in someone else’s country. He tells Gordon through his messenger that if he so willed, the King could call down a scourge so fierce that even his great Egyptian Government with all its might could not save him. Then the messenger goes on to ask what brings Gordon to King M’tesa’s land if it is not to fight. He relays the King’s message that, “We are content with our situation. We have not complained to you nor appealed to you for assistance. And we certainly can do without your civilization which would only deprive us of our peace and the independence we now have” (v. I, 24).

Fawzi’s transmission of M’tesa’s reply can be read only as a ventriloquized critique of British imperial policy. But this leads us to ask of Fawzi how Egyptian imperial policies were different. Fawzi is caught in what appears to be a double bind. On the one hand, he cannot affirm empire when it is his own subjugation that is in question, that is, Britain over Egypt; on the other hand, he cannot outright negate empire after all that he has seen as an agent, himself, of colonialism—Egypt over the Sudan.

Fawzi resolves this apparent contradiction through the deployment of an embodied moral economy in which justice and civility are not abstractions but concepts lived in the everyday interactions of ruler and ruled. Thus, he is able to explain why Britain's initial occupation of Egypt might have been deserved—because of the corruption of those in power—while rejecting its continued occupation of Egypt on the grounds that it had found a responsible ruler. The latter also elucidates his skepticism at Gordon's offer to introduce civilization to King M'tesa's people.

The incommensurability of Fawzi's and Gordon's conceptual domains is revealed most poignantly, for Fawzi, through the exposure of Britain's great lie. Fawzi expresses disbelief in the British government's proclaimed determination to save Gordon from his impending doom as the Mahdi's forces surrounded Khartoum. Gordon's horrible death only reaffirmed for Fawzi the lack of morality in British liberalism. Furthermore, Fawzi found the British policy forcing Egypt to abandon the Sudan an ethically and politically indefensible position. He argues that to leave the Sudan to its barbarism is tantamount to an abnegation of moral responsibility (v. I, 295–302). Ironically, it is on these same grounds that Fawzi is able to accord respect to the Mahdi—the putative enemy of civilization (v. I, 73–74 and 103).

FAWZI, THE MAHDI, AND REVOLUTION

Despite his apparent confusion about the proper economy through which to think a new political horizon morally, Fawzi does not hesitate to condemn what he perceives as immoral. For example, a metaphor of sodomy is deployed to symbolize the moral decay of Turco-Circassian rule in Egypt and the Sudan, which ultimately led to the 'Urabi revolt in the former and the Mahdist uprising in the latter.¹⁷ In a section on the Mahdi's biography, he incorporates this story of sexual misconduct and surprisingly confirms the legitimacy of the Mahdi's accusations of Egyptian misrule.¹⁸

The Mahdi was on his way back to his home on the island of Aba and he had to spend the night in the town of Kordofan. He heard music coming from the neighbor's house and later noticed a look of surprise and shock among the people. When he asked them what was wrong, they told him that some slave trader was preparing to marry his boy servant (*ghulam*) named Cinnamon (*Qirfa*). The Mahdi did not believe them. So, he called two of his followers and they went to this place of heresy. They found a party with guests, tables piled high with food, music being sung, the Sudanese *daf* being played, and a man dressed like one of the *ulama* (religious notables) chanting the words of a marriage contract. Then, according

to the account, the slave dealer penetrated the boy (*dakhala al-nakhaas bi al-ghulam*) to consummate their union. The Mahdi drew his sword to behead the slave dealer and his fornicating friends, but his companions managed to restrain him and carried him back to their house.

Later, he gathered a group of elders and marched to the local government office to complain about this offense. After delivering his speech, he and the elders were treated to a barrage of insults and abuse. In the end, the police chief told them: "The world's a free place" (*al-dunya huriyya*). The author concludes that this was certainly one of the episodes that convinced the Mahdi of the corruption and godlessness of Egyptian government officials, not to mention, gained him adherents among the notables of Kordofan.¹⁹ Aligning the sodomizer and the representatives of the Egyptian government against the Mahdi and his followers, Fawzi strongly condemns the moral and physical vices, which characterized the Turkish-speaking ruling elite in Egypt prior to the British occupation and blames them for the loss of Egypt's independence and the loss of the Sudan.

A concept of the rightly ordered society has a long genealogy in Islamic history. Its roots in fact begin with the first Muslim community guided by the Prophet Muhammad. Its disruption is often explained in a gendered language in which contamination by the feminine is often seen as the root of social chaos. Thus, Ibrahim Fawzi's ambivalence toward the Sudanese Mahdi and his movement can be understood only in terms of his own "muslimness." Not being satisfied by the rule of his Turkic coreligionists and not inspired by the alternative of liberal rule embodied in Gordon, Fawzi cannot not be moved by the revolutionary hope of restoring a just society represented in the early stages of the Mahdist revolt. Of course, even this hope was dematerialized when the Mahdi died and the brutal al-Ta'ishi took over the movement. To understand the political confusion that arises from the ethical moment this text represents, and which seems to be at the heart of Fawzi's narrative, we must turn to another revolution.

The world that Ibrahim Fawzi attempts to capture in his narrative about the Sudan was one that was rapidly changing in all aspects. For a man who had spent much of his military career in the Sudan as part of a conquering and ruling class active during an optimistic and expansionist period in Egyptian history, being forced to return to Cairo in the late 1870s and to witness the crisis facing his society were clearly formative moments in his political development.²⁰ He was a victim himself of the political, social, and economic upheavals that pitted Egyptians (mostly Arabic-speaking) against the Ottoman-Circassian and European elite. As an Arabic-speaking officer in the army, despite his claims of not being a participant in the 'Urabi revolt, he was court-martialed and stripped of his rank.²¹ This and

the varying treatment he received while in prison at the hands of Italians, Circassians, and Englishmen were enough to shape a political and masculine subjectivity informed by national, racial, class, and gender differences (v. I, 52–54). This complex identity unfolds in the remainder of the narrative, as Fawzi's account refocuses on the Sudan and the events of the Mahdist movement.

In the section immediately following his account of the 'Urabi revolt in Egypt and the ensuing British occupation, Fawzi turns to the ancient history of the Sudan. The themes presented recur throughout the two volumes. The excesses of ruling men and their ignorance—usually inscribed through the tropic female figure—produce misrule that eventually results in the loss of independence and rule by a foreign power. Fawzi starts this brief tour through Sudanese history in the Middle Ages, when there was purportedly mixing between the Arabs of Upper Egypt and the indigenous blacks, the Nuba. After the first generation of Arab rule, however, the people slipped back into ignorance. Their knowledge of Islam was diluted with local beliefs. This decline is illustrated with a reference to women's sexuality: "If a woman were divorced in the morning she'd be married again before the evening" (v. I, 56). Women are mentioned three more times—all to give evidence of decadence and profligacy. In one case, the concubines of kings and lords number in the thousands. In another, the women of the upper class are said to have worn only gold slippers and slept on beds made from gold.²² Finally, the ultimate symbol of moral degeneration: the daughters of the aristocracy would appear in public streets with their faces unveiled accompanied by hundreds of maids-in-waiting similarly (un)adorned. Of course, when women began to behave like men, or men like women, then the only logical conclusion for a society is a total loss of freedom—in the section immediately following, Fawzi narrates the conquest of Sudan by Mehmed Ali in the 1820s (v. I, 56–57).

PERMISSIBLE CROSSINGS?

In Fawzi's narrative, women are figured as phantasms that lurk behind every political turn. They are used as boundary markers to signify the difference between order/disorder, civilized/uncivilized, natural/unnatural, Egyptian/Sudanese. The crossing of boundaries by women poses untold risks for social peace and stability; in fact, the trespasses of women threaten the nature of the social. This understanding is predicated on the existence of an ideal social order—perhaps one that has already passed, located in the Golden Age of Islam. However, when Fawzi is forced to analyze an existing

social order of which he has gained intimate knowledge—the Sudan of the Mahdi and his successor, the Khalifa al-Ta'ishi—his entry into an ethnographic mode shifts him onto an entirely different register, and the results are startling.

Paradoxically, within a cultural context that Fawzi views as outside his own, he is able to conceive of women and men more as culturally and historically gendered subjects than as essentially defined ones. Fawzi relates two different instances of cross-dressing, both of which reveal a remarkably flexible approach to gender identity. From the example above of women entering public spaces unveiled, Fawzi's understanding of gendered spheres would seem rigid. However, in the cross-dressing examples his views emerge as much more complicated.

The first case involves the mother of one of the wives of the Mahdi. Halima Umm Fatima Bint Ahmed Sharafi al-Dongolawi is reported to have dressed like a man, borne arms, ridden horses, and preached in public male forums (*majalis al-rijal*). In her oratories, she is said to have been an outspoken advocate of the Mahdi's movement—with an emphasis on the importance of her own family—declaring that there was no path to salvation but through God, His Prophet, His Mahdi, the Mahdi's son al-Kamel, his mother also known as the Mother of the Faithful, and his grandmother Halima! Since al-Kamel died in infancy, what Halima was actually proposing was the succession of her daughter as the leader of the community after the Mahdi's death. Upon the Mahdi's death, this cross-dressing grandmother was arrested by al-Ta'ishi, the official successor (*khalifa*), and rebuked for her behavior. She was also forbidden from mixing with men and forced to retract her earlier preaching. Fawzi reports that although she recanted before the Khalifa, she is said to have denounced him as envying her in the way that the Quraysh envied the Prophet Muhammad²³ (v. II, 68).

Fawzi's opinion is not revealed in this passage, but it is possible to glean from other places within the text—and from outside it—what he might have thought about this cross-dressing grandmother. First, as in most other accounts of the Mahdi's movement, while the Mahdi himself is given some respect as a capable leader, his successor Khalifa al-Ta'ishi is despised and unequivocally represented as an ogre. Hence, any challenge there might have been to al-Ta'ishi's succession would most likely have been welcomed by Fawzi—especially as someone who suffered greatly under him as a prisoner of war. On the other hand, his equation of the appearance of women in public with social disorder would seem to mitigate against Halima's claim to power. But this is where I believe Fawzi is willing to assign to gender a performative dimension that would make possible a crossing from the female private sphere to the male public sphere. Arguably, the performance

of male gender by a woman is conceived of contingently since the issue of rightful—much less female—succession is not a regular occurrence; nevertheless, Fawzi's silence on the question of the legitimacy of Halima's claim seems to affirm the possibility.

The second didactic moment in which Fawzi seeks to signal the moral and political failure of a prevailing order involves men cross-dressing as women (*mukhannathin*). It is important that the male performers themselves are not the ones condemned as morally depraved; but the reprehensible are the men in power who solicit their services while claiming moral piety. Fawzi in fact scripts this gender bending as a primordial facet of Sudanese culture intimately linked to prostitution, which was socially sanctioned as an organized trade for which taxes were collected. He relates that after the Sudan came under the Mahdi's control (early 1880s), prostitution was outlawed but the male performers (usually prostitutes as well) were left alone. Then under the hated Khalifa al-T'aishi, a pogrom was conducted against them as well. Some were exiled to their deaths in malaria-infested Equatoria, others imprisoned and tortured. The survivors were subjected to strict surveillance, ordered to relinquish their female personas, and attend all five prayers at the mosque.

Gradually, however, as they were forgotten they slipped back into their female guises. Many, Fawzi maintains, were to be found in the company of 'Uthman Shaykh al-Din—the son of al-T'aishi! According to Fawzi, the Khalifa's son actually became their patron and guardian, punishing severely one of their previous jailers who had been particularly harsh. Fawzi ends this section by exposing the rulers associated with the *mukhannathin* for their hypocrisy. He argues that their claim that these men visit their homes only to teach their women the arts of entertaining their husbands is simply a thin attempt to disguise their own homosexuality (*al-liwat*)²⁴ (v. II, 173–175).

The other case of cross-dressing men is also linked to the corruption of those in power—this time al-Ta'ishi's nephew who is given the leadership of Darfur province. He is reputed to have enjoyed the same pleasures as 'Uthman the son of al-Ta'ishi (v. II, 217). In none of these examples does Fawzi criticize the practitioners of an alternative gender identity, but rather the sources of power which, when it suits them, can hail these identities into existence, and likewise, force their erasure. In both crossings—female to male and male to female—the alternative performances of gender identity are not represented as the causes of social and moral degeneracy, but are symptomatic of that crisis. Thus, in an ideal society these gender identities would not be acceptable to Fawzi—they would not exist in the first place—but in this horribly nonideal world of the Khalifa al-Ta'ishi, they are at least understandable and at most not deserving of his condemnation.

CONCLUSION

At the time that Ibrahim Fawzi was composing his memoir-ethnography of the Sudan, his country, Egypt, had been under British colonial occupation for nearly two decades. A new century, by the Christian calendar, was beginning. Under the Condominium treaty of 1899, “the Sudan” now belonged to both Egypt and Great Britain. There was no sign of a British withdrawal on the horizon. A fiery new generation led by the young nationalist Mustafa Kamel spoke fluently in the language of rights and self-determination. At the edge of these heady times, Ibrahim Fawzi attempted to gain some perspective on his place within this new world by remembering another place and time. His memories were of course deeply marked by the current state of subjugation in which he found himself and his countrymen. The return of the conqueror into the space of the conquered was surely a cause for trauma. His liberation from the “barbaric” rule of al-Ta’ishi was liminal at best, an ephemeral moment before his passage into yet another unfree state.²⁵ Thus the charting of the Sudan was for Fawzi a profoundly personal, moral, and political project.

Fawzi’s narrative does not exude any of the self-righteous confidence expressed by heroes of colonial narratives.²⁶ Although there are points when Fawzi is keen to state his own importance to the narrative of civilizing the Sudan, the subject ultimately produced through his writing is one deeply marked by an ambivalence toward the major discourses, which seemed to both enable and limit a liberatory position. Fawzi experienced the principles emanating from imperialist and nationalist discourses through the mediations of Gordon and the new generation of Egyptians clamoring for British withdrawal from Egypt and the Sudan. Gordon and the young Egyptian nationalists were both sites of translation of a new kind of politics in which the abstract notions of nations and rights were constantly deployed as slogans and explanatory devices. For Fawzi, however, these sites presented new ways of seeing the world that could not be assimilated unproblematically. The new vision of nation and subject emerging in the late nineteenth century is raised by Fawzi’s text as a problem that does not appear to have an answer.²⁷ The subject of the nation and Fawzi seem to be an uncomfortable fit.

Anticipating Timothy Mitchell’s critique of modernity’s invasive and totalizing logic, Ibrahim Fawzi, nearly a century earlier, suggested one consequence of succumbing to its pull.²⁸ Modernity is anthropomorphized as the English:

I saw a man in Umm Durman who was one of those who had managed to escape. He had been struck by madness as a consequence of this defeat.

He told me that the English are devils and not humans. Because after they defeated us at Abu Tulayh they penetrated our bodies and occupied our heads, and I don't know how to rid myself of them. (v. II, 41–42)

Fawzi does not comment on this encounter further. He moves on with the account of the battle at Abu Tulayh and the Mahdi's response. This passage can quickly be dismissed if Fawzi's narrative is simply being mined for historical information. However, in a dialogic mode, the scene of writing urges us to read the passage as an allegory of the current emasculated condition in which the writer finds himself and his own defeated compatriots—at the mercy of devils.

Ibrahim Fawzi's Sudan narrative and all the characters and events which populate it establish a grid of identity and difference onto which we are able to map a series of concepts emerging and being contested at the moment of the text's inception. The questions of both self and national identity were forefront in Fawzi's journey through the "heart of Africa" and back. Forms of social and political organization were charted through his experience of the 'Urabi revolt, his encounters with Gordon, the Mahdi, and the Khalifa, and the various "tribal" groupings of this vast region labeled the Sudan. Differing notions of gender identity and their connections to power and history were staged in his meditations on the rise and fall of polities. A proper—not synonymous with equal—balance of the masculine and feminine is the product of an ideal society and not necessarily the converse; nevertheless, an improper balance signals the weakness and potential collapse of the social order. Thus, Fawzi's own gender identity can be read as conflicted after the doubly emasculating experiences of becoming a prisoner of war and then a colonized subject. Ibrahim Fawzi's masculinity was mediated by a number of different relations to power in which his subject-positions varied depending on the particular conjuncture of sociopolitical forces.

Thus, although the inauguration of an Egyptian political modernity started off with violence and repression, the *fin de siècle* witnessed the emergence of a nationalist movement and a nationalist discourse scripted by subjects endorsing the liberal notions of rights and representation. For these confident young men, the nation was their patrimony to which they had a self-evident claim. This is not to suggest, as the case of Ibrahim Fawzi demonstrates, that the tenets of liberalism were simply swallowed whole by Egyptian intellectuals and reformers. The local translation of the various concepts underpinning liberal political thought assumed numerous forms, but the act of "thinking" political modernity required some level of engagement with Europe—even if this was only to reject it.²⁹

The moment which Fawzi's text represents is in flux; the flow of his narrative is one charged with a deep ambivalence toward the new positions to which he was hailed. Though not articulating a self-confident masculinity, he does present a self-conscious masculinity that looks forward through and across the space of a Sudan textualized in historical and metaphorical time. In other words, Fawzi's text precariously charts a new way in the world through a re-membering of the paths that led him through the Sudan and back.

NOTES

1. This essay represents part of a dissertation in progress tentatively titled "The Subject of Colonialism: Masculinity, Political Modernity, and National Identity in Egypt, 1870–1940." It was first delivered as a lecture in May 2001 at the American Research Center in Egypt, where I was a Fellow from October 2000 to October 2001. In addition to funding from the ARCE, the research for this project was supported by a grant from the Program on the Middle East and North Africa of the Social Science Research Council with funds provided by the U.S. Information Agency.
2. Perhaps it is best to speak of masculinity under erasure. The historicity of the concept must be vigilantly attended to while at the same time understanding the need to read masculinity as a quiet ever-present script underlying most modalities of worlding thought and practice. See the cautionary note on following the path of masculinity by Homi Bhabha, "Are You a Man or a Mouse," in Maurice Berger, Brian Wallis, and Simon Watson, eds., *Constructing Masculinity* (New York: Routledge, 1995).
3. Ibrahim Fawzi Pasha, *Kitab al-Sudan bayn yadayy Gordon wa Kitchener [The Sudan of Gordon and Kitchener]* (Cairo: Al-Mu'ayyad Press, 1901), 2 volumes.
4. Eve Marie Troutt Powell, "Colonized Colonizers: Egyptian Nationalists and the Issue of the Sudan, 1875–1919," Unpublished diss., Harvard University, 1995. When I wrote the first version of this paper, I was not aware that Powell in fact dedicates an entire chapter ("The Lived Experience of Contradiction," 90–135) to a reading of Ibrahim Fawzi's *Kitab al-Sudan*. Although there is some overlap between our work, Powell's major focus seems to be on how race and colonialism were lived by Fawzi; my contribution is to situate the centrality of gender, and particularly masculinity, in the process of working out the meanings of Fawzi's Sudan experience. It is also to think "coloniality" as a sphere of subject-making apart from the British-centered master-narrative of "colonialism," while recognizing, of course, that in the end these were imbricated processes.
5. For an interesting discussion of the intersections between masculinity, British popular culture, and imperialism in Africa, see Gail Ching-Liang Low, "His Stories?: Narratives and Images of Imperialism," *Space and Place: Theories of Identity and Location*, ed. Erica Carter et al. (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1993).

6. Michael Uebel, "Men in Color," in *Race and the Subject of Masculinities*, 11. Uebel is in conversation here with Geoffrey Harpham and his elaboration of the "ought" of ethics in *Getting It Right: Language, Literature, and Ethics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).
7. It was far from obvious in the 1870s while Fawzi and Gordon were serving in the Sudan that in a decade Egypt would move out of the sphere of Ottoman political sovereignty into a state of semicolonial occupation. Neither was it evident at that time (the 1870s) that when Fawzi started to compose his narrative (1900) Egypt would begin a movement out of the Ottoman cultural world into one in which the cultural horizons were unmistakably colonial.
8. Whether to call it a colonial power is open to debate. On the one hand, it could be argued that Egyptian territorial expansion followed the general logic underwriting the earlier colonial expansion of European states. But it can be argued also that colonialism has a specifically Western epistemic valence and its application to non-Western cases of territorial expansion would be inaccurate. Although generally sympathetic to the latter, I contend that Egypt's expansion further into the Sudan in the last quarter of the nineteenth century was in fact informed by this specifically Western *episteme*. Eve Powell makes a similar argument in "Egyptians in Blackface: Nationalism and the Representation of the Sudan in Egypt, 1919," *Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review* 2 (1995), 2: 27–45; and "From Odyssey to Empire: Mapping Sudan through Egyptian Literature in the mid-19th Century," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 31 (1990): 401–427.
9. Khaled Fahmy, *All the Pasha's Men: Mehmed Ali, His Army and the Making of Modern Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
10. *Ibid.*, 314.
11. *Ibid.*
12. The dedication was made to Khedive 'Abbas Hilmi II (r. 1892–1914), who, during the first few years of his reign was seen as a supporter of the nationalist cause. Since this is the major source for the section, further citations are given in the text with only volume and page numbers.
13. Before joining Khedive Isma'il's service, Gordon had already made quite a name for himself through his military exploits during the Crimean War and later in China. Despite this fact, it might be that Fawzi's memories are more a reflection of the mythic proportions reached by Gordon's personality after his death in 1885.
14. On the surface, Ibrahim Fawzi's text appears to be a largely secular account of the Sudan. Reading his thinking of issues like just rule, however, in relation to what Gordon represents and in relation to the modern reformist context he occupies results in a productive tension between the Islamic tradition which formed much of his epistemological background and the ostensibly secular liberal tradition with which he was forced to contend. Furthermore, he was writing at a time when the relatively influential discourses of Pan-Islamism and Ottomanism supported by the Ottoman Sultan—who also held the title of Caliph of Islam—vied for the loyalty of Muslim subjects within and beyond

the domain of the Ottoman Empire. I owe much of this analysis of competing traditions to Samira Haj, who pushed me to think in this direction. See her forthcoming work, *Reconfiguring Tradition: Islamic Reform, Rationality, and Modernity*. Also, for an elaboration of incommensurable traditions, see Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993), second edition.

15. I develop this point later.
16. These were indeed the explicitly stated goals of Khedive Isma‘il as he sought to expand Egyptian control beyond the equator. Isma‘il deeply desired to be identified on par with the European rulers of his day.
17. Both revolts began roughly at the same time: 1881.
18. The force of the example is such that even the author himself does not seem to believe the last sentence in which he states that further investigation by the Government showed that it was all farcical and that there was no grain of truth to the story.
19. This episode is recounted by Fawzi in volume one, 73–74.
20. When Gordon was appointed Governor-General of Sudan in 1877, he made Fawzi the governor of Equatoria. Gordon dismissed him soon after because of an incident involving a European traveler named Dr. Junker. Essentially, Fawzi insisted that Dr. Junker pay his own way while traveling in the area since he could not produce a written order to support his claim that Gordon had authorized him to charge his expenses to the Government. In the end, Fawzi lost his job for, as he saw it, fulfilling his duty to the Government. Although Gordon managed to get him reinstated after discovering that Fawzi was not in the wrong, this incident would force him to oppose Khedive Isma‘il’s policy of relying on Americans or Europeans to fill positions in the military and bureaucracy and make him a sympathizer during the ‘Urabi revolt. Juan Cole has recently argued that this revolt was not merely an uprising of disgruntled army officers, but the manifestation and culmination of a larger social and political transformation experienced by Egyptians at all levels during the 1860s and 1870s. *Colonialism and Revolution in the Middle East: Social and Cultural Origins of Egypt’s ‘Urabi Movement* (Cairo: American University in Egypt Press, 1999).
21. Fawzi’s testimony is in fact preserved in the Egyptian National Archives.
22. Partha Chatterjee notes the same combination of signs—women and gold—to signify the weakness of men in the emergent Indian nationalist discourse. See *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 62–68.
23. The Quraysh were a powerful tribe in Mecca that initially rejected the prophecy of Muhammad. The experiences of the early Islamic community are repeatedly performed in Fawzi’s narrative to represent right behavior and proper action.
24. Both *mukhannath* and *liwat* are difficult words to translate. The former could be rendered as homosexual, bisexual, transvestite, transsexual, hermaphrodite,

or some combination of these depending on the specific context. *Liwat* is derived from the Biblical story of Lot and does most often seem to denote sodomy without necessarily connoting a gay identity. For the complicated task of defining and translating Arabic terms dealing with male sexuality, see Frédéric Lagrange, "Male Homosexuality in Modern Arabic Literature," *Imagined Masculinities: Male Identity and Culture in the Modern Middle East*, ed. Mai Ghossoub and Emma Sinclair-Webb (London: Saqi Books, 2000), 169–198, see especially 170–171.

25. The brutal violation of Egyptian bodies is represented a number of times in Fawzi's narrative. Each instance reestablishes the boundary between the civilized practices attending proper rule and the barbarism of improper rule; the latter is exemplified in the sadistic person of Khalifa al-Ta'ishi. The experience of torture at the hands of the Khalifa also ingrains in Fawzi an essential (and racialized) understanding of the difference between national bodies (v. I: 157–158 and v. II: 6–8, 16–17, 18, 84–87, 87–90, 260–261, 262–265, 323–326, 336–342).
26. In another version of this chapter, I have compared Fawzi's Sudan narrative with that of the British novelist G. A. Henty: *With Kitchener in the Soudan: a Story of Atbara and Omdurman* (London: Blackie and Sons, 1903).
27. This is true at least by the end of volume two, but perhaps if he had gone on to write volume three Fawzi might have reached some sort of solution.
28. Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).
29. Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 4.

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III. Constructing Masculinities

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10. Gender and Embodiment: Expectations of Manliness in a Zambian Village

Paul Dover

A hunter's moon shone down on the village in Chiawa Chieftainship in the lower Zambezi valley. I was at *chirero* festivities, when a dead person's spirit is recalled to its kin and people dance and sing all night. Young people dance to drums, while the mature people sing *chirero* songs accompanied by the beating of wooden pestles with sticks and the very old sit and chat together. I wandered over to the young people's dance. Called *chips*, it involves fast drumming and songs. On impulse, I joined in and was swept up by two young girls who spun me round and round to the enjoyment of the onlookers. It was one of those occasions in which one feels part of the community.

As this anecdote shows, we instinctively recognize the preeminence of the body in social and cultural interaction, but what theoretical angles can we employ that encompass the body as enlived experience? The body is where the personal and the social meet, we know ourselves through our interactive subjective experience with other actors. Through nonverbal language, our bodies consciously and unconsciously interact with each other in both culturally defined and idiomatic ways. As persons, we are our bodies and whilst the physical may be transcended by the mind in terms of authoritative weight, charisma, or sexual allure, these aspects are still identified with our bodies. Thus, the challenge is to work toward a "mindful body" and to incorporate a sense of the physical phenomenology of experience. Such a focus is particularly apt in trying to analyze and understand gender, sexed identity, and sexuality.

Before I turn to the substance of this chapter, I would like to give some ethnographic and research background. The people in Chiawa

Chieftainship are called the Goba, which they translate as “river people” as they live mostly along the Kafue and Zambezi rivers. The Zambezi valley forms a porous border between the central African belt of matrilineal peoples and the patrilineal peoples of Southern Africa. The Goba are an ethnic mixture of peoples and utilize both matrilineal and patrilineal descent. But the predominating culture and language is of patrilineal Korekore Shona people, whose heartland is south of the river in the northeast of the Zimbabwean plateau.

In this chapter, I begin by describing Goba understandings of the sexed bodies and how this relates to gendered upbringing. I then examine the link between the sexed bodies, ideals of masculinity, an ideology of male hegemony, and the performance of gendered roles. This is followed by a section on learning gender and sexuality. I conclude by showing how the phallus is a prime symbol of Goba masculinity and summarize the inherent conflicts in Goba ideals and expectations of manhood in relation to the autonomy it represents.

THE GENDERED BODY

If we take gender to be the social construction of masculinity and femininity, in which culture elaborates on the sexed body, then socialization and enculturation are the most important formative processes. Nevertheless, as the following material illustrates, these processes on the individual are based on our experience of the body and on stereotypical ideals that build upon the sexed body and its attributes. As will be shown, Goba concepts of masculinity and femininity juxtapose a hard, erect, strong, and potent male body to a soft, round, and yielding female body.

Right from the beginning of my fieldwork, I was confronted with statements about the body and male and female sexuality. I therefore started looking into how local ideas about the sexed body were utilized in concepts of femininity and masculinity, especially in relation to ethnomedicine.

In understanding the body, its life cycle, and reproductive processes, Goba ethnomedicine employs the mixing of opposite states of hot and cold, dry and wet. In the life-course, the infant is seen as growing from the wetness and coolness of infancy through a gathering warmth and dryness to the sturdiness of childhood. The person develops to the full strength and warmth of adult maturity and then slowly dwindles to the coolness and dryness of old age. Though there are differences between girls and boys in their physical development, girls are seen as becoming “moist” and soft, whereas a boy grows into the hard strength of manhood. Men are described

as hard [*kuoma*], difficult, and annoying [*kunetsa*]. They are stubborn and cannot be easily deflected from their purpose. A boy needs discipline because once he has become a man, he is like a grown tree and cannot be bent or formed to someone else's will. Females, though, are by their "nature" soft, pliant, and "bendable" [*kukombama*]. They are easy-going and not "fussy" like men. They are easily satisfied [*kugutsikana*] and take life as it comes, whilst men attempt to shape life to their desires.

These stereotypes are not seen as purely natural male and female attributes. People emphasize that boys are encouraged to be tough and self-reliant for their future roles as head of a household. Women are taught to be humble, shy, and to respect men. These at least are the ideals of upbringing and how a proper woman and a proper man should behave in public. Making a man out of a boy is described as a longer and more difficult process than achieving womanhood. Girls are taught femininity and wifely duties, but womanhood is closely linked to biological processes, such as first menstruation and other physical markings of female sexual maturity. Girls still get married at much younger ages—marriage at mid-teens is not unusual in Chiawa—and the school statistics show a drop in the number of female pupils from grade five¹ onward. Boys do not get married until they are in their early to mid-twenties and thus have a long period to establish themselves before the responsibility of a family.

GENDERED UPBRINGING, GENDERED SPACE

Gendered upbringing in Chiawa starts long before puberty. Goba mothers perceive differences between boy and girl babies from an early age, as the citations from two young mothers, followed by one from a grandmother, show below:

Boy and girl babies have their own way of being troublesome. Boys steal and fight. When they are small, they cry a lot and climb about everywhere. Girls play with mud and water and do not fear fire. They are more adventurous than boys.

Boys are more difficult to bring up. They like dangerous things, like playing in the bush, which makes you worry about them.

Boy babies are more of a problem. They do not want to be left alone as compared with girls. They cry a lot. When they grow, the mother has more freedom as they are always out, but girls are near by you.

The socialization into masculinity and femininity is accented and embodied through the social segregation of the sexes, gendered tasks and

tools with which to accomplish them, and gendered use of space. As they grow up, Goba boys and girls differentiate themselves into separate sex groups. Girls stay around the kin-group compounds, or follow kin to the female areas such as the water pump, the Catholic Church, or the fields. Women's space is to do with the home and their productive and reproductive tasks. Girls are expected to help, according to their age, and to look after the younger children. Boys have a much freer life, which some women and older girls have said to me that they envied when young and thought was unfair. Because of tsetse fly, which spreads the deadly sleeping sickness, there are no cattle in central Chiawa and surrounding villages and therefore boys have no herding duties. Goats are allowed to roam and are rounded up by the boys for penning before dark.

The Goba, like other Shona speakers (and also many Zambian peoples), do not have male initiation ceremonies. In the old days, boys would move from the natal compound at early puberty. They would live with a kin-group of other boys in a *dare*² hut, under the captaincy of an older boy. The *dare* hut would be situated near to the edge of a settlement of kin-related compounds and would be close to the gathering place (*dare*) of the young unmarried or newly married men. More centrally located would be the senior *dare* gathering place of the mature married men. In those days, it is said, men would spend most of their time together rather than at their family compounds and food would be brought to them by their women kinfolk. The boys would share the young men's fire in the evening and were expected to serve the senior men's *dare*, where they and the younger men would listen and imbibe the proverbs and knowledge of the elders. Elders with particular skills would instruct the boys in male crafts. Elders speak ruefully of the tough life in the boys' *dare*, especially as a young lad at the bottom of the group, and laughingly of their escapades as young rascals. Nonetheless, they conclude, "It made men of us and taught us respect." As in many other cultures, expectations of manliness have been socialized through hardships and trials (Gilmore 1990).

Nowadays, weaned children will often sleep in the house of nearby elder kin or with an unmarried female relative and then move at the age of about ten or twelve to separate small huts on the family compound: a *dare* hut for boys and a *diye* for girls. People say the sign for a boy to move out is when he starts to be aware of his body and ashamed of nakedness. As they get older, boys are encouraged not to hang around the compound with the women. Mothers say that it is the father's duty to train boys. They explain that boys (outside of the agricultural intensive periods) live a rather free life because men are often not interested in their sons' help until the boys are of an age of physical dexterity and strength in which they can be useful.

MASCULINITY, FEMININITY, AND SELF-HOOD

Masculinity and femininity can exist only as each other's opposites. They are predicated upon the sexed body and its separate reproductive functions. As can be seen in the hard life of the boys *dare* group, the attainment of masculine ideals often means not showing what are perceived to be feminine qualities and their devaluation in the withdrawal of the boy from the feminine sphere. At the same time, this also implies the creation of a prestigious male sphere with a corresponding hegemonic ideology.

The social differentiation of girls and boys and the concurrent creation of gendered identity are the focus of neo-Freudian analyses, which go under the name of "object relations theory." By "object" is meant the internalization of the intimate relation with the main caregiver with whom the infant comes into contact. Object relations theory centers on the breaking of the child's symbiosis with the mother and the disassociation from this first love object. This process in which the child achieves selfhood and physical autonomy is seen as more traumatic for the boy, as he must also come to the realization that he is of another sex or kind. This process involves an orientation of the boy toward a male world and identification with the "father." Men, it seems, have to create a separate sphere of values and attributes, whilst women have a continuity of identification with the mother and, at base, a reason to be in their associated reproductive and domestic roles. In Zambia, for example, women are taking on new responsibilities, but their ideological, symbolic, and actual continuity with customary ideas around womanhood is maintained. Many men though have difficulties in living up to modern expectations of the role as "breadwinner" and head of household provider for the family. At the same time, Zambian women's statements of autonomy in moving beyond the confines of female gendered space are perceived as threatening the moral order. As a young Goba man said to me: "It is good for a woman to have a good job but she should not lose her womanship [*sic*]."

Object relations theory provides glimpses as to the reasons for a competitive insecurity around masculinity in the male creation of a "non-feminine" identity (Chodorow 1978). It also provides pointers as to the creation of a prestigious male sphere.

HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY

That men are superior to women and that women should defer to men are the accepted public attitudes in Chiawa. The concept that male superiority

and corresponding rights are maintained by ideology (and by violence) has been entitled “hegemonic masculinity” (Carrigan et al. 1985). Bob Connell (1987, 1995) is credited with its main theoretical developments. His analysis delineates “gender regimes,” maintained by ideologies and resultant practices, that reproduce the “gender order.” Gender regimes are, naturally, sites for ideological and political struggle. They are also closely tied to economic forces and socioeconomic change, and the resultant ways in which a society manages human reproduction and socialization.

People in Chiawa were articulate about the ideals of manhood, expectations of manliness, and the goals of Goba socialization into manhood. During a description of male ideals by an elderly man, he said with a twinkle in his eye, “Such a man is a *murume akasimba* [a man of power].” I found that this term, though not as usual as referring to someone as a “big man” [*murume mukuru*] was instantly recognized by people. To give a thumbnail sketch: the man of power is self-reliant, hardworking, and successful. He provides all his family’s needs and helps his kin. He does not show fear; he is always calm and decisive, slow to anger but will defend his own and his family’s honor. He does not complain in hard times or show pain. He is generous and people come to him for advice. The opposites of the man of power are the lazy man, the one who fears, fails and falls, and the drunkard. Women can also be given the epithet *akasimba*, but this denotes a woman who, admirably, exhibits manly virtues. “Like my sister,” recounted the same elderly man, “who killed a snake while men stood around fearing.”

A *murume akasimba* has a strong back and is implicitly a potent man. As in the elusive English description “gravitas,” his power is manifested in his bearing and he receives a seat of honor when he joins gatherings. But this physical expression of a hegemonic masculine ideal is also part and parcel of a general formalism of gender and age hierarchy. This is played out through bodily postures of autonomy, domination, and submission. These expressions of politeness embody *tsika*, which can be translated as “respect” or “good manners,” and they perform moral conduct and act out gender roles.

Goba daily interaction is governed by observances of embodied formal politeness in terms of greetings. Types of handshakes, height observances, and hand clapping mark age, and gender status, and recreate the moral community. Height and bowing, or bending the back, are important markers of subservience. A man conscious of his worth does not lightly bend himself to others. A junior man or one who considers himself of a lower degree will, for example, shake hands with a man of higher rank by bending forward, clasping his right arm with his left hand. This obviously indicates

defencelessness, as does a similar polite position adopted by women of holding the right arm with the left hand behind their back when interacting with senior people. Seated men keep a hierarchy of height observance so that elders, big men, and guests receive higher and more comfortable positions. Within reasonable limits, this is a process that can involve a reshuffling of places if someone of importance arrives. Women always sit on the ground in the presence of men. Boys and females of all ages should crouch sideways with hands clasped in front of them or by their thighs when talking to or serving seated men. By custom, men were served food by their wives on their knees, but with younger women these days, a low curtsy suffices.

The performance of *tsika* embodies virtuous conduct and the nature of women and men. It underpins power and reciprocity between men and women, old and young. Women should respect men as the young respect the old and will in their turn receive respect and care according to the customary rights and duties inherent in their roles. Women do not oppose the hegemonic ideology. For women, gender problems are not the fault of the hierarchical system, but the failure of men to fulfill their reciprocal demands. Thus, the legitimacy of female demands on men is invested in the ideology of male hegemony. Women say that the problem is not that men are heads of the household, but that some men fail to live up to their responsibilities as husbands and fathers.

Whilst *tsika* acts out the observances of respect, these are the outward trappings of a much deeper morality. In the same way that work skills are learnt by observance and the slow imparting of knowledge, the “form” of integrity exhibited in practicing disciplined social conduct constructs morality, which in turn protects the person from temptation and evil. Responsibility, duty, and self-control are virtues strongly linked to the performance of *tsika*. Thus, the hegemonic ideal is interwoven with morality and the propriety of gender roles. The performance of *tsika* is part of the naturalized hegemonic relations between male and female in which male worth is ultimately expressed in the ideals of a “man of power” or “big man.”

GOBA MODELS OF SEXUALITY AND REPRODUCTION

So far, I have dwelt on the male and female body and their gendered performance in relation to each other. The hot–cold and wet–dry dichotomies utilized in understanding the body, reproduction, and the life course are part of a wider cosmological understanding of the life, growth, and death

of living things in general. The coolness of rain, combined with the heat of the growing season, causes crops and vegetation to grow. In the same way, in the heat of sex, men “plant” their semen in women’s field. Semen is symbolized as “seeds” or “rain,” both of which bring fertility to the land. According to Bucher (1980: 76), heat and coolness are represented in Shona thought by the colors red and white respectively. White is connected, amongst other things, to the coolness of rain, clouds, semen, and breast milk (58). Jacobson-Widding (1990: 52) describes Manyika Shona women elders performing lewd rain-dances to excite the male ancestors, so they rain down their semen over the land. Such dances are reported by my elder informants to have previously taken place in Chiawa.

Sex is symbolically related in the wider region to heat, fire, and cooking. An elderly lady traditional healer showed me the connotations by pointing to her hearth, as a means of explaining sexual heat and human reproduction. The three round stones on which the pot is placed, she said, are the female organ, the firewood sticks placed between them are the phallus, the fire is sex and the pot is the womb. Whilst women are seen as more moist than men, both should be dry and hot for successful procreation. Sex and conception are “hot” processes, which require “friction.” Traditional healers speak of people as being “too wet” or “too cool,” for example, in questions of problems with fertility, and prescribe warming and drying medicines. To make the body warm and to increase potency and fertility, both women and men take traditional medicines. Women use medicines that warm the womb and dry and tighten the vagina.

A man’s potency is linked to his back and strength. Traditional potency medicines, which many men take, are said to strengthen the back. They are also believed to work on the liquid at the base of the spine. This makes the back supple and recharges a man’s “batteries” (a metaphor for testicles). Masturbation is said to be weakening to the back.

Sex then is a *re-creational*, as well as a recreational act. It is part of a cosmology of fertility that encompasses human and animal reproduction, agriculture, and the rains.

LEARNING GENDER AND SEXUALITY

Sexuality in Eastern and Southern African societies has been ruled by strict taboos that in turn reflect the moral order of respect and proper relations between kin, age groups, and the sexes (Heald 1995). Sex and the mystery of reproduction hold dangers if not socially channeled (Douglas 1984 Heald 1995; Jacobson-Widding 2000; Moore et al. 1999). In general,

talk of sex should not be broached within relations of hierarchy and respect. Sexuality should not be alluded to between children and parent. The young people learn from the grandparental generation and they have a relaxed and joking relationship with them. The old systems of training the young included sexuality as part of training for adult responsibility, rather than being specifically focused on sex. Among the Goba, a girl goes at menarche for a short period of seclusion to an elder female relative, usually a maternal or paternal grandmother. Girls thus had a family life and sex-education training. As in many societies, a girl's virtue has been protected through restricted social space and supervision.

Boys' education has been much more haphazard. They pick up many hints and tips on expectations of potency and virility from male kin with whom they have joking and intimate relationships and, of course, from peers. Men are perceived as having greater facility for self-control. One can conjecture that this has its roots in gendered ideals of male physical endurance and of not showing pain and fear. Such aspects of a stoic masculinity are found commonly cross-culturally (Gilmore 1990). Nonetheless, this does not pertain to male sexuality, and men are seen as being easily bemused by women's sexual appeal. Moreover, a man needs regular sex and a woman to look after him. There are also the implicit and contradictory ideas found in many cultures, that boys should prove their sexuality, whilst public morality says that they should wait for marriage.

Having boyfriends or girlfriends is not accepted. "You don't put a lion in the cattle kraal," remarked an old man. So, the illicit nature of young people's sexual lives adds to their unplanned and spontaneous expression. The male role of provider is accentuated in these relationships in that a woman should always receive presents for allowing a sexual relationship outside of marriage. These gifts (or money in lieu) are a widespread practice in much of sub-Saharan Africa. They show respect and love, but also allow a sliding scale between a social relationship and commercial sex working.

Previously, the boys living in the kin groups *dare* would serve and help the men and thus receive a nonformal schooling into manhood. They would pick up knowledge on sexuality from the elder men, those who stood in a category of grandfather to them, as well as the mother's brothers. Old men have recounted to me being taken by male elders for semen tests when they were boys. They would go to the river at dawn each holding a stick of fire and standing waist deep in the water would be told to masturbate. If the semen sunk, it was good, but if it floated, it was watery and weak.

You had to keep the fire going. If you could not get an erection and ejaculate then you would use that same stick to light a fire, cook porridge and

medicines would be put in it. If the semen floated then that stuff was useless and medicines would be given. (Goba elder man)

As can be seen, the symbolism of the phallic stick and fire occurs again.

Young men are still given advice by an elder kinsman on a man's responsibilities and family life as they approached marriage. They may also be given potency medicines. Weddings are a test of virility. The bride is questioned in the morning by her female mentor, who enters the hut with breakfast for the couple. This old woman takes the cloth that the wife uses to clean her husband after sex, and it is examined by the women elders. Thus, the emphasis on fertility is still marked in Goba society. A grandfather may ask his grandson if he has nocturnal emissions and tell him to check the consistency of his semen, which should be thick, sticky, and white. Boys may be told the importance of their first "bullets" (i.e., the first "round" of intercourse when the semen is strongest) shooting deep into the woman. Semen is thus a life-giving substance whose quality should be looked after and whose name in Goba, *urume*, can be translated as "essence of manhood."

THE PHALLUS

In this chapter, I have shown how culture elaborates on the body. I have also highlighted the interface between culture and experiencing the sexed body. I conclude by relating the most obvious sexual male difference, the penis, to expectations of masculinity embodied in the symbolic authority of the phallus.

As already stated, the big man is a virile man. In Goba culture, the phallus defines masculinity: potency, fertility, and male strength are combined. Impotence is euphemistically described as "slaying" [*kubaiya*] a man. Aschwanden (1982: 212ff.) reports that this expression is also used among the Karanga Shona, when the man "falls" after orgasm, as his "power" is temporarily lost. Devisch (1991: 286) reports similar ideas among the Yaka of the Democratic Republic of Congo and says this loss, or transfer of power, should result in gestation. Thus in the concept of male sexuality as giving power and making life, one can understand the general dislike of condoms and prohibitions against masturbation found in many African societies. The phallus is therefore not just a symbol of authority, it "stands" for life-giving creative power.

The self-evident authority of the Goba phallus can be seen in the following citation: "As long as I can direct my urine and my wife cannot,

I am head of the household!" A middle-aged man made this remark when we were discussing gender equality. Shona culture, with its emphasis on fertility, utilizes many daily objects in an anthropomorphic sexualized division of the world (Aschwanden 1982; Jacobson-Widding 2000) in which the phallus is the privileged signifier. There are many symbolic instances of mystical prohibitions protecting male potency and fertility. For example, a mother should not let her breasts touch the infant boy's penis and a boy or man should not sit on a burning log (the symbol of phallic penetration into the fire of sex) protruding from the hearth. Jacobson-Widding (2000: 79) reports that the (phallic) stirring ladle should not be allowed to burn in the porridge pot, which represents the womb.

Whilst there is less emphasis on fertility in contemporary mainstream Western culture, the importance also invested in the phallus in Western societies can be seen in the work of Kessler and McKenna (1978: 142ff.). These two psychologists used various tests to ask people to decide the sex of an ambiguous subject through clues that combined female and male attributes. They found that their Western informants, confused by other clues, made gender attribution either on the presence and absence of a penis, or, in the absence of genital clues, tended to decide "male." Kessler and McKenna interpreted this as "male" being the positive gender. Femaleness, on the other hand, was defined by a "lack" of male attributes.

The symbolic importance of the phallus is emphasized in the work of Jacques Lacan, whose theories combine neo-Freudian analysis with a structuralist approach. Lacan posits the central symbolic importance of the phallus, within a matrix of symbolic construction, which creates the human world. As in object relations theory, he focuses on the breaking of the symbiotic bond with the mother as a source of conflict. In the process of the emergence of the self, the child enters the sociocultural order of human society encapsulated in language and entitled the "symbolic" or the "law." In his structuralist reinterpretation of the Oedipus complex, Lacan posits sexed identity as dependent on the absence or presence of the phallus, the "privileged signifier" (Butler 1990: 44; Segal 1997: 85). Whilst the child desires the mother, the mother desires the "phallus," but the phallus is not the penis so much as the symbol of patriarchal control, power, and authority. The phallus cannot exist by itself, it needs its opposite to become, and in this sense Lacan means women "are" the phallus. Men "have" the penis, but at the same time, try, but will always fail, to "achieve" the phallus, as this is a symbolic object and ideal. Butler puts it this way:

For women to "be" the phallus means, then, to reflect the power of the phallus, to signify that power, to "embody" the phallus, to supply the site to

which it penetrates, and to signify the phallus through being its other
(1990: 44)

Thus, women's acquiescence in reflecting the phallus is necessary to allow men the construction of power and autonomy, that is, hegemonic masculinity. But why does the phallus have this signification? According to Segal's reading of interpretations of Lacan and reminiscent of Kessler and Mckenna's findings, "it is the visibility of the male organ which is crucial." Or, as Rubin (1975: 130) puts it, "castration is not a real 'lack' but a meaning conferred on the genitals of a woman."

Lacan provides important insights into the privileged significance of the phallus. Particularly important is his point that the phallus is a desirable symbol to obtain, but as an ideal it is always beyond reach, as in the eternal refrain: "We are less worthy men than our fathers." Second, he points out that female and male can only come into being in relation to each other and that male authority is reliant on female acquiescence. The phallus then symbolically represents both the illusion and the actuality of the hegemonic masculine ideal.

Female and male are symbolic opposites, which implies mutuality, but the autonomy of the phallus negates the feminine. Thus one sees in the Goba phallus the inherent conflicts and stresses in terms of male ideals, expectations of manliness and the corresponding burdens. A real man is economically and emotionally self-reliant. His ideal is to be head of a compound in which he provides for others, but he is not beholden to them. His failure to meet these obligations is demeaning. He needs a woman's emotional and sexual succor, the children she provides him with, and her productive and reproductive services, but this is rarely explicitly acknowledged. Furthermore, he should be a sexually active man. Male potency is accentuated in the socialization young men receive, and male sexuality is represented as an uncontrollable force rather bereft of relational intimacy. At the same time, public morality expects abstinence before marriage and faithfulness afterward. In sum, the Goba phallus pretends that it stands alone, but it is always dependent on others.

CONCLUSIONS

I began this chapter by emphasizing the importance of bringing the experiential nature of the body into analyses. This is, obviously, of utmost importance in understanding the construction of masculinities. Gender is

not rooted in essential biological or psychological differences between the sexes. The interplay between culture and the body is clearly too complex for such simplifications. But the fact of sexed bodies does have ramifications in their historical and social manifestations. The sexed body creates a common framework for cultural elaboration and for the performance of gender. Thus, I would argue that an understanding of the many cross-cultural similarities of masculinities and femininities has more pertinence for analysis of the human condition than the search for gender ambiguities.

My ethnographic material has shown the importance that Goba people place on sexual differentiation and that fertility is a central aspect of their cosmology. Goba people perceive both innate and learned differences between the sexes. The expression of masculinity and femininity is, though, to a large extent predicated on the physical bodily differences between “soft” women and “hard” men. These differences and the gender and age hierarchy are expressed through the performance of a morality of politeness called *tsika*.

Sex segregation outside of the household compound is the norm among the Goba, and boys are taught to be men by being differentiated from the female sphere. I have argued that object relations theory gives some insights to this process of the creation of hegemonic masculinity and the concurrent devaluation of the feminine. A further point I made, in the Goba construction of a prestigious male sphere, is the importance of the phallus as the privileged signifier and symbol of potency and authority. Yet, as Lacan points out, the phallus is an ideal that is always beyond reach and needs female acquiescence to sustain its image. I concluded by briefly touching on the inherent conflicts and stresses in Goba expectations of manliness.

I have concentrated on ideals, rather than actualities because my thesis is that models *of* and *for* behavior are important in our creation of male and female. I have attempted to show the social interactive nature of the construction of gender, its relation to embodiment, and performance of the sexed body and the power of stereotypes in modeling and sustaining gendered behavior.

NOTES

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1. This should be twelve to thirteen-year-olds, but pupils can be several years older as they may start school late, drop out of school in hard times, or have such bad end of year exam results they have to repeat the class.
2. *Dare* in Goba can refer to the boy's hut, a gathering place for the men, and the headman's customary court for settling disputes.

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11. Poverty, Male Disempowerment, and Male Sexuality: Rethinking Men and Masculinities in Rural and Urban East Africa

Margrethe Silberschmidt

INTRODUCTION

Most writings on gender in the Third World necessarily examine issues of poverty, the lack of economic development and the spread of HIV, and emphasize the subordination of women and the power of men. The possibility that men could be disempowered is not entertained. The dominant framework for discussion is that men have been the “winners” and women the “losers” in the process of socioeconomic change during the past century (Silberschmidt 1992b). Drawing on anthropological research work in East Africa, this chapter explores the changing position of men and argues that many of them have been, and feel, disempowered.

Research on women since the 1970s accumulated deep insights into the implications of massive socioeconomic change, poverty, and increasing workloads for African women. Similar insights on men’s lives for the most part do not exist. In 1980, Ester Boserup (1980) suggested that the change in women’s work has been less radical than that in men’s. This insight has seldom been applied to the study of men’s work. I apply Boserup’s contention to the position of men in the economy in the belief that it will shed light on gender politics and will have implications for gender and development work.

My aim is to analyze changing cultural ideals and characteristics of East African masculinities and femininities in a context in which important

economic changes have occurred. These changes have undermined the ability of men to find employment and have thus eroded their ability to be breadwinners. The essay further examines how changes in the economic realm have impacted notions about gendered social roles, social value, self-esteem, perception of self, and how they interact with male sexual behavior.

I first carried out the research for this chapter in Kisii, rural Kenya, at different periods from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s. Research in urban Dar es Salaam took place in 1996–1997. The Kisii research consists of survey data (723 women and 200 men in their reproductive age) and qualitative data collection, life histories and focus group discussions with a selection of men and women from two villages included in the survey. The vast majority had not completed primary education. Most women referred to themselves as housewives, and the majority of men referred to themselves as farmers. The qualitative data collection in urban Tanzania took place in three low-income squatter areas of Dar es Salaam: Mabibo, Vingunguti, and Buguruni. In-depth interviews were carried out with 38 women and 53 men also in their reproductive age by means of structured, semi-structured, and open-ended interviews. Contrary to the Kisii informants, the majority had completed a primary education. While seven out of the 53 men had attended secondary school, only one of the 38 women had been to secondary school. The vast majority of men said they were casual laborers, self employed, or involved in petty business (selling cold drinks, dried fish, etc.). Women said they were housewives and at the same time involved in petty business. In addition, 13 focus group discussions were conducted with different groups of men and women of different ages but with similar backgrounds.

SOCIOECONOMIC CHANGE AND MALE DISEMPOWERMENT IN EAST AFRICA.

While the causes are still contested, there is no doubt that people in East Africa have become poorer in the last half century. The processes of structural adjustment have accelerated impoverishment in the last two decades.

In 1975, the regional GNP per capita of Sub-Saharan Africa stood at 17.6 percent of “world” per capita GNP. By 1999, it had dropped to 10.5 percent. Relative to overall Third World trends, Sub-Saharan health, mortality, and adult-literacy levels have deteriorated at comparable rates. Life expectancy at birth stands at 49 years, and 34 percent of the region’s population are classified as undernourished (Arrighi 2002: 27). While development literature stresses that it is women who are most seriously affected, this chapter argues that amongst certain men, the consequences of poverty are very serious.

With different historical and economic developments, one area rural, the other urban, Kisii and Dar es Salaam necessarily show many differences. However, both areas also have some of the same characteristics with 41 percent of the rural population in Kenya and 61 percent of the urban population in Tanzania living under the poverty line (Fields 2000). Moreover, both rural Kisii and urban Dar es Salaam have experienced an overall population growth, overall economic decline, and economic instability.

Under colonialism, the supply of labor did expand, and so did the demand for it, as exploitation of natural resources was stepped up. During and just after decolonization there was even a shortage of labor partly because of a demand for Africa's natural resources and partly because of the efforts of the newly independent states to modernize and industrialize. It was only after the economic collapse of the 1980s that sub-Saharan Africa's structural labor deficit turned into a labor surplus (Arrighi 2002). This labor surplus has continued and as a result, there is now a serious lack of income earning opportunities both in rural and urban East Africa. This is coupled with a breakdown of social and political institutions, a large percentage of female headed households, high birth rates, low use of contraceptives and not the least high HIV seropositivity, gender antagonism, violence, criminality, and alcohol abuse, mainly by men.

SOCIOECONOMIC CHANGE IN KISII

Kisii is among the most productive cash and food crop regions in Kenya. In 1907, the population was estimated at 75,000. Since then, the population has multiplied at least 20 times. Unemployment is a serious problem because there is not enough land to secure survival. Yet, a large proportion of household reproduction remains based on peasant agriculture relying on female labor (Orvis 1988). Before colonial rule, men were warriors and cattle herders and took an active part in political decision-making. Cattle represented wealth and power, and constituted the major part of bride price. The more cattle a man had, the more wives he could marry, and the more land could be cultivated. Through marriage, he controlled his wife's sexual and reproductive powers. Masculinity was closely linked to self-control and dignity. Adultery was a serious offence, much more serious when committed by a woman (LeVine and LeVine 1966; Mayer 1973).

The colonial power put an end to the precolonial socioeconomic structure. Taxation was introduced, and men were recruited to construct railroads and urban centers. Many women were left for years to manage the farm. After World War II, a shift toward production of industrial goods

began. This created a demand for skilled and semi-skilled workers. Most Gusii migrants were unskilled and had to return home. In Kisii, though, men's activities had disappeared. There were no tribal wars to fight and no more cattle-camps because it was more profitable to use land for cash crops. Many returned therefore to the urban areas, only to find that their labor was not needed. Most men then returned again to Kisii.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE "PROVIDER" IDEOLOGY AND NEW VALUES

During the 1940s and 1950s, households were dependent on men's financial contributions. Men occupied a new social role—that of a breadwinner. New values that meshed with old ones were created. Women became the daily managers of the household, but men remained heads of households—in absentia—and they were expected to provide financial assistance to the household. However, the urban wages were very low and hardly provided for the man's own subsistence requirements. His remittances were therefore irregular or nonexistent. Men's difficulties in providing financial assistance to the household undermined their social roles and their social value. As discussed below, this has had serious consequences for men's roles and masculinity.

The disappearance of cattle camps had a negative effect on bride price payment. Temporary unions increasingly substituted for marriage. Women had to learn how to make ends meet without any assistance from their husbands. And so they did. Many even managed to send bags of maize to their husbands in town. When husbands returned to Kisii, women continued their hard work on decreasing plots of land—still without support from their husbands. Farm work was women's work. Men, however, still owned the land, and women were dependent on men for access to land. They were also dependent on men for access to cash as returns on coffee and tea, delivered to the respective factories or cooperatives, were issued to the head of household, the husband. Women, however, learnt to make deals with local middlemen so that they could sell part of their cash crop produce without the knowledge of their husbands. Women's position as important managers of both food and cash crops and often as sole managers of the farm has made them crucial for the survival of the household. Linked to this, many women have become more autonomous. They increasingly make decision without involving or consulting their husbands, present or absent. Many women are also openly aggressive and openly attacking men for their lack of support.

During fieldwork, recurrent observations from women were: "a woman is better off without a husband"; "if only he was dead"; "men are so delicate;

they break so easily”; “our sons have nobody to take as a model.” Men, though, would immediately emphasize their status as head of household and proclaim their right to “correct” (= beat) an obstinate wife. However, typical comments by men (and women) were that “men drink to drown their problems—and they are many,” “men drink and are rude to women to forget that they cannot provide the family with blankets.” Particularly striking was men’s aggressive “macho” behavior, on the one hand, and on the other, men’s complaints that “today women do not respect their husband”; “they humiliate the husband and tell home secrets to others” (Silberschmidt 1999).

But not all East African men find themselves in conditions of poverty and hopelessness. Wealthy businessmen can afford bride price for at least one wife and frequently use their wealth to keep “girlfriends.” These men are highly admired and respected. They serve as models to be aspired to, despite the dire economic condition in which most men find themselves. A general observation by men interviewed was that “a man needs at least three wives: one to bear his children, one to work and one for pleasure.” However, most men had not even provided any bride price for their first “wife.” In the 1970s, 33 percent of the households in Kisii were polygamous (Population and Development in Kenya 1980). My findings indicate that in the 1980s and 1990s less than 10 percent lived in polygamous unions. With one wife only, a general observation by men was that “a man needs to go outside to feel like a man. Wives always complain. To get affection he has to go to his outside partner.”

The intensification of their roles and responsibilities has made women increasingly aware that the household cannot survive without them. Thus, even though structurally subordinated, women have actively responded to the new situation. They have created a new social role for themselves. Both men and women agreed that “more and more women have taken command of the home,” and “harmony has gone out of the window.” Thus, gender antagonism and domestic violence have escalated. Persistent rumors about men being poisoned by their wives circulate. Men’s position as heads of household is challenged, and some would be called “figure” heads of household. However, land is still owned by men, and men call themselves farmers.

SOCIOECONOMIC CHANGE IN DAR ES SALAAM

In 1894, Dar es Salaam was a minor settlement with 10,000 inhabitants. By 1957 it had grown to 130,000 (Leslie 1963). Today the population has grown to over 1.5 million. In the 1950s men in the capital far outnumbered

women. Today there are only 0.9 men for every woman. In 1993/1994, contrary to expectations, female-headed households in urban Tanzania constituted 18 percent of the highest income households, and only 13 percent of the poor households (World Bank 1995).

In 1978, 84 percent of the men in Dar es Salaam had formal employment (Tanzania Population Census 1982). In the 1980s, large numbers of workers lost their jobs. Today, only a fraction is employed in the formal sector. Salaries are far from enough to support a family (Tripp 1997). Thus, the informal sector has become overcrowded with myriads of market vendors—men and women. Even young men with secondary education end up as street vendors.

Like in Kisii, the ideology of men as breadwinners is forcefully alive. Stereotyped notions shared by both genders are that “a man should be the head of his family”; “he should provide a house (and land), pay school fees and clothes for wife and children.” Such a man has social value and respect. However, a majority of men suffer the same fate as men in Kisii: they cannot fulfil expectations and respond by withdrawing from household responsibilities. Consequently, men’s status as head of household is seriously challenged. When asked about their “status” in the household, it was obvious to all 53 men interviewed that they were “born” head of households. That was a “God given” fact. “Women are like children and should be guided by men.” “Men are the lions, and women are the sheeps.” Nevertheless, women accused men of being irresponsible husbands and failing to support their children. In fact, the 53 men interviewed had 30 percent more children (with 2–4 women) than the 38 women interviewed.

Most men and women interviewed live in more or less informal/passing unions. If a couple stays together for two years they are registered as “married.” A proper marriage still requires the procurement of bride price. With no bride price, male control over women’s sexual and reproductive powers is weakened, and women’s security is at stake. Urban life, however, has also provided women with many opportunities. While women would often express self-limiting culturally accepted expectations to them as women, in practice, they would be very entrepreneurial agents. The majority who referred to themselves as “housewives” were actively involved in the informal sector, baking and selling mandazis (small sweet buns), preparing “lunches,” selling secondhand clothes, and so on. Both men and women interviewed agreed that women are much more hard working and more enduring than men. Therefore, when women enter the informal sector many are often able to earn more than their husbands.

The negative attitude of husbands toward women’s income-generating activities is well known (Mgughuni 1994). However, men and women

agree that families cannot survive unless women contribute income. Most women say that husband and wife should decide together on the use of "household" money. In practice, what women earn belongs to them, and they, not their husbands, decide how to use it (also see Strauss 2000). Nevertheless, husbands are always expected to provide rent, money for food, and school fees even if it is honored more in theory than in practice. According to Omari (1994), the more women control and manage their own incomes, the more responsibilities are added to them. My findings, however, also indicate that when women have their own money, they become less respectful of husbands (see also Tripp 1997).

According to the officer heading one of the wards (in one of the subdivisions) and who constantly dealt with divorces filed by women, women are much more hard working, more inventive, and they have a psychological strength that men do not have. Many men feel destitute and have no strategy to deal with their problems. According to my male and female informants, "when husbands are crushed down economically, they suffer from feelings of inferiority"; "a man's ego is hurt." As a result, "men lose their vigor and women take over"; and "when a man has lost control over his household and is humiliated by his wife, his pride is hurt." In this situation, men agree that to "build up our pride" and "boost our ego," we men need to "relax" and to be "comforted." As shall be shown below, relaxation and comfort are mainly provided by "extra-marital" partners.

MALE DISEMPOWERMENT

Although the main axis of patriarchal power is still the overall subordination of women and dominance of men, the deteriorating material conditions have seriously undermined the normative order of patriarchy in both Kisii and Dar es Salaam. While men do have a relative freedom, compared to women, particularly in sexual and reproductive behaviors, lack of access to income earning opportunities has made men's role as heads of household and breadwinners precarious. With a majority of men reduced to "figure-heads" of households, men's authority has come under threat and so has their identity and self-esteem. Patriarchy does not mean that men have only privileges. A patriarch has also many responsibilities. The irony of the patriarchal system resides precisely in the fact that male authority has a material base while male responsibility is normatively constituted (see also Kandiyoti 1988). This has made men's roles and identities confusing and contradictory, and many men express feelings of helplessness, inadequacy, and lack of self-esteem. Men increasingly seek psychiatric help (personal

communication with heads of Psychiatric Department, Kisii District Hospital and Muhimbili Medical Centre, Dar es Salaam, respectively). Advertisements in the local newspapers offer to assist men with problems of depressions and loss of sexual power.

Research in the North reveals specific male depressions caused by economic marginalization and lack of self-esteem. These depressions are characterized by increased aggressive behavior, lack of self-control, overconsumption of alcohol, and often suicide (Sabo and Gordon 1995; Stillion 1995; Rutz et al. 1997; Shajahan and Cavanagh 1998). A study from Tanzania argues that frustrations and inner disturbances may even result in men raping children and women (Masenja and Urassa 1993). Possessing no means to change their economic status many men seem to be responding by developing macho attitudes and resorting to physical violence against women. As one man interviewed put it: "there is always a tendency for men to want to overcome women and to show them how aggressive we are. This gives respect and self-respect to us men." In this way, men may translate their economic subordination into a symbolic expression, which is perhaps psychologically rewarding if politically displaced.

Perhaps some parallels can be drawn to what has also taken place in industrialized countries, namely what Mies (1986) calls a "housewifization" of men. When men cannot anticipate salaried wage-labor employment—fundamental for their role as breadwinner—they find themselves in the situation of housewives: atomized, unorganized, and economically insecure. Man the hunter becomes a parasite. He is constantly vilified because of his failure to support household needs. The fact that women are increasingly becoming economically independent threatens the ego and prestige of husbands. Many men fear that when wives have their own business projects outside the home, they may feel attracted to other men. "As soon as a husband starts declining economically, his wife will take advantage and go out to look for other men to satisfy her material needs." Successful businesswomen in Dar es Salaam are even said to pay younger men for sex. Thus, women's sexuality represents an active and threatening power. A man's honor, his reputation, his ego, and his masculinity are severely affected if he cannot control his wife.

SEXUALITY AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF MASCULINITY

Sexuality like masculinity cannot escape its cultural connection. Thus, patterns of sexual behavior, attitudes toward and beliefs about sexuality exhibit

considerable variation across the African continent. Traditionally, African sexual systems were based on complex sexual norms, values, and moral codes. Restrictions, respect, and avoidance were key notions related to sexual behavior. Today's sexual networking (the term developed and used by Caldwell et al. 1992) or multi-partnered relationships/casual sex (the terms I prefer to use) is not a result of some traditional permissiveness (as argued by Caldwell et al). It is a result of a breakdown of traditional norms and regulations surrounding sexual behavior (Ahlberg 1994; Standing and Kisekka 1989; Heald 1995).

My interviews with men indicate that a man's need for sexual/extramarital partners is urgent "when a man has lost control over his household and is humiliated by his wife," and "when a man's ego has been hurt." Then "he needs peace on his mind"; "he needs to be comforted." One way to meet these needs is to go to the bar—officially to socialize with peers—where money-hungry women (according to wives) are waiting for a catch. He may also go to the *nyumba ndogo* (small houses = concubines) who will "serve a beautiful meal and give nice comfort." Wives do not have the time, energy, or money for that.

Despite the centrality of men's earning powers in constructions of masculinity worldwide, most notions of masculinity are closely associated with virility, sexuality, potency, fertility, and male "honor" (Lindisfarne and Cornwall 1994; Lindsey 1994; Connell 1995). Such notions are also clearly reflected in colonial attempts to create an African masculinity: beneath the rhetoric of social control were the officials' attempts to create an African masculinity that mirrored a flattering vision of their own maleness (White 1990). Masculinity is composed of a number of different elements, identities and behaviors that are not always coherent. They may be competing, contradictory, and mutually undermining, they may have multiple and ambiguous meanings which alter according to context and over time, and they may vary across cultures. As such, masculinity is always liable to internal contradiction and historical disruption (Connell 1995). Masculinity has to be constantly reasserted in the continuous denial of "femininity" or "feminine qualities" (Seidler 1991). According to Kimmel (1987), sexual performance is one of the crucial arenas in which masculinity is socially constructed and enacted. Performance failure can challenge the essence of masculinity, and confront men with the possibility that they are not "real" men. This links up with the observations by Connell (1995) that the male gender is constructed round at least two conflicting characterizations of the essence of manhood: first, being a man is natural, healthy, and innate; second, a man must stay masculine; he should never let his masculinity falter.

In his recent work based partly on his studies of the Kabyles in North Africa, Bourdieu (1998) stresses the link between masculinity, sexuality, and violence with the erect phallus representing the dynamic vitality fundamental to sexuality, and procreation. He points out that men are also prisoners and victims of their role as the dominating sex. Thus, male privilege is also a trap. To exercise domination, men are obliged to play their prescribed roles where "honor" is central. Women and their sexuality represent an active and threatening power to male identity, social value, and not the least male "honor." From this point of view, women as women acquire power over men.

A man's identity, self-confidence, and social value are linked to his sexuality. In attempting to compensate for feelings of inadequacy and despair, men engage in "extramarital" sexual activity, often with casual partners. Drawing on norms and values that do give positive connotations to male sexual activity (contrary to that of women), such activity is considered to be a legitimate way for men to enhance self-esteem and masculinity precisely because it contributes to define a status radically different from that of women. With sexual identity being a major element in men's social identity, sexual exploits by disempowered, not to say emasculated, men in Kisii and Dar es Salaam seem to be a key element in terms of male self-identification. With control over women being an important social index for their masculine reputation, many men seem to have "chosen the lifestyle" (to use the terminology of Giddens 1991) of (aggressive) sexual behavior with multiple partners. This behavior seems to have become a tool to acquire self-esteem, a tool of domination and control over women as well as a legitimate way of manifesting masculinity. As one man put it, "if you cannot be a successful breadwinner, you can be a successful seducer." The fact that more than 30 percent of the sexually active population in Dar es Salaam is HIV positive (Tanzania Demographic and Health Survey 1996) was of no concern to him.

ALTERNATIVE MASCULINITIES?

The increasing poverty, the increasing lack of access to income earning activities, women's agency and their disrespect toward men, provide serious challenges not to say threats to traditional and dominant masculine identities both in Kisii and in Dar es Salaam. This is in line with research undertaken in Britain already in the early 1980s, which shows that the lack of male wage and the increasing independence of young working class women

disrupted the “normal” path into heterosexual relationships and marriage, if not into parenthood. Young unemployed working-class men, black and white, made less attractive prospects as husbands and long-term heterosexual partners (Willis 1984). As my research shows, many men experience feelings of disempowerment and emasculation, and their inability to fulfil their breadwinner role also seems to have profound effects on heterosexual and marital relations. However, this does not necessarily undermine existing hegemonic forms of masculinity or power relations (Connell 1993), and it does not necessarily lead to the construction of alternative identities less oppressive to women (Willott and Griffin 1996).

This being said with masculinities being socially and historically constructed, masculinities are not constant or static, and domination is not inscribed in men’s nature. While men and women have deep-rooted, often unconscious conventional ideas of masculinity and femininity, which cannot easily be reshaped, there is always potentiality for innovation or creative action: masculinities are dynamic and open-ended processes. Drawing on Bourdieu’s notion of “habitus”—this is an open system of dispositions constantly subjected to experiences, and therefore constantly affected by them in a way that either reinforces or modifies its structures (Bourdieu 1992: 133).

The present (traditional) ideas of masculine habitus in rural and urban East Africa are constantly subjected to new, “modern” insights. According to these insights, a few men have started questioning these ideas. They do not make sense, and they are not in men’s self interest. In Kisii a few young men now work together with their wives in the field. They are ridiculed by other men because they are doing “women’s work,” and excluded from socializing with them. “I don’t care,” one young man argued. “If I work together with my wife, we can produce more bags of maize. This will improve our living standard, but those men laughing at me will stay poor.” In Dar es Salaam, well-educated, employed men with equally well-educated, employed girl friends/wives refuse to reproduce “traditional” gender relations. They argue that husband and wife were (almost) equals and both should invest in the upkeep of the household. [Women would agree to contribute some of their earnings, but they insisted on keeping some money for “personal emergencies”.]

The above scenarios indicate that there are changes underway, but for different reasons. The young Kisii were pushed by their poor situation, the young men in Dar es Salaam were more informed about “modern” Western ideas and dissociated from traditional patterns. However, both types of young men contribute to serve as new models.

CONCLUSIONS: PERSISTENCE AND CHANGE

My research indicates that socioeconomic change entailed by increasing poverty has perhaps been just as harsh for men as for women, but in a different and more obscure way. Men seem to have been subjected to a larger extent than women to new roles, obligations, and new value systems. While there is clear evidence that women's roles have expanded and their burdens increased, similar evidence does not exist on men's roles. My data, however, clearly demonstrates that a majority of men are not able to honor their expected role as heads of household and breadwinners. This has serious consequences for men's social value and it is a constant threat to their masculine pride. Contrary to women, who have actively created new roles for themselves, men have not been able to do so.

However, with masculinity and sexuality being closely related, sexual manifestations and control over women—often acted out in violence and sexual aggressiveness—seem to have become fundamental to a process of restoring male self-esteem. This has extensive theoretical as well as policy implications.

First, there is a need to revise the generally accepted stereotypes of male domination and women's subordination. As my research shows, even if the patriarchal ideology may be embodied (and expressed) in the lives of socially dominant men (and women), this certainly does not mean that all men are successful patriarchs or that all women are passive victims. Stereotypes are dangerous: they are static, they do not allow for change, and they hide the fact that there are cultural variations. Stereotypes may even help to "naturalize" inferiority and may end up being internalized by the subordinates themselves. While the need for an investigation of the changing cultural, social, and attitudinal context of male sexual behavior is increasingly stressed (UNAIDS 2000), such investigations have not yet taken place. Moreover, they are far from enough.

There is a need to refine and develop methodologies that reveal the interaction between men's life situation, notions of masculinity, and male sexual and reproductive behavior. Strategies to empower women and women's rights figure prominently on the national and international agenda, and increasingly in relation to their sexual and reproductive health. "Empower women, halt HIV/AIDS" was urged by UNIFEM during the AIDS Conference in Barcelona (July 2002). Women were also urged to couple efforts to empowerment with the ability to identify key entry points to integrate components on self-esteem development (UNIFEM 2002). But what about another slogan: "Empower men, halt HIV/AIDS?"

The promotion of women's empowerment and the call for women's rights are often based on simplistic solutions to complex socioeconomic

problems. Moreover, and as observed by Connell (1995), to focus only on dismantling men's advantages over women through a politics of equal rights would be to abandon our knowledge of how those advantages are produced and defended. Ironically, empowering women may free men from taking responsibility, in particular in sexual matters. Furthermore, efforts to empower women may have unintended and negative consequences for women unless they are balanced against efforts to deal with men's increasingly marginalized situation.

Consequently, while there is a recognition of the need to "include" men in development (IDS bulletin 2000; Chant et al. 2000), there is first of all a need to promote the overall economic empowerment not only of women but certainly also of men along with efforts to make both genders center on alliance work. More specifically, there is a need for real economic opportunities for both men and women, focused on lower-class laborers as well as peasant farmers. These are major development challenges.

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12. Violence and the Gendered Negotiation of Masculinity Among Young Black School Boys in South Africa

Deevia Bhana

INTRODUCTION

By the time boys begin attending primary school in South Africa, they have already embarked on the lifelong process of acquiring and constructing their masculine identities. Masculine identities in school reach back in time into the family and, in turn, the social location of these families plays a major part in the early processes by which masculinities are formed. In South Africa, the context in which many black families function is one of poverty. Poverty and race correlate closely in South Africa with 61 percent of blacks being poor (May 2000). Three children in every five live in households characterized by unemployment, lack of access to water and electricity, crowded homes, and food insecurity. Although poverty does not cause aggression, it gives rise to conditions that make it more likely. Boys, black boys in particular, are vulnerable to violence, but at the same time, they learn that might is right. To understand the shape of school masculinities, we need to give due recognition to early life experiences of violence.

Schooling is an important arena in the construction of masculinities, even in the primary years (when boys are between 6 and 12). In particular school settings, violent masculinities emerge surprisingly among young boys. In black working-class townships, there is a strong connection between violent masculinities and schooling (Morrell 2001a, b). Violence interferes with a school's ability to produce a safe learning environment. Although schools are affected by their violent social surroundings, they are

themselves implicated in the violence. Many schools, for example, continue to fuel gender inequalities despite policies and laws that promote gender equity in education. In this context, schools can and do promote aggressive and misogynistic masculinities. This chapter, based on a study of a black working-class primary school in Durban, explores the gendered negotiation of masculinity among young boys.

THE RESEARCH SITE: A BLACK PRIMARY SCHOOL IN DURBAN

The focus in this chapter is on young black, Zulu-speaking boys between the ages of six and ten and who attend a working class, township school in Durban. The data and analyses derive from an ethnographic study I conducted. I have given the school in which I conducted the research the pseudonym KwaDabeka Primary School. For a period of a year, I visited the school, sat in on lessons and talked to the boys and girls in grade one and two and their two black teachers (namely Mrs. G and Mrs. H) (Bhana 2002). KwaDabeka Primary School is situated in an economically deprived black township area in Durban. In the context of massive economic and social dislocation, KwaDabeka is also a hotspot for violence. It is from the context of poverty, crime, the increasing prevalence of HIV/AIDS that young boys come to school as gendered beings.

By the time this study began to engage with the boys, the process of constructing and negotiating their masculine identities in their local cultures had already begun. But the domestically shaped early formation of their gender identities did not render them immune to the gendered forces at school. The hegemonic masculinity drew on *tsotsi* images in a discourse of masculinity, which was subversive of authority and antisocial. *Tsotsi* is an oppositional street masculinity alive especially in black urban townships. *Tsotsi* is usually associated with a flashily dressed black male street thug frequently a member of a gang and armed with a knife or weapon (Branford 1980). The rugged and violent hegemonic school masculinity draws from the images of *tsotsi* gang cultures but at the same time, it also accommodates itself to the rigors of the school where obedience to teacher authority is required. The boys who forge their identities through violence and who draw from *tsotsi* culture are referred to here as *tsotsi* boys. The violent masculinity has achieved a position of hegemony in the school but it is not monolithic. It is contested, fluid, and unstable.

Hegemonic masculinity is contested internally in relation to the particular context in the school and in relation to body size, bigger size girls, and

age. This means that the fact of belonging to the group of boys who exhibit hegemonic masculinity is itself unclear and shifts over time, as boys get older and bigger. This violent masculinity is also challenged, at least at the level of being a cultural ideal, by *yimvu* (Zulu for sheep, used metaphorically to describe passive, quiet, harmless boys) masculinity, which offers peaceable models of behavior. Not all boys at KwaDabeka Primary School draw on the toxic *tsotsi* model. *Yimvu* or holy, innocent boys do not readily resort to violence. They are more agreeable. The existence of *yimvu* boys suggests that not all boys practice violent and subordinating strategies at all times and in all circumstances (Mac an Ghaill 1994; Salisbury and Jackson 1996; Skelton 1997).

Second, violent masculinity is fluid in that its shape changes depending on context: in the classroom, on the sports field, outside the school, in the company of girls and boys, and in the presence of teachers. It is not impervious, for example, to the threat of teachers or to the critique of girls who prefer peaceable *yimvu* masculinity. Violent masculinity may be hegemonic when might is right, but it is not consistently and universally the most favored way of performing masculinity in the school.

THEORIZING MASCULINITY

In common with other research studies, schools are analyzed as sites where multiple masculinities are played out (Mac an Ghaill 1994; Martino and Meyenn 2001; Skelton 2001; Frosh et al. 2002). These researchers have shown that the ways in which boys enact their masculinity need to be understood as gendered practices that are relational, ambiguous, and multiple. Importantly, these studies indicate that masculinities are dependent upon access to power. The social location creates the conditions for relations of power. The context and the available cultural resources set the limits of what can be said and done in the making of masculinities.

Connell (1995) defines hegemonic masculinity as the culturally exalted form of masculinity. The patterns of conduct associated with hegemonic masculinity are usually authoritative, aggressive, heterosexual, physically brave, sporty, and competitive (Connell 1995; Mac an Ghaill 1994, 1996; Salisbury and Jackson 1996; Gilbert and Gilbert 1998; Lesko 2000; Frosh et al. 2002). This hegemonic masculinity is celebrated, presented as an ideal, and invested with power. Non-hegemonic masculinity is a move away from power and is subordinate. The important point is that different forms of masculinity exist together and the hegemonic form has to be constantly struggled for and is subject to challenge. Not all men embody the common

form of masculinity. All men live in a state of tension with, or distance from, hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1995), but the patterns of exclusion and hierarchies are an important source of conflict and violence. Hegemonic masculinity can be quiet and implicit; it can also be violent. There are thus different patterns of masculinity, different ways of being a boy. These differences relate to the interlocking dimensions of race, class, and sexuality (Mac an Ghaill 1994). Thus, more than one kind of masculinity can be found in a given cultural or institutional setting. These differences mean differential access to power, practices of power, and effects of power (Haywood and Mac an Ghaill 2001). The next section focuses on the school where the research was conducted before an investigation is made of masculinities and the way in which unequal gender power relations emerge.

VIOLENCE, POVERTY, AND THE SCHOOL

In contemporary South Africa there is fierce competition for scarce resources. The absence of job opportunities generates violent gender relations between men in particular. It is inside these families who generally live in *imijondolo* (informal shelters often made of mud and wattle) that many of the children learn about human relationships and about violence. It is within these conditions that children at KwaDabeka School experience their gendered lives.

The violent culture of the school involved a complex interactive network of violence between boys and boys, boys and girls, and girls and girls. Mrs. G points to this context:

Mrs. G: In this school it is the survival of the fittest. The stronger you are, the harder you fight. If you are weak you lose.

Me: Who wins?

Mrs. G: It depends on the grade. Usually the boys in the senior phase.

Mrs. G notes the connection between boys and violence but also to size and the bodily capacity for violence. A key element in the enactment of violent masculinity is strength. Bodies are used as tools and weapons to symbolize the capacity for violence (Connell 1995; Gilbert and Gilbert 1998; Salisbury and Jackson 1996). What struck me in KwaDabeka was how social and personal conflicts so quickly turned violent. In the everyday world at KwaDabeka, children's conflicts ranged from the demand for a slice of bread to a fight for an old pencil. Violence was not only the means to maintain control over others but the mere threat of violence was sometimes sufficient to ensure compliance.

At KwaDabeka School and against the backdrop of major structural inequalities, the mimicry of physical violence provides the means through which social identities are constituted. It is to the construction of these social identities that the rest of the essay turns.

VIOLENT MASCULINITY: BOYS FIGHTING TO SURVIVE

Violence is seen as an ideal way of gaining and maintaining status and resources. However, violent hegemonic masculinity was not stable. They are complex and fragile. In fact, boys find it difficult to maintain and sustain a hegemonic gender identity. While boys recognize violent masculinity as an ideal, they are sometimes unable to meet the hegemonic ideal. Their age and their bodies are changing and this impacts on their ability to occupy hegemonic positions. In examining this complexity and the way in which boys actively struggle to accomplish a hegemonic form, I focus on misogyny, boys and boys, boys and authority, sexuality, and finally on positions of fragility and stability.

BOYS, GIRLS, AND MISOGYNY

Young *tsotsi* boys resort to violence, a signifier of their masculinity, as a means of gaining control. Power over girls dominates the gender processes within the school and shapes relations harmful to other boys and girls. In this section, the violent expression of masculinity as it impacts on girls is considered.

In my conversations with the *tsotsi* boys, they told me, “girls are naughty, they talk too much” and so they hit them. Girls were expected to speak in hushed tones and not “anyhow” to an (adult) man. *Tsotsi* boys were learning adult ways of being male, and talking too much was in opposition to the general expression of deference, part of Zulu cultural practices. That the girls talk too much is thus an expression of an “unacceptable degree of freedom.” If girls fail to give deference to *tsotsi* boys, then it is seen as bad conduct to be punished.

The struggle for masculinity always occurs on the presumption of superiority over girls, as the following data illustrates.

Me: Why don't you like girls, Andile?

Andile: Girls are rude. They are funny. They try to impress the teacher and I hit them.

- Me: Do they get hurt?
 Andile: Yes and I hit them again.
 Me: But why?
 Andile: They must not be rude.

Andile said “they must not be rude” with a sense of indignation. This resonates with the point made earlier that the cultural construction of male entitlement and the idea that women and girls must speak in hushed tones is pervasive. Andile argues that he hits the girls because they are “rude, funny and impress the teacher.” Violence is a pattern of behavior that he feels he is obliged to carry out.

Tsotsi boys dominate the space at schools. As space invaders the *tsotsi* boys disrupt the girls who play *ije*—a game of rhythmic clapping and song. Rita refers to the domination of space and the girls’ private moments: “when we are playing *ije* the boys don’t like it and they always trouble us.” *Ije* is the means through which girls find a freer and private space within the public site of the school but that space too is fragile with the constant threat of “boy trouble.”

- Me: Do you like boys?
 Eli: No.
 Me: Why?
 Eli: I am scared of them.
 Me: Why?
 Eli: They are rough.
 Me: What do they do?
 Eli: They hit. I am scared of him [pointing to Seshishle]. I am scared that he is going to hit me.

“Violent males . . . exaggerate, distort and glorify those [hegemonic masculine] behaviours” (Kenway and Fitzclarence 1997: 121). It would seem here that I am painting a picture of girls as unagentic but girls do resist:

- Mncedo: The girls say: “He’s mad in the head.” They say: “voetsek.” The girls say: “come here” and they raise their dresses.
 He shows me what he means.

Mncedo knows the power and agency of girls and sees it in operation when they try to humiliate boys by raising their dresses. However, their agency diminishes when violence and the threat of violence constructs and limits everything they do. The boys are not simply the product of patriarchal discourse although patriarchy is always embedded in their relations.

Their violence and aggression are part of the process of blending a potent and lethal mix of masculinity.

BOYS AND BOYS

At school, boys constantly struggle with each other for positions of power. Generally, this involved force and was premised on the importance of aggressive forms of behavior for gaining and maintaining a particular status. Violent masculinity relates to where a boy was and with who he was in those places. Age and body size were clear factors in acquiring hegemonic status. In the limited confines of a classroom, for example, some boys could use their size and age to dominate other boys and girls and yet in the field these boys would have to struggle to compete for hegemonic status as other older and more powerful boys and girls took over. Hegemonic masculinities are contextual. Not all boys are the same and have varying access to the hegemonic ideal.

From the early days of the research, violence and the threat of violence provided the immediate lens through which young boys struggled to forge their identities. The following incident was observed in Mrs. G's classroom:

Sandile and Nkanyiso fight with Thulani. They try to convince the younger boy to release his pencil. The child fights back and Sandile says "*ngizokushaya*" [I will hit you].

Incidents like these are part of the everyday world at KwaDabeka. In the incident described above, Sandile and Nkanyiso are older than Thulani. Sandile threatens with *ngizokushaya* the child after school. The word *ngizokushaya* followed me in most of my observations with children. Violence and bullying can be seen as a means through which the boys try to position themselves in relation to "smaller" boys, establishing a pecking order of social relations and through which bodily enactments are used to establish an identity.

Tsotsi boys would generally use "*sukha wena*" (get out) or "voetsek" and these were enough to threaten other boys into compliance. Fighting for things provided the avenue through which a masculine identity was developed. Fighting for food was key in the development of a masculine identity and it shifted speedily into violence. Very few children bring lunch or snacks to school. If they do, it is usually brown peanut butter bread wrapped in newspaper and sometimes, as Mrs. G pointed out, "bread without Rama" [margarine]. Having a sweet is a luxury, but I noticed that even

a small chocolate éclair sweet had to be shared with *tsotsi* boys who demanded it.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE

This study shows that verbal and physical harassment relating to sexuality against girls is rife. During the break I chatted with Thabani (male) and Thulisile (girl) in Mrs. G's class:

- Thabani: Why are you asking all these questions?
 Me: I want to know what boys and girls do in the primary schools.
 Thabani: That's easy. They play.
 Thulisile: They play and they hit.
 Thabani: Girls fight; boys and girls fight, and girls fight with girls.
 Thulisile: It's better in the other school because the Zulu people fight a lot.
 Thabani: No, in any school they fight, not only in the Zulu school. Children fight all the time.
 Thulisile: Boys are criminals. They steal our pens and they swear, "fuck, fuck, fuck."
 Thabani: Girls smell. They give us diseases. Their armpits smell. Girls tease boys. The boys don't sleep with the girls because the girls stink.
 Thulisile: The boys kick. The boys want to do things with the girls but the girls don't want to do those things.

The "polluting" effects of femininity within the context of KwaDabeka School quickly turn to violence and part of the sexual dominance and exploitation of girls (and women). Thabani's reference to girls who smell and boys who don't want to sleep with the girls suggests contempt in the nature of dominance and exploitation. Is Thabani preparing for sexual harassment activities as he learns adult male *tsotsi* patterns of behavior? These are young boys and girls and sexual activities are considered adult (and taboo), but the explicit nature of the conversation was a public performance as Thabani produced and reproduced his masculine sense of identity. Significantly, this conversation also blurred adult-child relations as explicit sexual knowledge is usually adult, which Thabani challenges. This conversation was held as a large group of boys and a few girls gathered around me and it served as a struggle for the boys to give meaning to adult knowledge. Thabani's ability to discuss sex, the callousness of his attitude toward girls and his misogynistic taunts provided a strategy to challenge both the dominant discourses on childhood and me as adult, and provided a space both to gain and maintain status amongst the group of boys and to produce and reproduce adult ways of knowing.

BOYS AND AUTHORITY

Violent masculinities are intricately associated with an antiauthority position (Mac an Ghaill 1994; Connell 1995; Kenway and Fitzclarence 1997; Mills 2001). At KwaDabeka School, relations of dominance and subordination are often worked through defiance to sustain a masculine identity and as a way of gaining a reputation within the male group:

- Me: Seshishle, do you stop if the girls tell the teacher that you have hit them?
 Seshishle: The girls cry (laughing) and they tell the tisha.
 Me: What does the teacher do?
 Seshishle: She hits me.
 Me: So do you stop hitting the girls?
 Seshishle: No, I will still hit them.
 Me: Why?
 Seshishle: They're naughty.

I use the conversation again to emphasize the defiant pattern of *tsotsi* conduct. Seshishle points to the antiauthority performance of *tsotsi* boys. Acts of defying institutional authority by hitting the girls become recognizable as part of the hegemonic masculinity. *Tsotsi* boys will not want to give up power easily as it is the chief and most celebrated means through which they maintain a sense of status and reputation. The question remains about the kind of incentive there is for them to be otherwise (Paechter 1998) when they have nothing to lose and much to gain in the continual performance and display of defiance.

Seshishle conforms to a particular pattern in violent masculinity that also reacts against authority. An important point needs to be made here regarding the blurring of adult-child relations. Seshishle is able to blur relations with me as he says, "No, I will still hit them." This defiance is an example of the antiauthority pattern of *tsotsi* boys. In this sense, the conversation above is a public one, and the emphasis on hitting girls is as much for my benefit as it is for his sense of masculine reputation. This conversation and the others in this chapter must not be seen as a representative account of the children's conversations with me. They were, however, expressive of a struggle to position identity between themselves and between them and me.

Not all boys at KwaDabeka School engaged in this potent and lethal definition of hegemonic masculinity. When I asked Thabani if all boys were like him, he said: "There are quiet boys but they're not nice." I consider

these quiet boys or *Yimvu* later in this chapter. They too suffered from the ignominy of potential and the pain of actual violence.

FRAGILITY AND STABILITY

In the early years of schooling *tsotsi* boys dominate but are dominated as well. Power is relative and they live in fear of the bigger boys especially on the soccer field and the bigger girls who sit on them like chairs:

- Me: Are you afraid of any of the girls?
 Mncedo: Yes, I am afraid of the big girls.
 Me: Which one?
 Mncedo: I am scared of the girls in standard 5, standard 3 and standard 4.
 I am not afraid of the standard 1 and 2 girls.
 Me: Why aren't you afraid of the standard 1 and 2 girls?
 Mncedo: They're small and short. I am afraid of the tall girls. They make me like a chair and they sit on me.

The construction of masculinity occurs through relations far from monolithic. In one situation, *tsotsi* boys experience potent masculinity while in others, they are thwarted by other relationships. Sport provides an interesting theater for the performance of hegemonic masculinity. Both Mncedo and Spesihle would like to play soccer. There is no soccer field at the school, just a makeshift goalpost behind the school as boys squeeze in for a game. Mncedo and Spesihle are alert and vulnerable to age relations. They assert their masculinity by subordinating girls, yet simultaneously they know of a pecking order of power relations between males and males on the "soccer field," which renders their power fragile. They are learning how to be in relation to older *tsotsi* boys and at the same time (re)produce patterns of *tsotsi* masculinity. The boys' masculinity is on the constant offensive and defensive (Kenway 1995).

Mncedo and Spesihle invested, albeit tenuously, in the production and projection of their *tsotsi* boyhood. The size and age of a person was integral to the production of a "proper" boy. The effects of gender power were clear for Mncedo when it came to larger and older girls, as his size and age were clear markers for the production and maintenance of masculinity, as it was for the production of other forms of masculinity and femininity. Clearly, his ability to act and resist older and bigger girls and boys was based on his perception of risk, which was his knowledge of different relations of power through which he organized differently according to the discourses at play. He was able to take power but only according to the risks involved for him.

YIMVU BOYS

Many of the boys are not happy occupying the space of the “rough and tough” *tsotsi* boy. Those who position themselves as gentle are *yimvus*. In their everyday relations, *yimvu* boys encounter threats of and actual violence. *Yimvu* boys’ negotiation with violent *tsotsi* boys was often a question of establishing physical distance from them out of a consideration for their own safety.

Khanyiso and Uvula were in Mrs. G’s classroom and were constructed as *yimvu* boys. They tended to sit together in class, play together in the playground. They were also more likely to be attacked by other boys and *tsotsi* boys in particular and were uniformly excluded from playing soccer and other games like marbles. Their togetherness represented a strategy of survival. Part of the strategy meant that they would sit in the classroom during the break and have their pap and gravy or whatever else was served by the School Feeding Scheme. Many of the teachers including Mrs. G, and, to a lesser extent, Mrs. H had their lunches in the classroom. Khanyiso and Uvula most often chose to sit in the classroom. Their response was one of avoiding the threat of attack and also the humiliation of being excluded by developing their own protected spaces. The teachers do not go on ground duty, thus making the classroom a much safer environment during break.

- Me: Do they [*tsotsis*] hit you?
 Khanyiso: (softly) Yes.
 Me: Are you scared of those boys?
 Khanyiso: Yes
 Me: What do they do?
 Khanyiso: They hit me; they push me. Sometimes they take my food away.
 Me: What do you bring for lunch?
 Khanyiso: Nothing.
 Me: What food do they take from you?
 Khanyiso: The food the aunties are cooking for us.
 Me: What do you do when they hit you?
 Khanyiso: I cry.
 Me: Do you fight back?
 Khanyiso: No. They hit my friend also.
 Me: Do they hit you, Uvula?
 Uvula: Yes, they hit me, they slap me, but I don’t cry. I don’t like them.

While I have documented the effects of violent gender relations for girls, for boys described as *yimvu* there were similar effects. Khanyiso draws

attention to the pecking order of masculinities and shows how certain boys are targeted and bullied. There are definite relationships between the different masculinities, the most salient being one of hierarchy and exclusion. Khanyiso and Uvula do not fit the dominant hegemonic masculinity and are “hit and pushed,” which works to reinforce an oppositional structuring of gender relations.

Mrs. G indicated that the *yimvus* were boys who went to church and were holy or in Zulu “*ngcwele ngcwele*” boys. This is similar to Hemson’s (2001) study of African lifesavers in Durban, some of whom are constructed as amaKholwa, converted to Christianity and whose masculinity is emphasized through piety and respectability. Like the amaKholwa, *yimvu* masculinity is not central in the township area, but it does present a less violent and a more peaceable form of being. The process of acquiring masculinities occurs around and within a framework of discourses in KwaDabeka that the boys drew from and were located within. Alternate positions do exist even though they are not the most favored. Boys do have agency. While *yimvu* masculinity is not hegemonic, it does gnaw at the hegemonic status of violent masculinity. Masculinities evolve spatially. Violent masculinity is dominant and not easy to challenge openly, but the existence of *yimvu* masculinity means that not all poor, black Zulu boys choose *tsotsi* culture.

Friendship among *yimvu* boys provides a protected space, a collective practice establishing distance from *tsotsis*. Friendships are important for *yimvu* boys because they provide the pressure-free space in which they are able to express their experiences in school. Expressive emotional practices are not congruent with hegemonic masculinity. Emotions are attributed to effeminacy and an indicator of an unacceptable form of masculinity.

Uvula suggests that he “does not cry” while Khanyiso does. He tries to distance himself from crying and the expressive emotional side of gentler masculinities. He struggles to give meaning to himself as he is constructed outside the dominant masculinity but also shows signs of aligning with it. The potential does exist to change for the worse. The status of violent hegemonic masculinity creates pressures for boys like Uvula producing contradictory *yimvu* masculine identities.

Yimvu boys are targets for abuse because they do not engage in disruptive behavior and their visibility as *yimvu* casts doubt on *tsotsi* boys. During the break, I had a conversation with a group of boys:

Mdu: We don’t like quiet boys. The names of boys are going down. They’re not nice.

Me: Why?

Mdu: The girls talk to them like that. They're stupid.

Me: How?

Mdu: Nkosinathi is quiet, and the girls talk to him.

Dominant masculinity has to be won by dominating alternative patterns of conduct. The mockery directed against *yimvu* boys is part of the process that reproduces violence in general and sustains aggressive and violent masculinity and violence against girls and women.

YIMVUS AND GIRLS

Yimvu masculinity is more peaceable than *tsotsi* and favorable to girls, as Samekeliswe suggests:

Me: What do you think of the quiet boys?

Samekeliswe: I like the quiet boys. Khanyiso and Qubelo. I like them because they are so quiet and so beautiful, but their work is not good, but they have good behaviour. If tisha says something, he listens. Khanyiso doesn't hit the children. The other boys hit him.

Me: Why?

Samekeliswe: If he doesn't give something, the other boys hit him. He doesn't tell tisha because after school the other boys will catch him. They walk with him and then they will hit him.

Me: What do the other boys think of them?

Samekeliswe: They tell them that they love girls, like they say, "Hey, do you love Nomvula" and they laugh. They don't want to play with them because they tease them.

Samekeliswe draws attention to the normative processes through which *yimvu* boys are policed. She also draws attention to the stylized version of *yimvu* masculinity, which is associated with "good behaviour" and respect for authority instead of the antiauthority stance of *tsotsi* boys. *Yimvu* boys who do not enact an aggressive violent masculinity are constructed as easy targets in getting "something," which is usually associated with material goods.

Yimvu masculinity is on most occasions gender friendly but othered. This can be seen in the heterosexual bullying: "they tell them that they love girls" and works to police the boundaries of acceptable masculinity. *Yimvu* is presented as less than normal, through misogynistic mockery and within the heterosexual matrix. *Yimvu* boys learn how to negotiate their masculinities within these normative boundaries. *Yimvu* boys' contradiction

thus lies in their association with girls, which can at any given time give rise to teasing behaviors associated with the feminine.

Yimvu boys are generally tolerant and gender friendly but the pressures to align with dominant *tsotsi* masculinity are always present. This means that even subordinated masculinities can perform hegemonic forms of masculinity. However, at the same time, their less toxic masculinity means that gender arrangements are always multileveled, contradictory, dynamic, changing, and open to change. In the making and remaking of masculine identity, there is always complexity and fragility. Mrs. G captures this here:

Mrs. G: Some boys are very soft, not like this one, but the soft boys get pushed around and they say, “this one is fooling me” and that’s how they become murderers. And they don’t want to hurt, but they become murderers because they don’t want to fight.

All masculinities are vulnerable. Mrs. G refers to the possibility that gentle masculinities can alter for the worse so that soft boys can become murderers. Significantly, Mrs. G points to the pressures that non-hegemonic forms of masculinity face. The underbelly of all masculinities is the driving force of rage and ambiguity (Kenway and Fitzclarence 1997: 119).

The existence of *yimvu* masculinity is important for the work toward gender equality in South Africa. These subordinated masculinities challenge hegemonic masculinity and have the potential to disrupt the conventional assumptions about masculinities. Despite the lethal blend of the hegemonic patterns of conduct and the violence that it engenders, alternative patterns of conduct do exist. This opens up the possibilities for teachers to exalt alternative ways of being, which boys do inhabit and which others can also.

CONCLUSION

KwaDabeka Primary School provided the context in the making of gender as a violent expression of certain types of masculinities. Attention has been drawn to some of the violent gender arrangements, which occur within the massive structures of inequalities. Racialized gender identities are characterized by poverty and violence.

Violent masculinity as a hegemonic form provided a fertile context for the eruption of violent gender relations. *Tsotsi* boys align to dominant patterns of aggression and violence as a means to maintain a sense of status and, through such enactments, gain material dividends. Not all boys at KwaDabeka School perform hegemonic *tsotsi* masculinity. *Yimvu* boys

suffer from the ignominy of potential and actual violence, as they are effeminized through misogynistic mockery. *Yimvu* boys struggle to perform their masculine sense of identity, as they are othered in the policing of acceptable hegemonic masculinity. In the struggle to survive, the *yimvu* boys struggle to maintain and contest daily battles of bullying, mockery, and actual violence.

This chapter has highlighted the importance of masculinities in the early years of primary schooling and its association with violence in the contexts of poverty, unemployment, and economic dislocation. Ending violence and ending violent gender relations are thus also inseparable from ending economic inequalities. The fight for food, lunch, vetkoek, sweets, pens, and pencils shifts speedily to violence and fuels violent gender relations. The children in this school have to see a new sense of economic possibility if alternate and peaceable gender relations are to develop. Antiviolence work has to be part of the broader strategy of reform in gender arrangements that will equalize resources and opportunities.

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13. “Ugandans,” “Cats” and Others: Constructing Student Masculinities at the University of Botswana

Rob Pattman

INTRODUCTION: THE EDUCATED ELITE

We salute the student spirit and their drive to learn, to improve the nation and to make a difference. Students are our biggest asset.¹

The University of Botswana is one of the richest universities in Africa, with a recently constructed, well-stocked four-storey library, a championship swimming pool, and individual computing facilities for all academic staff. The entitlement of all students to government grants means that the student population is not drawn exclusively from the upper middle classes but is relatively diverse. As one of the wealthiest African countries, Botswana attracts many professionals from abroad, and a significant minority of students at the University of Botswana are the sons and daughters of relatively affluent expatriates, mainly black students from other African countries as well as Indians. Students from different class backgrounds as well as citizen and expatriate students were among those interviewed in this study.

It is the only university in Botswana, and its students are idealized as key national assets, positioned as the elite in the making. Among the students interviewed, all spoke in an oblique way about the prospect of acquiring status and affluence as a result of going to university. They spoke about their education as a form of self-investment and enhancement, and some envisaged going on to do postgraduate work either at the University of Botswana or a university abroad. What was striking was the absence of any reference to the enjoyment they derived from studying particular subjects

as a reason for pursuing undergraduate and postgraduate education. The emphasis on the future potential of students was, however, undermined by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. At the University, initiatives had been taken to address HIV/AIDS as a threat to the student body, notably the formation of an anti AIDS committee headed by an HIV/AIDS coordinator and the setting up of a voluntary counseling and testing center. But there was no form of HIV/AIDS education directed at students.

Constructions of students as the elite in making were gendered, and this chapter examines the identifications of men students at the University of Botswana by focusing on how they talk about themselves and other men and women in interviews. I was interested partly in how the men constructed themselves in relation to the ways they viewed women students. But also, I wanted to investigate the different kinds of student masculinities they spoke about, how they differentiated between these, and how they identified in relation to them.

INTERVIEWING STUDENTS

I started researching the identities of the students I was teaching at the University of Botswana mainly through unstructured, student-centered interviews with individual students or with students in small single-sex groups. The students were aged from their late teens to mid-twenties. Fourteen women and eighteen men volunteered to be interviewed at the University of Botswana. The aim of this research was to generate local resources about the social construction of gender and "race," which I, as their sociology teacher, could use. I tried to be friendly and informal, usually providing food and drink, and sitting with my interviewees in a circle. The interviews lasted about one and a half hours.

I covered similar topics with all my interviewees, such as their relationships with and attitudes toward students of the same and the opposite sex, and of similar and different ethnic backgrounds, their definitions of different student groups and their own identifications and affiliations, their reflections on being men or women students in institutions of higher education, their ambitions, and aspirations. Though there were certain recurring themes in all the interviews, the interviews were interviewee-centered, with the interviewees, themselves, raising issues and concerns and talking about identities and relationships that were particularly pertinent to them.

In analyzing the students' accounts of themselves and others, I adopt a social constructionist rather than a social realist epistemology (Burr 1995), focusing on the interviewees' accounts as *producing* the social identities,

relationships, and emotions they appear merely to describe. Investigating how people construct their gendered identities in interviews, researchers have paid particular attention to aspects of interviews which, under the influence of social realism, have been dismissed as irrelevant, for example, the emotional tone of the interviewees, and changes in this during the interview, contradictory statements, the relationship the interviewer and interviewee establish with each other. Some or all of these have been taken by various researchers² as significant pointers concerning the processes of identity construction going on in the interviews.

The researchers referred to above, have developed unstructured and interviewee-centered methods precisely because they are committed to an approach to research that puts the onus on the interviewees to determine the pace and direction of the interview. They are addressing the interviewees as active subjects who construct their social worlds and identities.

In researching the ways various students construct their identities, I focus on individuals not just as authors of what they say but as taking up and negotiating certain positions made available to them by longstanding cultural discourses on gender and “race.” This is not to suggest they are cultural dupes, simply manipulated, like a ventriloquist’s puppets. Rather, a great deal of work, as I want to illustrate, goes into identity construction.

This chapter concentrates on the ways two men students spoke about themselves and their relations with men and women in the interviews. I have selected these students because they represented student masculine identities, which all the men I interviewed alluded to. These identities appeared to be highly significant as markers or points of reference in relation to which other men negotiated their own identities.

KEY CONCEPTS

Gender has often come to be associated with femininity, and as far back as the early 1970s, Simone de Beauvoir (1972) argued that this and the unmarked character of masculinity were features of a patriarchal culture that positioned men as universal subjects and women as the gendered “Other.” A key concern of this chapter is to make student masculine identities visible and also to present these as constructed in relation to student femininities. My work is part of the recent tradition of feminist research and analysis, influenced by discourse theory (Foucault 1979). This takes issue with the view that gender is an essential identity, which men and women possess and which determines their outlook and behavior in fixed

and preordained ways, and, instead, addresses masculinity and femininity as categories, which exist only in relation to each other and are produced discursively.

My work is also influenced by the social constructionism of Fanon, who critiques the assumption of essential and primordial “racial” and national identities, and focuses instead on how these identities are constructed in relation to each other and on people’s unconscious psychological investments in these. More specifically, I draw on Fanon’s account of the discursive construction in developing or postcolonial countries of traditional black or African values, and the investments of the educated elites in these. Fanon argues that the “native intellectual” wants to escape the “supremacy of the white man’s culture” and, despairing that he is “breaking adrift from his people,” “feels the need to turn backwards towards his unknown roots” and construct these as sacred, traditional, and timeless (175).

This may have accounted, partly, for the form and ferocity of the students’ verbal attack on the vice chancellor, a white American woman, at an open meeting held in 2001 between students and the University administration. This meeting was called in response to a student campaign organized by the SRC against the quality and cost of the food provided on campus. The campaign had taken the form of boycotting meals and lectures and received unanimous support from the students. At the open meeting, attended by hundreds of students, the vice chancellor was accused by a succession of mainly men students of heading a corrupt and inaccessible administration, and, on a more personal level, of being a bad “mother” who, unlike “our African mothers,” had deserted her “chicks” when they were “hungry” (had not listened to their grievances when they were boycotting meals). This personalized attack drew ecstatic cheers and applause, which, I want to suggest, reflected resentment they felt as black Batswana or Africans (even though elite ones) about her perceived superiority as a white American. Thus, she was criticized for her arrogance, for not listening to the students, as if she considered black students not worth listening to. Her gender is likely to have made her seem in the eyes of the students a particularly arrogant Westerner. Here was a woman asserting her authority against the students. Hence the focus on her motherliness and her failure as an American to live up to the standards of “our mothers,” to be compassionate and considerate. There was a reversal going on here in the status they accorded to someone from the so-called developed world and themselves as black Batswana or Africans. Her very presence at the meeting made the personalized attacks particularly telling and cathartic.

Fanon views the “claim to a national culture in the past” as part of an anticolonial discourse, which reifies and idealizes culture and constructs it

as the roots of a black or African identity. However, when I examined student masculinities at a teachers’ college in Zimbabwe (Pattman 1999), Fanon’s work failed to problematize the impact of gender relations on the way elite intellectuals discursively construct culture. Reflecting the significance of the “modern–traditional” axis in the lives and identities of students, all the interviewees in this study characterized the different groups of male and female students they spoke about as traditional or modern. As illustrated later, these groups were also characterized crucially by their heterosexuality—by their attractiveness and sexual proclivity or lack thereof, by the kinds of heterosexual relations they had or did not have and with whom. Also, descriptions of “modern” and “traditional” students were highly gendered, with “modern” and “traditional” men being constructed differently from “modern” and “traditional” women.

POPULAR CONSTRUCTIONS OF “TRADITIONAL” MEN

Much significance was attached to drinking as a marker of student masculinity at the University of Botswana, with the university bar a conspicuously masculine space.³ Most women I interviewed were afraid of even walking past that area of campus for fear of being insulted. Regular drinkers there were actually accorded a specific name and identity—the bar was known as “Uganda” and its regulars called “Ugandans.” This (I was told) was partly because Uganda denoted Africanness, and the “Ugandans” identified as traditional men in touch with their African roots. But, also, Uganda was connected, in the eyes of the students, with political rebellion, and the Ugandans’ commitment to drinking was characterized as rebellious for conflicting, so acutely, with the University’s work ethic. (I asked why Uganda was associated with political rebellion and no one was very sure, though one hazarded a guess that it might be because of Idi Amin.) A T-shirt had recently been produced by the Ugandans emblazoned with the word “Uganda” and the names of Ugandans, forging not only a sense of identity, but of their own exclusivity. Only the committed drinkers had their names on it and were entitled to wear it.

The men interviewed spoke about the Ugandans, even though only two identified as them. The attention they received in spite of their size—there were fewer than 30 Ugandan men in the University—suggests that they were extremely influential as a symbolic category in relation to the ways many men students identified themselves. Other men spoke about them as naughty and wasters for spending much of their day at the bar, getting drunk, talking loudly, play fighting amongst themselves, speaking so openly

about their heterosexual desires, and commenting loudly on the bodies of women (especially those not usually seen near “Uganda”) who went past. But the “Ugandans” were also spoken about by the men I interviewed as popular precisely for being so hedonistic. Most other men expressed good-natured humor toward them for missing lessons and “overindulging in male horseplay.” For example in three different interviews with men, the same story about a Ugandan was told with a mixture of laughter and amazement, and was clearly a popular and symbolic one. It was about a male law student, who regularly when drunk, went to the women’s hostels, sprayed the women with a fire extinguisher, and then had to pay damages to the security guards. The story for the interviewees was not about his misogyny, but his perceived naughtiness and irresponsibility. Some men also mentioned, with amusement, that this man, like many other Ugandans, was repeating a year.

Though they did not identify with them, for these men the Ugandans were clearly significant in terms of how they positioned themselves as responsible students who were still “real men.” It was not that they were anti-drinking—almost all these men made it clear that they drank sometimes at the university bar as well as off campus. Some were highly critical of another group, the Christians, for their opposition to forms of student hedonism, namely drinking, smoking, and extra-marital sex. The Christians were criticized for being hypocritical—a popular symbol of this being pregnant and single Christian women students. Paradoxically, Christian men were criticized for not having heterosexual relations and, therefore, for not being proper men, but “sack men,” an insult commonly used among men, alluding to the large amount of sperm men without girlfriends were assumed to accumulate in their scrotums or sacks. In one interview, the men became almost hysterical with laughter describing the “Ugandans” as “sack men” for getting drunk on campus and prioritizing drink over women. What was “funny” to them in this instance was actually questioning the masculinity of “Ugandans”—supposedly the ultimate male hedonists and “real” men. When questioned whether and, if so, how the “Ugandans” had heterosexual relations, the interviewees indicated that they were not “sack men” after all, but studs who had sex with women and prostitutes they met in the bars and shebeens outside campus.

The men spoke in a mildly critical but amused way about “Ugandans” having unprotected sex with prostitutes, as if they themselves were reveling in the fantasy (represented by the Ugandans) of male hedonism and irresponsibility. The majority of men also constructed themselves as “irresponsible” in relation to women (though not as irresponsible as the Ugandans). For example, some said they talked about being responsible and using condoms only when women were present and not in exclusively male

company. While implying here that they put on an act, whereas with other men they could express themselves freely, some of the men, when pressed in the interviews, indicated that this was not in fact the case, and that they could not talk freely about condoms in all male student groups because they would be teased for being too responsible and feminine. When I asked some of the men whether they used condoms, all of them were ambivalent, indicating that it depended on whether the woman was someone they did not know very well, in which case they probably would, or whether it was their girlfriend, when they would be unlikely to do so.

The Ugandans interviewed constructed themselves as “traditional.” As illustrated in the following extract from an interview with a Ugandan, Mothusi, what, in part, characterized this version of “traditional” masculine behavior was a striking adherence to sexual double standards—they made drinking not only a key and defining part of their (male) culture but also a contributing factor to women becoming “loose” and immoral.

Rob: So why don't women go along to the university bar?

Mothusi: Because traditionally women are not supposed to be drinkers; because once you see women drinking they are perceived to be loose or something. So mostly it's not that women don't drink. They buy [alcohol] and drink. Mostly they send guys to go buy for them and then they drink in their rooms because they don't want to be seen drinking . . . seen as loose, seen as I'd say bitches or something because it is believed that once a girl is drunk, you know she will sleep with anybody . . . I wouldn't go out with a girl who drinks.

Rob: Wouldn't you?

Mothusi: No, no . . . I can't go out with a girl who goes to the bar, who drinks.

Rob: Could you go out with a girl who drinks in her room?

Mothusi: . . . [I]f I find out, that would be a problem.

Rob: Why?

Mothusi: Because it is believed the girl who drinks doesn't take good care of herself . . . it's a traditional belief; it's been going for a long time.

Significantly, Mothusi here uses the third person. When he asserts: “I wouldn't go out with a girl who drinks,” he suddenly and surprisingly changes from explaining to me, “a cultural outsider” (a white English man), values determined by and rooted in “tradition,” to expressing his feelings in the first person. It would seem that he was slightly embarrassed telling me how the women who drink are seen. That he could not say “bitches”

without the qualifiers “I’d say” and “or something,” clearly suggests anxiety about saying this to me. When making the association between girls who drink, who are “loose” or not taking “good care of herself,” he spoke as if this was not a view for which he is to be held responsible but a “traditional belief,” which, as if to emphasize its relative autonomy in relation to him, has “been going for a long time.” As well as invoking “tradition” in a way that relieves him of responsibility for these views, he is identifying as a “traditional” man.

The girlfriend figure was constructed in opposition to the prostitute and situated firmly outside what came to be conceived as male drinking spaces. What was regarded as the constraining influence of girlfriends upon their men’s drinking time, and hence their masculinity, became a source of humor among the men drinkers. For example, Tamuka, another “Ugandan” interviewed with Mothusi, teased Mothusi about not going to the university bar as often since he met his girlfriend, the assumption being that he was not a “real man” for allowing his girlfriend to influence him, especially when this resulted in his spending less time at the bar.

IDENTIFYING IN OPPOSITION TO CAT MEN

Of the expatriates, the interviewees distinguished mainly between Indian and black African students. They did not see the Indian students as Africans and, only when asked, did they elaborate on having little in common with them. The expatriate students they identified as black and African were also presented as different. But they were spoken about at length, and in unsolicited ways by almost all the men interviewees. They were spoken about as particular homogenous groupings embodying different values relating to gender and sexuality, different cultural and social class identities, different expectations and ambitions, and different relations to “modernity” and “tradition” from those which were seen, in contrast, as local or indigenous. Much significance was attached to these expatriate students as a group, from whom my male interviewees differentiated themselves.

In the interviewees’ accounts, these students were lumped together with “high-class” Batswana who preferred to speak English rather than Setswana (the main indigenous language in Botswana) and had attended expensive English medium schools, and were described as “cats.” Their styles of dress, speech and walk, their sporting interests—basketball—their general orientation was said to be American and, more specifically, black American. While the focus in the men’s accounts may have been on “cat” men, what was conspicuous about “cats,” according to the interviewees, apart from their baggy designer clothes, black American speech, and bop walk, was

that they were gender-mixed. The implication of this was that it was the norm not to socialize on campus in gender-mixed groups.

When the male interviewees elaborated upon the differences between them and the “cats”—their different tastes in music (South African *kwaito* as opposed to rap), or sport (football as opposed to basketball)—it seemed, at times, that they were merely describing, in non-pejorative ways, two distinct categories of male students. At other times they appeared to be describing the “cats” as superior to themselves—as, for example, cleverer because of their privileged education and home background, or as having more money and better clothes, or as being confident and individualistic.

I think they are making our lives very difficult because we wish to be like them and having no money to get their clothing, we are always thinking of what they are wearing. We wish we could be like them, their clothes.

They are intelligent and doing computer science courses and sciences . . . they attended richer schools and they come from richer families and had electricity to read . . . sometimes I get tired when I get a book and read it . . . their background has shaped their attitude, and to talk to them you have to access the kind of language they use.

Some of the men I interviewed, noticeably those from more affluent backgrounds, were clearly troubled by the high status they accorded the “cats,” and appeared to undermine this and bolster their own position by questioning the “cats’” authenticity. It was then that they came to associate themselves, in contrast, with cultural authenticity and humility, turning their perceived inferiority into a virtue. When asked whether he ever mixed with the “cats,” one man said: “I don’t want to be artificial; I want to be real . . . I’m humble personally,” and after describing the “cats” as “coming to [university] in cars and wearing nice clothes,” another man said they were “pretending to be something else.” Both men came from urban areas and their parents held professional jobs. These and other relatively affluent students criticized the “cats” for identifying with the West, “putting on an American accent,” speaking as if in a “movie” and acting “as if they can speak English even more than the English or American people.” It may be that such students felt less far removed from the “cats” than students from poorer backgrounds, and were more likely to feel jealousy toward them.

A CAT MAN

The one cat man I interviewed, Ken, a Ghanain who had lived in the United States, spoke with enthusiasm about the international feel of

“catland” (the benches outside the library where “cats” sat), and about the mutual and good natured teasing that went on as people humiliated each other’s accents and “dissed” (insulted in a jokey way) each other’s countries. Dissing such as this was highly gendered. When I asked if girls engaged in this, Ken looked surprised and said they “just laughed.”⁴

Ken appeared to possess all the characteristics of what Connell (1995) refers to as the “hegemonic” male. He was good-looking, witty and sporty, wore sports gear and designer labels, and clearly enjoyed talking about being the center of attention with women students after the basketball games in which he starred. He mimicked their praises of him and laughed as he did so:

You see like a hundred girls run down and say “Oh you were so good,” and from then on whenever they see you “Oh high” [high pitched voice] [laugh]. . . . people who you’d never talk to normally when they see you play basketball, they go “Oh god you’re sooo good” . . . basketball’s got this kind of dog mentality, “Oh the cool boys, they wear the best trainers, they’re big, you know.”

When talking about his relations with Batswana men, he was much more serious, and spoke about them as competitors less successful than he was and who envied him. One of the striking themes in this interview was his distrust of and hostility toward Batswana men students.

Ken: . . . You know guys, there’s this ego . . . they always have a reason to hate you, you know “he thinks he knows all the girls,” or “he thinks he’s got all the money” or “he plays basketball.”

Rob: So some of the guys have that attitude to you?

Ken: Yeah. Yeah I know it . . . some of them tell me. [But] I don’t care. It doesn’t matter to me.

Rob: So what do they tell you?

Ken: They can say anything from . . . “where are you coming from” . . . or “who do you think you are?”

Although Ken appeared to dismiss these men and their reactions to him as insignificant, he did not, as one might have expected, largely ignore them. On the contrary, he constantly referred to them in the interview, and this and the defiant tone he adopted in the passage above strongly suggest that he was extremely concerned about them and defusing the anxiety they posed. The questions they asked of him— “who do you think you are?” and “where are you coming from?”—were not only, as he later made

clear, aimed at puncturing what they perceived was his elevated status, but also positioned him as an outsider, a foreigner.

When I asked him how he felt about this, he constructed himself as no different from his accusers, as an “African,” indicating that national demarcations in Africa were artificial, a product of colonialism. (It is significant, in this respect that the “cats” identify as “modern” by aligning with blacks—black Americans—as if they are not rejecting their “real selves.”) He was critical, then, of Batswana men for their xenophobic attitude toward him, a fellow black African, and he went on to attribute this to their “inferiority complex”:

If they see a black man who’s made it they just hate you . . . You drive a BMW or a Benz, the kind of reaction you get is “look at that amakwerekwere” that’s what they call us. So if you see him making it or riding a big car, “you know that guy’s amakwerekwere,” can you imagine? [amakwerekwere is a derogatory term used by Batswana to refer to black African foreigners, apart from South Africans with whom they partly identified and admired. This term was supposed to emulate the unintelligible sounds black foreigners made when they spoke].

The complexities of class and “race” and how they intersect are clearly articulated in this passage. Indeed, Ken criticizes Batswana people (in particular Batswana men) for being xenophobic and more specifically for racializing class relations. He is constructed as being of a different “race,” he thinks, because he is successful in relation to most Batswana. While attributing their presumed xenophobia toward him to their “inferiority complex,” his response to this would appear to reinforce the construction of him as a foreigner with superior airs. He said he formed friendships only with men with whom he felt on an equal footing—by this, he meant men who were as affluent as he was and also with other Ghanaians. He was contemptuous of the “Ugandans,” and in contrast to them, presented himself as someone who worked hard at business and sport, who invested his money soundly, who wore smart clothes, and was more “romantic” with girlfriends. He did not, however, construct his relationships with women as more equal. He enjoyed elaborating on his capacity to “woo” many women, and said his reputation as a cat man partly depended on this. Indeed while “cat” men who slept around could enhance their reputations as “players” (a term that applies only to men and is based on the assumption that men are the sexually active participants, always looking for women to satisfy their desires), women who mixed with cats could be insulted and called “bitches” if they were seen as not faithful to one man.

RELATIONS WITH WOMEN AND
ANXIETIES ABOUT "CATS"

It was concerning relationships with women that other men expressed most anxiety about the "cats." Mothusi indicated that girls "aspired to guys from the 'cats' because they are of a higher class." When asked how he felt about this, he said, "we know our targets and we know our kind of girls." These girls were commonly constructed as "traditional" as opposed to "modern." Not only was he distinguishing, now, between different kinds of girls, but implying that he needed to lower his sights.

Most of the men who were not "cats" admired "modern" girls for their class and beauty, but condemned them for their materialism, and, in contrast, spoke positively about "our girls" that is, "traditional girls" as "down to earth" and "humble." As one interviewee said: "We have other girls who love us for who we are." Implied here was that other women loved the cat men for their money and were "prostituting" themselves.⁵

These men were drawing on a familiar and longstanding discourse in which black African women are idealised as repositories of "culture," and demonized if influenced by "modernity" (Ogundipe-Leslie 1994). Their investment in this discourse reflected anxieties, I suggest, about lacking power in relation to "modern" women. The construction of women as materialistic was a popular one at the University and was captured in the term "triple C," which had become a familiar part of the University lexicon. This referred to women who wanted boyfriends with cars, cash, and cellphones. While most of the men interviewed were strongly opposed to "Triple C" women, they still wanted heterosexual relations where they "took her out," paid for food, drinks, movies, and bought presents, behaving like "real men" in the sense discussed earlier. They expressed anxieties about being rejected by "modern" women, though they blamed "modern" women for this, rather than their own investments in fantasies of power (in relation to women). Because of these, they were competing with and "losing out" to older and richer men. They appeared to quell these anxieties by asserting that relationships based on money not "love" would surely flounder, and that, anyway, they did not want as girlfriends girls who were interested only in money. Ironically, some of these men admitted *reluctantly* (presumably because they were themselves critical of "sugar daddy affairs") that they had relationships with high school girls.

CONCLUSION

Only three of the men interviewed were "Ugandans" or "cats". Yet the positioning of men students in relation to the "cats" as high-class males

symbolizing modernity as well as in relation to the "Ugandans" as "real" men embodying the popular stereotype of male hedonism and irresponsibility were major themes in the interviews. Perhaps these could be seen as two competing versions of "hegemonic" masculinity (Connell 1995) that few men actually embodied, but that were extremely significant as cultural markers that men students used when constructing their own masculine identities.

The men were constructing their identities as men partly in relation to the ways they understood, categorized, and evaluated women. Particularly significant about the masculine identities, symbolized by the "Ugandans" and the "cats," was how these were constructed as powerful in opposition to renderings of femininity. The "Ugandans" represented a caricature of male naughtiness and hedonism, and, identifying as "traditional," constructed themselves in sharp relief to women they defined as "traditional." The "cats," on the other hand, were constructed as powerful seducers of women whose seductive power derived from their economic power and their ability to sustain "modern" lifestyles.

While all the men interviewed associated masculinity with hegemonic attributes—sexual power, economic power, and physical power—most only partially identified with these. The ambiguous relationship of many men to popular fantasies and stereotypes of masculinity has been raised by a number of contemporary theorists on masculinity (Connell 1995; Segal 1990) who have pointed to the costs that men incur as a result of constructing themselves as different from women. Some men complained about being expected to pay for women, and indicated they were not free to talk seriously with other men about issues such as using condoms. When speaking about the Ugandans, most men did so with much humor and in ways that suggested they were identifying with them (enjoying their fun and naughtiness) and dis-identifying from them (seeing them as too irresponsible).

A discourse that elided assertions of male power with anticolonialism appeared to frame most male students' accounts of gender relations. This was reflected in the opposition to (1) women for being modern and immoral, which, in part, appeared to be motivated by anxieties about being rejected by women students, and also to (2) the cat men for being artificial, which appeared to be rooted, partly, in concerns and jealousies about the cat men's affluence, high class, and attractiveness to women. Significantly, when the men spoke about the cats, they were referring to men, even though the mixing of men and women was taken to be a striking feature of "catland." The omission of women here would seem to reflect a tendency to construct women students *in general* as modern, or at least as susceptible

to seduction or corruption by modernity. In contrast, only specific men students (and a minority)—mainly high-class Batswana and foreign men—are constructed as modern or *too* modern and are assigned and assume a specific group name and identity. And whereas these men were associated with and blamed for affecting specific cat styles of dress and speech, modern women were defined more generally in terms of their sexual relations with men and blamed for “prostituting” themselves or becoming “triple Cs.”

NOTES

1. From an advert for a graphics company featured in the UB Post, the University students' magazine.
2. For example, Hollway (1989), Wetherell and Edley (2000), Frosh et al. (2002).
3. Researching student identities at a higher education institution in Zimbabwe (Masvingo Teachers' College) (Pattman 2001), I found that much prominence was also given to drinking as a symbol of real masculinity and male hedonism as characterized by the “beer drinkers,” a group that closely paralleled the “Ugandans.”
4. This supports contemporary Western research on masculinities, which has found that boys and men typically position themselves as funny in relation to girls and women (Frosh et al. 2002; Kehily and Nayak 1997).
5. In her study of student politics and gendered identities in the University of Zimbabwe, Rudo Gaidzanwa (1993) found that middle-class and urban women were perceived as undermining the authority of men, though especially by those men from rural and working-class backgrounds who, themselves, aspired to middle-class lifestyles. These women were criticized for their “Western and provocative” clothes and even “stigmatised as wanting to be like whites.”

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IV. Contesting Masculinities

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14. Indentured Masculinity in Colonial Natal, 1860–1910

Goolam Vahed

The men of Southern Africa have frequently been fitted into the binaries of black/white or indigenous/settler. While this framework distinguishes the different histories and power positions, it conceals the presence of men whose geographical origins, ethnic affiliations, and position in the racial order escape these neat divisions. This chapter on a hitherto neglected group of South African men, the “Indians,” argues that for most of them, their arrival as indentured laborers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was critical in framing their masculinities. Their inbetweenness as “not white” and “not black” and their strong connections with the cultures of the Indian subcontinent created a specific configuration I term “indentured masculinity.”

Indentured Indians enjoyed few rights in Natal. Though they were not legally required to return to India at the conclusion of their contracts, the Natal government passed legislation in the 1890s that compelled many to return. Indentured Indians occupied a highly exploited location in the labor market, and specifically on sugar plantations. In addition to the colonial setting, existing ties with India—particularly those of religion, ethnicity, culture, and caste—were integral to the character and form that masculinity took. These validated indentured workers’ sense of themselves as male and shaped the “Indianness” of the emerging masculinity. After a brief history of indenture in Natal, broadly sketching differences among Indians and conditions of indenture, this chapter examines the lived experience of workers in areas where masculinity was forged, day-to-day conditions at the workplaces, leisure-time activities, and family life, all key areas in the constitution of indentured masculinity.

INDENTURE IN NATAL

Around 100,000 Indian men were brought to the British Colony of Natal on the east coast of Southern Africa as indentured workers to meet white settlers' demands for cheap and reliable labor. Their stay was not intended to be permanent and few women accompanied them. Over time, however, they remained and were amalgamated, in the racial language of South Africa, into the category of "Asian" and then "Indian." The indentured experience was defined by the following: migrants were overwhelmingly male, diverse in terms of culture, religion, and caste, widely dispersed throughout Natal; and the experience of indenture was short, usually five years, after which they began a new life as "free" Indians, joining the small group of Indian traders who began arriving from Gujarat in western India from the mid-1870s.

The indentured population was characterized by a pronounced gender imbalance. The required ratio of males to females was set at 60 men to 40 women in 1868, a target never met. An overwhelming 68.7 percent of the 152,164 migrants were male (Beall 1990: 147). Around 70 percent of males were in the 18–30 age group and only 2 percent older than 36 (Bhana 1991: 20). The skewed gender balance, with a ratio of seven men to three women, had profound consequences for the expression of indentured masculinity in work relationships, family life, and leisure activities. There were other axes of division. Migrants were divided by caste, which numbered several hundred (Bhana 1991: 20); language, broadly, those who came via Madras spoke Tamil, Telegu, Malayalam, or Kannada, while those who came via Calcutta spoke Hindi dialects such as Braj, Kanauji, Standard Hindi, Bundeli, Awadhi, and Bhojpuri (Mesthrie 1991: 29); and geography, with "Madrassi" and "Calcuttia" the broadest categories of differentiation.

Masculinity is always constructed in interaction (Connell 1995: 35), in this case the interaction of indentured workers with colonial employers, the colonial state, fellow indentured workers, Indian traders and indigenous Africans. Not only were indentured workers set apart from local white settlers and indigenous Africans by class (work) and geography (migration), but also by the fact that white hegemony was fashioned primarily along racial lines, which was a central feature of the colonial context. Settler society was "tight knit and largely uniform," with negative stereotypes of Indians and Africans (Morrell 2001a: 7).

WORKING CONDITIONS

The appalling conditions to which indentured workers were subject have been extensively chronicled with Swan concluding that "overwork,

malnourishment, and squalid living conditions formed the pattern of daily life for most agricultural workers" (Swan 1985: 26). Employers maintained rigid control through harsh laws that viewed contractual offences as criminal acts and sanctioned legal action for laziness, absenteeism, and desertion. Indians could not go more than two miles from the estate without an employer's written permission, even to lay a charge against their employer. The coercive apparatus of the state ensured the leverage of employers was largely unchallenged.

Hard work eventually destroyed workers' bodies and health because it was done in a damaging way under economic pressure and beatings. On the coal mines in Northern Natal, for example, where 2,500 Indians were employed in 1908 and 1909, 360 were repatriated for contracting pthisis (I/181, PMP 1367/1911, January 1910). Individuals on occasion chose suicide over underground work (I/180, PMP 1181/11). After visiting A. J. L. Hulett's sugar plantation in 1900, H. W. Jones, medical officer of Stanger, wrote to him:

Mr Hulett, you don't err on the side of mercy in the treatment of your coolies. . . . During the Summer months you make your Indians toil in the blazing sun from sunrise to sunset, a period of 12 or 13 hours. . . . It is a rare thing to see any of you in the field. You employ a highly paid *SWEATER* to boss the show. It is not an unknown incident for Indians to drop down dead in the field from sheer exhaustion. You profess a lot of Christianity, the psalm-smiling machine (*American Organ*) is on the jog nearly the whole day—but you don't practice it. (I/198, PMP 609/1900, June 16, 1900)

Physical and emotional violence was inflicted upon indentured labourers by white owners, African or white overseers and Indian Sirdars. Beatings legitimated violence and inflicted humiliation on indentured workers. Testimonies in magistrate's records and files of the Protector indicate how closely violence was woven into the experience of indenture. In 1885, for example, Mariappen (32402), who cleaned the Natal Government Railway (NGR) barracks in Durban, was caught with rum in his possession. In his deposition to the Protector he said that he was taken to the NGR hospital, given "six cuts on my bare bottom—I was ordered to take my trousers down for the purpose"—by Manistry, the manager, and locked in a tiny room with three other men. He was released a week later, when he "hammered at the door" during the Protector's visit. An uncovered bucket was placed "for the purpose of nature" while he was jailed (I/30, September 25, 1885). Adult men were reduced to the status of young boys in the administration of punishment.

SIRDARS

The organization of plantations were marked by tripartite stratification, comprising white employers, administrators, and management at the top; an intermediate class of mainly Indian Sirdars or overseers, and the mass of indentured workers. Certain workers rose to become overseers, forming an Indian subelite. They were usually men of high caste as planters attempted to use what they regarded as traditional forms of Indian hierarchy to keep workers “in their place” (Carter 1996: 124). In Connell’s terms they were “complicit” to the “dominant” white masculinity; but “dominant” in relation to most other Indians (in Morrell 1998: 609).

Many Sirdars profited from their role as intermediaries. When Sirdar Sewsaran of the Durban Corporation, who had arrived in Natal in 1874, returned to India in April 1888, there was an official enquiry because he and his wife Suhdree returned “with expensive clothing,” including velvets and silks, gold necklaces, bangles and rings valued at £60, around £50 cash, a medal from the Zulu War, a silver watch, and large diamond worth 3,000 rupees. While in the employ of the Corporation he had lived in his own house rather than the barracks, was a moneylender and trader who sold to those under his supervision (I/53, PMP 3282/1890, June 2, 1890).

Sirdars consolidated their power by virtue of living for extended periods on plantations in contrast to the rapid turnover of the workforce. For example, James Aiken of Ruthville Estate, Umzimkulu, requested permission from the Protector on May 21, 1890 for his Sirdar, Ramasamy, to own a gun. Aiken pointed out that Ramasamy had worked for him for eight years and “has 16 years previous good service in Natal” (I/53, PMP 5124/1890, May 21, 1890). The Protector informed the Colonial Secretary in 1896 that “several of the Sirdars have been on the place too long, and I feel sure that if these men were discharged it would be a great comfort to the Indians” (I/82, PMP 2977/1896, May 21, 1896).

Sirdars were entrusted with the means and opportunity for violence. Many liberally used the *sjambok* (whip) to impose their authority. Displays of violence were markers of masculinity for white employers, African overseers and Indian Sirdars. Morrell has suggested that experiences of violence by boys (white settler and African) provided a climate of acceptance as well as the justification for the ready use of violence on farms (Morrell 1998: 609). This also accounts for white indifference toward Indian workers. Failure to oppose employers directly diminished Indian masculinity in the eyes of whites and gave rise to stereotypes.

INDENTURED MASCULINITY—STEREOTYPE
AND REALITY

While seen as “steadier” than Africans, Indian workers were regarded as “less robust,” “timid,” “wily,” “dishonest,” “obsequious,” “litigious,” “insincere,” “roguish,” “cowardly” (Kale 1999: 144).

Indians, generally, were depicted as “unmanly” in white eyes and marginalized as a stigmatized Other. Their “cowardly” resistance was contrasted with the strength, aggression, and fierce independence of white masculinity. This was reinforced by Indians showing excessive deference to whites, whom they almost always referred to as “saheb.” The treatment to which indentured Indians were subject acted as a homogenising social force that lumped them together, regardless of location in the work place, whether they were married or not, age, and so on. The white gaze made important distinctions among Indians disappear.

Cornwall and Lindisfarne argue that in everyday life, “the weak restore their own sense of worth and maximise their advantage within the system which disempowers them” (1993: 24). Most Indians chose to comply, complain, or abscond, engaging in what Scott calls the “weapons of the weak,” seemingly mundane and individualistic resistance that restores and validates integrity and reputation (Scott 1990: 7). Indentured workers were for the most part unable or unwilling to engage planters and colonial authorities violently. Instead, they protested through absenteeism, insubordination, theft, flight, malingering, feigning illness, destruction of property, and neglect of duty (Swan 1985: 243). These acts were camouflaged in everyday routines. They did not threaten “to overthrow the authority at the workplace but constantly undermined it” (Mohapatra 1997: 10).

Desertion was a crucial feature of indentured masculinity. Though they came to work in Natal, many Indians refused to subject themselves to the humiliations and exertions of plantation labor, and opted instead for flight. The Protector explained to the Colonial Secretary in 1884 that some men repeatedly deserted because they preferred jail to work. “They boasted that they did not mind going to gaol as they were well fed there.” He therefore put them on a “spare diet” in prison as this has “the salutary effect of keeping in check to some extent the threatened serious evil of a class of indolent, slothful Indians gaining any great strength in our midst” (I/20, PMP 158/84, April 19, 1884).

Desertions numbered several hundred per month (I/16, PMP 905/83, October 1, 1883, Protector to Colonial Secretary). In his deposition to the Magistrate, Umzinto, about a missing roommate, Lasha Chellan described

the most common form of absenteeism:

I woke up about 3 in the morning and noticed Kurruppan was not in his bed, I then thought that he had hidden himself in the canes for the day. It is usual for Indians when they do not intend to work to hide in the canes. (I/70, September 27, 1894)

Marshall Campbell, manager of Mount Edgecombe, explained to the Protector in 1885 that when he took over the plantation an average of 106 coolies were absent and 31 sick in hospital daily: “some of the coolies would get their weekly rations and clear out and live in the bush till the next rations were issued, some selling their rations for rum and clothing, and would only stay on the estate when too ill to go to the bush.” Marshall instituted daily rations to force Indians to report to work. Though illegal, “with your support I will make useful men of those who are now a trouble to themselves” (I/30, PMP 1313/85, October 16, 1885).

Deserters were hounded and hunted, with the Indian Immigration Trust Board employing African constables to seek them out. The wider African society joined in this effort. W. B. Lyle of Lower Tugela informed the Trust Board on April 4, 1900 that “Indian deserters are frequently arrested at the Tugela mouth by the Natives residing there and handed over to me with the request that I should reward them for their trouble” (I/96, PMP 459/1900). Rewards were paid for the arrest of Indians without passes, even if they subsequently proved they had passes.

Some indentured men reacted defiantly to the ambience of violence that marked their day-to-day existence. They refused to “observe the rules” and lived by a code of revenge, not shirking from physical confrontation. The idea that most indentured workers were simply malleable does not stand to scrutiny. Violence was anchored as much in the social milieu in colonial Natal as in individual pathology. To quote Whitfield, “violence was acted out in a wider cultural theatre wherein what it means to be a man is inextricably connected to the perceived ability and opportunity to (re) act violently towards others” (Whitfield 2002: 37). There are isolated examples, even during the early years, of workers reacting violently. The Deputy Protector reported in September 1884 that during a visit to Illovo, he learnt that “one of the men had got Mr Hall down on his back and was about to pound him with a knobkierrie but was prevented by another white man” (I/29, September 22, 1884).

In his deposition to the Protector Daljeet stated that his employer J. Saville of Camperdown had punched and kicked him because he was not satisfied

with repairs he had carried out. Daljeet reacted by hitting Saville with a wooden mallet three times before he was overpowered by Saville's overseer. Saville's son then "handcuffed my hands to the roof in the mealie meal room, tightening it until I stood tip-toe and I was in this position until 2am," when his friends Persad and Rameshaur untied the rope. Daljeet proceeded handcuffed to the Protector to report the incident. (I/30, PMP 1297/85, October 8, 1885)

An examination of Magistrates' records reflect many cases each month of indentured laborers resorting to violence. Connell refers to this as "radical pragmatism," a "don't care" attitude that develops in a climate of working-class alienation and deprivation (1995: 97).

Some individuals emerged as leaders and could muster as many as thirty or forty coworkers to march to the Protector to complain. During the 1913 Indian strike, orchestrated by Mahatma Gandhi, the authorities identified "ringleaders" on plantations and coal mines, and arrested them swiftly to stem the tide of protest (see Attorney General's Office (AGO) 1/8/146, 764/1913; 1/8/146, 782/1913; 826/1913). The workplace, marked by violence and gruelling work, was difficult for workers. These features of indentured masculinity were reinforced by a rough and physical approach to leisure-time activities.

LEISURE

Leisure-time was a key element in the constitution of indentured masculinity. It provided an opportunity to carve out a space independent of settler control, as well as constituting an all-male milieu in which modes of decorum, both settler and Indian, were transgressed. Indentured workers engaged in characteristic leisure activities such as a "physical" culture of drinking and gambling, as well as religious and ethnic festivals. The Muslim festival of Muharram was an important collective practice, and a mode for many indentured workers to express residual frustrations. This festival, held on the tenth of Muharram, the first month in the Islamic calendar, commemorated the martyrdom of Imam Hussain, the grandson of the Prophet Muhammed. Indentured Indians were given their three days annual leave during Muharram, which became an "Indian" festival with large-scale Hindu participation.

On the tenth, groups of Indians pulled tazzias, miniature wooden mausoleums covered in coloured paper and gold and silver tinsel, by hand, all the while singing songs to the memory of Hussain, beating on drums, dancing wildly, or carrying out stick fights. There was a strong police

presence because the festival usually ended with the spilling of blood. Perumal and Koman Nilladoo, for example, were imprisoned for 12 months in October 1892 for assaulting Chattiah, from a nearby plantation in Verulam on the North Coast “with intent to do grievous bodily harm.” During an altercation between competing processions on August 4, 1892 Chattiah was stabbed on the head and chest. According to a reporter,

the man was so badly injured that he was paralysed, and for some time his life was in danger. Other people were injured severely, and witnesses came into the box with marks of the fray upon them. (*Natal Mercury* October 15, 1892)

The general sense of abandon sometimes spilled over into attacks on police. Police inspector Alexander felt that many of the approximately 3,500 Indians who were arrested annually in Durban used Muharram to “settle old scores” against the police (Annual Report, 1902. UD-W, Documentation Centre, Accession No. 957/2059). Muharram not only provided an opportunity for developing and expressing a self-conscious local community identity, but also signaled the participation of Indians in a larger collective. By drawing them together, Muharram played an important role in fostering a wider common identity, “Indian-ness,” in relation to whites and Africans (Vahed 2001).

Palliatives like alcohol, Indian hemp (dagga), and gambling were key features of indentured masculinity. There were canteens in the vicinity of most estates. It was estimated in 1894 that Natal derived £20,000 per annum from the sale of rum to Indian workers (Tayal 1977: 530–531). Explaining why he had opened a store on his estate Wilkinson of Ottawa told that Protector that “the men are always asking for a pass to go to the canteen and get drunk, lose what they had bought from the stores and be useless the next day” (Tayal 1977: 530–531).

Drunkenness often resulted in violence. In December 1900 Munien (63281), who “indulged too much one Sunday assaulted a fellow-worker Naickern (66785) with a stick,” breaking his arm (I/99, PMP 1783/1900, December 10, 1900). The files of magistrates are littered with such examples. In a report to the Mayor in 1892, police inspector Alexander noted that “out of a population of 5,000 Indians [in Durban], half of which are women and children, last year’s return shows 3,113 arrests, of this 2,152 for drunkenness” (UDW Accession Papers No. 957/2044, July 4, 1892).

Not all Indians were heavy drinkers. To try and limit alcohol consumption, the law compelled Indians to drink at canteens from 1890. But, as the

Medical Officer for Umzinto pointed out in his Annual Report for 1890, the law had an unpleasant consequence:

Before, a man bought a bottle of rum and took it home where it was consumed among him and his friends, taking sometime to get through it. Now a man goes into the Bar and drinks as many "Tots" as he can pay for, one after the other. He then goes away, but has not got far before it takes effect upon him and he is compelled to lie down on the road. On Sundays I have seen as many as six such cases in less than half a mile. This is very objectionable where European women who pass along the same roads see these disgusting sights, nor is it much improved when two or three Native police are seen pushing one of these drunken men in a wheel barrow to the gaol. The poor brute is seen with his legs hanging over in front and his head hanging over between the handles. It is a wonder they don't break their necks or get apoplexy. (I/59, PMP 1298/1890, January 22, 1891)

The Wragg Commission reported in 1887 that the smoking of a mixture of tobacco, opium, hemp, and brown sugar was widespread among indentured men. Around 20 percent of Indians smoked dagga in Pietermaritzburg, mostly purchased from Africans (Wragg Commission 1885–1887, in Meer 1980: 256–257). The Medical Officer in Lower Umzimkulu reported in 1887 that "Indians as a rule go in for cultivating the Indian Hemp plant (*Cannabis Sativas*) around their camps" (I/43, PMP 274/1888, February 5, 1888).

Gambling was an accepted part of manly behavior. For example, Subbiah "was a gambler," according to his manager McLeod, who found him "late on Sunday night gambling in Soyin's barracks." Despite warning him "of the consequence of gambling instead of sleeping," Subbiah did not turn up for work and was given some "cuts with a stick" by the "annoyed" manager (I/188, PMP 3062/1912, October 31, 1912). Some Indians accrued huge debts as a result of gambling. For example, Pauloo (£6), Sabapathy (£1), Narsimulu (£2), Kistadu (£2), and Ramsamy (10/-) were in debt to Guruvadu (I/188, PMP 3071/1912, November 1, 1912). Charles Waller, Inspector of Police, warned the Protector that "there is far too much gambling amongst the Indians—it should be put a stop to" (I/188, PMP 3215/1912, November 20, 1912).

Most leisure-time activities of Indian workers, whether religious festivals, drinking, or gambling, were male-exclusive, through which strong bonds of male friendship were formed. The exclusion of women was partly a function of their paucity, though it could have been an effect of misogyny, perhaps even promoted misogynism. The numerical predominance

of men also affected the constitution of family, another important site where indentured masculinity was forged.

RESTORING THE FAMILY

Much was lost in the process of migration. Life in the compounds, mostly male, left many men without female companions and without the possibility of constituting family as a place of procreative patriarchy. Without family they were without a means to build a future and extend the patrilineal line. Unlike African migrants who had families in the homelands, few indentured labourers had families in India, and those that did, often did not see them for many years. Narratives in the files of the Protector indicate that the desire to establish a family which would meet their needs for intimacy, sex, friendship, and children, was central to the experience of most indentured men.

While there was regional and class variation, and gaps between the ideal and real, the “ideal” family in India, including rural ones, would have been an extended one with the grandfather as patriarch, married sons and their wives, unmarried sons and daughters living under his authority. With its center in the household the family was expected to serve as a moral community, a productive enterprise and support group (Stern 1993: 33). Patriarchy, defined by Sylvia Walby (1990: 20) as “a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women” (Morrell 2001: 18), was central to Indian family. Understandings of patriarchy generally stress the power of men as “hierarchically located, oppressive and ideologically substantiated” (Whitfield 2002: 87). Women and children worked on the basis of a strictly gendered division of tasks, under the authority of males, who “owned” the labor of wives and children (Janssens 1997: 19). Women were expected to undertake housekeeping and childrearing, as well as cultivation and artisanship in poorer families. More affluent families displayed their “respectability” and status by secluding women (Sharma 1980: 3).

While it was important for Indian men to have a wives, there were many obstacles to marriage. It was costly to import women from India and it was only officially possible because colonial authorities were concerned about preventing same-sex and interracial sex (Kale 1999: 165). There were virtually no marriages between Indian men and African or Creole women from Mauritius and St. Helena.

The precarious position of men is reflected in the dowry system. In nineteenth century India, dowry was paid by the family of the bride.

The situation was inverted in Natal. Men were compelled to pay dowry because the gender imbalance weighed against them. The system was frequently abused. Heron, manager at an estate, informed the Protector that Indrashun, "a good man," married Jaunky, "a young girl of the Estate, three years ago. The ceremony took place on this Estate." Following a quarrel between Sookram, "the alleged father of the girl," and Indrashan, Jaunky was taken from Indrashun but the £27 dowry not returned (I/38, Heron to Protector, June 24, 1886).

Indian family life was fragile. Hanamauthadoo complained to the Protector in 1886 that his registered wife Eerakka made off with £15 and was living with Hanmooj, and "refuses to return to me" (I/36, September 22, 1886). Naicker committed suicide when the parents of the woman he was living with in Tongaat took her back (I/188, PMP 3020/1912, October 29, 1912). The experience of Jagdeo underscores the difficult position of men. He was married for ten years to Samundri when he arrived in Natal in 1898, and was indentured to Keith Fraser. Samundri was given a position as domestic to the overseer Kress, who took her as his mistress. The Protector advised the Colonial Secretary that Jagdeo did not have the £5 required to sue for divorce, nor was there a law to deal with adultery between Indians and Europeans (I/96, PMP 3003/1900, August 6, 1900).

Colonial authorities attempted to stabilize family by instituting a legal foundation for marriage. Law 12 of 1872 required Indians to register marriages with the Protector. 4,998 marriages were registered between 1873 and 1886. The Law also instituted a £10 fine, one month's imprisonment and "a flogging not exceeding twenty lashes at the discretion of the magistrate" for adultery (I/35, Protector to Justice Wragg, June 30, 1886). The Protector supported stable family. In 1894, for example, Motijan applied to transfer from Prospect Hall with her "husband" Autar. While the manager Labistour turned down the request, the Protector pointed out that Autar had lived with Motijan for 18 months: "I submit that as they have lived together for so long a time, that they are all intents and purposes virtually man and wife and I consider that under the circumstances it would be a most cruel thing to separate them now" (I/76, PMP 6427/1894, December 7, 1894).

The position of Indian men was buttressed by colonial policy which gendered occupations. Women were paid half men's wages, while married women were not obliged to work (Beall 1990: 153). The division of labor confined women mainly to the informal sector, and differential access to resources. Unindentured women worked as domestics, cultivated small garden plots, or earned a living as hawkers under the control of patriarchs. Legislation and economic policy strengthened the power of Indian men

over wives in a nuclear family setting, and stymied the formation of egalitarian Indian families, which the social and material conditions in Natal might have facilitated.

And yet indentured masculinity did, under certain conditions, admit of men performing domestic duties. While this in theory created the potential for more egalitarian families, in fact it was generally a phase of life associated with being single and was not carried through into process of constituting family life. Having to live alone in Natal before finding a spouse or being joined by a wife from India, meant that Indian men became skilled at domestic tasks such as cooking. Duties could also include child rearing. For example, Sahadutt requested the Protector grant him custody of his two children as their mother had left him for another man. As the law gave woman the right to custody, Sahadutt's attorney suggested the children be "apprenticed" to him under Law 25 of 1891 (I/100, Attorney Langston to Protector, February 6, 1901). Men took on other responsibilities. When Marimandam's wife Valliama was due to give birth, he purchased blankets and camphor for his wife and castor oil for the child. Together with "two native women" they helped Valliama give birth. There were five indentured Indians on the farm, four men and one woman, and Marimandam took care of his wife and child (I/186, PMP 2299/1912, November 15, 1912).

Where possible, however, men strove to achieve the "ideal" of family, which included a division of labour, in which cooking and child-rearing were the responsibility of women. The Protector informed the Colonial Secretary in 1896 that:

many of the men object to their wives being compelled to labour whereby they are debarred from attending to their children or any other of their domestic arrangements. . . . My opinion is that it is neither in the interest of the Indians or of the Estate to compel married women to labour on the grounds that these people have other duties to perform in connection with their children and in the preparation of food for their husbands. (I/82, PMP 2977/1896, May 21, 1896)

Violence was a feature of indenture, in the workplace and in leisure time pursuits. For many, the family was another arena of violence, with gross exploitation of women by men. While there is no quantifiable data on how widespread violence between men and men, and men and women was, court records and complaints to the Protector indicate that the problem was rife. The following report captures the horridness of

wife murders:

At the Coolie huts in the vicinity of Botanical Gardens an Indian entered his hut shortly before 9 pm and deliberately killed his wife by hacking her head well nigh into pieces with a spade. He used such force that the edge of the spade turned and had particles of flesh and hair on it. (*Natal Advertiser* March 2, 1878)

Was violence a consequence of material conditions, the “collapse of social order,” or a part of Indian notions of masculinity? Are we to concur with Clare (2000: 201) that “pre-occupation with being in control” is at the heart of male aggression, sexual and otherwise? These questions have not been resolved in gender studies, and there is no clear answer from the evidence on indentured males in Natal.

The incident involving Nasibun, married to Khan at the depot on arrival from India on September 5, 1881, is illustrative. Khan assaulted her on April 5, 1887 by punching and kicking her “all over the body.” Fortunately, neighbors “interfered and prevented Khan from assaulting me further.” Infuriated, Khan threw her things out of the house. The cause of the assault, Nasibun told the Protector, was that she “refused to go and earn money for him by prostituting any longer. For the last five years he has compelled me to earn money for him as a prostitute and support him” (I/39, April 6, 1887). The intervention of neighbors suggests that violence was not lauded, condoned, or legitimated.

While official explanations viewed violence against women in “cultural” and racist terms, the result of Indian men’s contempt for women and their “possessiveness” (Kale 1999: 167), the reasons for violence were complex. Indenture made stable family difficult. It was marked by brutal working conditions, extended separations between couples when husbands were jailed for petty offences or deserted, the sharing of rooms by couples with single men, the absence of elders, break from extended family and shortage of women, all of which made men extremely vulnerable. Vulnerability breeds insecurity among men about their masculinity and increases their need to control (Seidler 1997). There is a strong connection between an insecure male’s sense of masculinity and physical and verbal oppression of women (Whitfield 2002: 165). Numerous cross-cultural studies have concluded that men with low self-esteem endorse wife abuse as a legitimate means for asserting male superiority within male–female relationships (e.g., Ali and Toner 2001; MacDonald et al. 1997). According to Loizos (1993) cross-gendered interaction can make partial identities coherent; the man

who hits his wife may feel a “real man” for the moment. In the indentured setting, brutal working conditions inured Indian men to violence, but also made them violent toward women. Acts of aggression against women was one means by which indentured men imposed their self-worth.

Married men often shared quarters with unmarried men, creating sexual tension in a situation where only one person’s sex needs were taken care of. The story of Mulwa, who murdered his wife Wootme by smashing her head with an axe on April 5, 1890 at Blackburn Estate, Inanda, where they were indentured, captures the multiple problems that indentured workers faced. Mulwa and Wootme shared a hut with two men, Sahebdeen and Moorgasen. Sahebdeen saw Wootme lying in a pool of blood and called the manager, Townsend. When Townsend reached the hut he found Wootme’s body “lying face downward with a large wound at the back of her head exposing the brains, some of which were splashed on the walls of the hut.” Sirdar Baboo, who was sent to look for Mulwa, told the Resident magistrate,

I found him in a canefield by the river two miles from the estate. . . . I said what is the blood sprinkled on you. He replied it was I that cut my wife and I am going to die for it. I got off my horse and tied the prisoner with one side of the reins. Prisoner said you need not tie me up. I will follow you. He looked more frightened than excited.

In court, Mulwa told the magistrate:

I and the woman lay down. The woman said “go to work now.” I did not go. Then I killed the woman. That is all. . . . We lived with Sahebdeen and Moorgasen who said if the woman would cook for them they would give her clothing and give us rations. . . . The woman cooked food and took it to the field for the men. She did not bring me food. . . . I went to Mr Townsend for a house. He did not give us a house. I went to the Sirdar and he would not give us a house. I killed the woman because she went with other men and I said I was not sufficient for you.

The judge considered the “evidence too clear,” and the jury found Mulwa guilty. Asked whether he had anything to say as to why the death sentence should not be passed, Mulwa replied “I have nothing more to add. You can do as you please.” The judge, in sentencing Mulwa to “be hanged by the neck until you are dead,” observed:

Where there is not sufficient accommodation afforded by the Proprietors of Estates where Indians are employed, there arises a fruitful source of crime and immorality and they wish to express their condemnation of the system by which both sexes, married and unmarried, are mingled together in living

and sleeping in the same hut, thus leading to most disastrous results, both in prostitution and criminality. (I/56, PMP 3839/1890, June 14, 1890)

Gajadhan's letter to his brother in India in 1901, while he was awaiting execution for killing his wife, was equally chilling, and underscored men's vulnerability under difficult socioeconomic conditions:

After I came to Natal I married a woman here. She committed adultery by going away to another person, whereupon I got so angry that I took a chopper and murdered her, and I am now going to get hanged. . . . Kindly be good enough to perform the necessary ceremonies by calling about 5 or 6 Brahmins and distributing among them some money and clothing. (I/104, PMP 2114/1901, December 21, 1901)

Men who cannot control other men's access to their wives "cannot control the definition of their own masculinity because they cannot control the definition of or the social practices surrounding the femininity of their lovers." Conforming wives endorsed their husbands' masculinity by "their proper adoption of the opposite feminine position" (Cornwall and Lindisfarne 1993: 27). When wives publicly diminished men's masculine credentials, they often paid a fatal price.

CONCLUSIONS

Aside from a few fleeting references, this chapter has not explored relations between Indian and Zulu men. Constituting the majority "race" group in the region, the Zulu were an important element in the political economy of Colonial Natal. There was minimal contact between Indians and Africans on plantations during the early decades when Indians comprised most of the workforce. This changed in the early decades of the twentieth century as Africans replaced Indian workers. For the most part, contact usually created tension and distrust. The colonial state employed Africans, for example, to track down Indian deserters, while individual white employers often utilized Africans to carry out beatings on Indians or keep them under check. The structure of domination on plantations was racialized as it pitted Africans against Indians, creating undercurrent racial tension that manifested on several occasions during the twentieth century.

There were multiple axes of domination in colonial Natal, race, gender, class, caste, language. By the time the importation of indentured labor stopped on July 1, 1911, most whites were hostile toward Indians, and were constructing a racial hierarchy in Natal. The gender order was founded on

an exclusionary settler masculinity which discriminated against men who for reasons of occupation (class position), race, ethnicity, or family lineage or fortune, did not “fit in” (Morrell 2001a). Denied entry into settler society, Indian migrants developed a form of (indentured) masculinity, which reflected the conditions under which they lived and worked. Hard physical labor, shortage of women, racial and gendered divisions of labor, constant threat of physical beatings, isolation, inadequate housing, abuse, and extortion, had major implications for the ways in which “being a man” was understood and legitimated.

The politics of masculinity in colonial Natal was organized along a descending scale. Dominant white men constituted a gendered construction of power that disempowered other men and women. Relations of power, inequality, and identity were complex among Indian men as well. Some men, particularly Sirdars, were privileged, though their subjugation by white hegemonic masculinity on the basis of race provided a common axis of bonding with their working class counterparts. Indian masculinity was “in process.” Being subject to external contingencies, its content was fluid, partial, fragmented, and contested. Given that the majority of Indian men were aged 18–36, they would have carried certain ideas about their self-image, developed from historically and culturally mediated codes which offered a ready means of signification. This included family, children, and division of labor. However, prevailing circumstances created a gap between male ideal type and colonial reality. While the ideal was not always achieved, the practices of gender signification among indentured Indian migrants to Natal had material and power consequences. I would like to thank Robert Morrell for his assistance with the writing of this chapter.

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15. Men Doing “Women’s Work”: Masculinity and Gender Relations Among Street Vendors in Maputo, Mozambique

Victor Agadjanian

Since Boserup (1970) first set the agenda for research on gender and work in developing settings several studies of sub-Saharan Africa have described how women can successfully compete with men in both rural and urban labor markets (e.g., Osirim 1996; Spring 2000) and how women’s increased participation in labor forces affect gender relations and family decisions (e.g., Adepoju and Oppong 1994). Most of this literature has been concerned with sub-Saharan women’s catching up to men in rates of labor force participation and entry into traditionally male occupations but has typically overlooked the opposite phenomenon—men’s work in traditionally female jobs. Yet studies in developed settings suggest that this phenomenon may have profound implication for gender identity and inequality. Thus Williams (1989, 1992, 1995) showed that men and women reproduce and maintain gender differences while participating in nontraditional occupations and that, reflecting the dominant gender hierarchy, this process is asymmetrical: while women entering traditionally male occupations are relegated to their margins, men involved in traditionally female occupations are, on the contrary, often channeled to the most prestigious and materially rewarding specialties that are also seen as more “masculine.” At the same time, men in traditionally female occupations, such as nursing, librarianship, elementary school teaching and social work, do become objects of negative “feminine” stereotypes on the part of clients and outsiders. The gender stigma attached to these occupations (in addition to lower material returns) may deter men from entering

those occupations in greater numbers (Williams 1992) or prompt them to leave those occupations quickly (Jacobs 1993; Williams and Villemez 1993).

Men's movement into "women's" occupations is precipitated by socioeconomic downturns and the accompanying reduction of employment opportunities, or by major technological changes. Compared to middle-age men, younger and older men are more likely to move into female-dominated occupations because they face less prestige penalty and are less concerned about the income penalty associated with such occupations (Bradley 1993).

The degree of stigma and contempt that men (or women) face in non-traditional occupations depends on their relative numerical presence in those occupations. Thus Kanter has argued that as long as the atypical group remains a token minority (less than 15 percent) in any particular occupation, it will continue to face discrimination and stigma (Kanter 1977).

STREET COMMERCE IN AN URBAN ECONOMY

Informal economic activities have been a growing segment of the urban economy in sub-Saharan and other developing countries but are also common for more developed settings (Koame 2000; Portes et al. 1989). Street commerce (hereafter also referred to as "street vending" or "street trade") employs a sizeable share of informal workers. Although in less developed countries street commerce is much more common than more developed ones, in both types of settings this occupational niche appeals to disadvantaged segments of the urban population. For one such group, recent unskilled migrants, street commerce offers an easy entry into the urban labor market; this group is typically overrepresented in the "street economy" of both developing (Koame 2000; Macharia 1997), and developed (e.g., Moore and Vigil 1993) settings.

Cross-national literature on street commerce suggests that women, another disadvantaged group, tend to be attracted to this niche because they lack skills for more rewarding employment pursuits, play subordinate roles in family income-packaging strategies, and because street commerce offers maximum flexibility in combining work and childcare (e.g., Chinchilla et al. 1993; Lund 1998; Macharia 1997). Of course, nowhere has street vending ever been a woman's monopoly. Men's involvement in street trade has been considerable, and within street trade gender specialization and hierarchy are always present. Yet this analysis is based on the assumption that most people—men and women alike—do not consider street commerce a "model" occupation for men but see it as more appropriate

for women. Men's presence in street commerce therefore may be seen as an anomaly, if not in absolute terms, then in relation to the range and quality of jobs deemed appropriate for men. Hence men's participation in street vending has to be negotiated within the dominant system of gender roles.

STREET COMMERCE IN MAPUTO

In Maputo, the recent growth of informal economy has been spurred by the continuing rural–urban migration and the reduction of alternative employment opportunities associated with the implementation of structural adjustment policies. Street commerce is among the most volatile but, at the same time, most rapidly expanding subsectors of the city's informal economy. Severely restricted in the colonial era, street vending emerged as a mass phenomenon after Mozambique's 1975 independence, in parallel with a mass influx of peasants into the city. In the socialist period (the first postindependence decade), street commerce started to grow and, despite the lukewarm resistance of the city authorities, small pockets of unlicensed traders began popping up in various parts of the city. The popular name of such illegal concentrations of traders, *dumba-nengue*, can be translated from Tsonga (the lingua franca of southern Mozambique) as "trust your feet," an allusion to the constant need to flee from the harassing police. In the subsequent period of economic and political liberalization (since the second half of the 1980s), the city's attempts to stem the growth of street commerce have become even less energetic, and street commerce has burgeoned all over the city. *Dumba nengues* mushroomed, and some grew to engulf entire neighborhoods. This proliferation has all but choked the more traditional forms of small-scale commerce—by the turn of the century, many of Maputo's formal marketplaces lay dormant, surrounded by the swarming hives of street commerce. In the process of growth, some of street commerce has become stationary and formalized through the city's attempts to tax and regulate it; much of it, however, has remained mobile, affording an easy point of entry into the urban economy for workers with the lowest levels of financial and human capital. Hence, despite the status and income disadvantage of street commerce relative to other forms of urban employment, this sector itself is internally stratified, with stationary commerce (in makeshift kiosks or stands) commanding higher prestige and income than mobile vending.

Street commerce has traditionally attracted less educated, poor urban women seeking cash employment, who are least likely to find more rewarding

jobs elsewhere. However, men, squeezed out of the formal labor market, have been increasingly joining the ranks of street vendors. This chapter, however, is not concerned with the number of men in street commerce but focuses instead on who these men are and looks through their eyes at street vending as part of daily survival and a social venue where gender roles are challenged and renegotiated.

GENDER ROLES IN THE CHANGING URBAN LABOR MARKET

Mozambique inherited from its former colonial master, Portugal, a large bureaucratic machine and a strong bureaucratic culture. This legacy was further nurtured during the socialist period, when the public sector, especially the government bureaucratic apparatus, greatly expanded. On the scale of occupational prestige, *serviço* (service) in a government agency was elevated not only above *negócio* (private business, trade) but even above other forms of formal-sector *emprego* (usually, wage employment). This hierarchy did not determine prestige alone: during the socialist years, especially in the first half of the 1980s, when shortages of basic goods and services were chronic and universal, employment in the formal sector, and especially work for the government, ensured privileged access to scarce rationed resources. In that context, traditionally female occupations, such as street commerce, were particularly derated, and even today *to sell* (*vender* in Portuguese or *kushavisa* in Tsonga) is often not considered *to work* (*trabalhar* or *kutirha*). Yet at the same time, the socialist period also accelerated women's entry into the urban formal labor market by opening up opportunities in the public sector. Although women's employment in the public sector did not eliminate gender inequality, it did lead to a more level playing field, thus contributing to urban women's continuous emancipation.

Civil war that ravaged Mozambique for some fifteen years (until 1992) amplified rural migration to the capital, thereby increasing the pressure on the already stagnant urban labor market. But the war did not just exacerbate the oversupply of unqualified labor; it also psychologically facilitated men's employment in low-prestige sectors of the economy, such as street vending, for such employment could be subjectively rationalized and justified as a temporary adjustment to war-induced hardships.

The public sector workforce, bloated in the socialist years, began to shrink as the structural adjustment reforms gained momentum from the early 1990s onward. At the same time, jobs generated in the private sector of the

formal economy could not possibly absorb the swelling ranks of low-skilled workers. Although the contraction of the formal sector has affected both men and women once employed there, men's mass ejection from it has greater implications for gender relations than does women's. This is because in the context of an entrenched patriarchal gender hierarchy, women's employment in the formal sector still tends to be seen as unusual, whereas for men, formal sector jobs constitute not only the most appropriate and desirable type of work, but also part of their masculine status.

Formal-sector jobs have not just become scarce. As cost of living continue to climb and wages stagnate, these jobs are also seen as poorly paid, which, considering men's disproportionate presence in them, further erodes men's economic preeminence. In addition, the last two decades have also seen a rapid reduction of legal employment opportunities for Mozambican men in South Africa. Men's migration to South Africa has increasingly become illegal and therefore often an unrewarding and even humiliating experience, different from the traditionally glorified *rite de passage* into manhood. The dwindling of income-earning opportunities in Mozambique and abroad accelerates the decline of traditional marriage and family regimes in urban areas. Bridewealth payments are frequently delayed, underpaid, or bypassed altogether, as informal cohabitation and single-motherhood proliferates. These changes, catalyzed by men's financial inability to live up to traditional norms and expectations, in turn, further undermine men's economic and social supremacy.

A CASE STUDY OF MEN STREET VENDORS IN MAPUTO

This case study draws upon 38 semi-structured interviews with male street vendors in Greater Maputo in 1999. My assistant and I interviewed men selling in the street both in Maputo's more urbanized core, known as *cement city*, and its less urbanized periphery, or *reed city*. In selecting informants we tried to include men of different ages, marital status, and origins who were selling different types of merchandise—from food, to clothes and shoes, to traditional medicine, to construction materials. We interviewed both stationary vendors and mobile vendors. Given the size and type of the sample, the study makes no claims at representative generalizations but instead attempts to explore the nuanced dynamics of the changes underway in men's employment and how these changes influence gender identity and relations in and outside the workplace.

MEN'S ENTRY INTO STREET COMMERCE

Men's presence in occupations that are (or are seen by most people as) predominantly female reflects the earlier described changes in the urban labor market. Not only is men's presence in these occupations as a whole increasing, however, but also so is their presence in the subdivisions of that market niche that until recently were considered uniquely female (e.g., minor fruit and vegetable or prepared food commerce).

Men's entry into street commerce is determined by a number of socioeconomic characteristics and life circumstances. Low human capital is obviously one such characteristic. However, the type of available social capital, such as having a male relative in street commerce, is also important. Still, street vending is not an occupation of choice. The fieldwork suggests that men who are most likely to end up selling in the streets are those to whom the mainstream labor market is particularly unfriendly and whose manhood is not to be compromised by doing a "woman's job"—primarily the young, the old, the physically disabled, and the socially marginalized.

For younger, usually still unmarried men, street vending is commonly an early and (at least subjectively) brief entry into the labor market, an easy way to earn quick cash mainly for their leisure-related needs subjectively irrelevant to their future work paths. Not surprisingly, younger men are also more likely to engage in mobile vending, which requires minimal capital investment and is easily discontinued when other opportunities come up. Since their social manhood has not yet been fully established, street commerce poses little threat to it. If anything, this threat is different from the one that mature men face: younger men may, for example, choose their peddling routes so as to minimize the chances of embarrassing encounters with their peers and girlfriends.

On the other end of the age spectrum, older men, who have most of their working careers behind them, whose pool of alternative work opportunities shrinks, and whose social status declines, are also more likely to compromise their maleness by taking on "women's jobs." Somewhat similar to this group are middle-aged men with physical disabilities, for such disabilities reduce their opportunities in the labor market and serve as socially acceptable justifications for their doing "women's work."

Socioeconomic and ethnic marginality is functionally analogous to the biosocial or physical one. Thus, poor recent migrants are more likely than others to be selling in the streets. Street commerce is usually their first job, and any city job commands greater respect than subsistence farming. They have not had a taste of more "dignified" and rewarding urban employment, and most of them came to the city when better employment opportunities

had already been severely curtailed even for longer-term and better educated city denizens. They therefore do not harbor illusions or aspirations of a rapid economic mobility. Like other men vendors, they are not happy with their earnings and they may view their current work as temporary. However, unlike longer-term urbanites thrown into street commerce by the vicissitudes of urban market transformations, many recent rural migrants still see themselves as peasants and their work in the city as a brief interlude before returning to their families in the countryside. Because their main locus of social life and their aspirations are far away from the city and their family's economic well-being is cushioned by their farms' output, street commerce experiments do not seem to clash as much with their traditional gender identity.

Among recent migrants, those who came from distant parts of the country and who are ethnically alien to the majority of city-natives and the majority of migrants alike—and therefore whose marginal status in society can be seen as a kind of social disability—are particularly likely to engage in street vending. Their ethnosocial marginality hinders their entry into more mainstream male jobs and facilitates—at least psychologically—their taking on such marginal occupations as petty street trade. Also, these men typically come from Mozambique's central and northern provinces, where matrilineality traditionally has a strong influence, and therefore do not feel fully bound by the perceptions of men's pride and shame deeply ingrained in the patrilineal southern psyche. Long-distance migrants also usually plan to return home to their families after making some money in Maputo (or in South Africa, if they manage to cross the border and find a job).

The last category of men engaged in street commerce consists of former mainstream "male economy" workers who lost their jobs and have not been able to find new ones in the formal sector; it also includes men whose lower-end formal jobs (e.g., night watchmen) do not provide enough income to keep up with the rising cost of living and who therefore are forced to moonlight as street vendors to make both ends meet. Understandably, the dissatisfaction of this group with their current work is particularly strong, and so is their longing for a "real" job.

A common characteristic of men who sell in the streets is their economic dependence on other males, especially their older and/or economically more successful male kin. The latter commonly lend their less fortunate relatives cash necessary to start up the venture, provide them shelter, and even employ them to sell goods that they produce and buy elsewhere. Adult men's dependence on relatives is another form of social deficiency that, when transposed onto the plane of gender relations, makes crossing and redrawing the gender boundaries psychologically easier.

MEN IN STREET COMMERCE AND THE DIALECTICS OF GENDER IDENTITY

Men entering the labor market niche traditionally occupied by women reconstrue this niche as gender-neutral, arguing that the dire economic need erases the “old” (i.e., the “ideal”) gender division of labor. They also tend to blur the status differentiation between large-scale commerce, traditionally a man’s realm, and petty street trade, traditionally a woman’s lot. These sociopsychological subterfuges help men to face occasional derogatory comments and remarks made by women and men alike. The gist of these statements is that street vending is not appropriate for men, who should strive for other, more profitable and dignified economic pursuits. Interviewees would typically admit having to deal with such deprecating statements, but most also argue that economic hardships and unemployment justify their working in street trade and that most people with whom they interact in the process of work accept this justification.

However, men’s adaptation to traditionally female occupations is not just a matter of psychological maneuvering; it entails important changes in their status—both absolute and relative to women. These changes in status—and eventually in gender self-identification—are further fostered through day-to-day interaction in the workplace. Yet the changes of gender identities in that workplace are not unidirectional and involve a dynamic and dialectic combination of de-gendering and re-gendering.

DE-GENDERING THE WORKPLACE

The street commerce workplace is largely desegregated. In *dumba-nengues* and other places where street commerce is concentrated, women and men vendors stand or sit side by side, often selling similar merchandise. Of course, the complete leveling rarely occurs, as location remains gender-selective insofar as the types of products sold are gendered. Relative to other settings, however, the gender specialization of space is reduced in street commerce, and men and women vendors are seen—and see one another—as part of the same social and occupational group.

Both female and male street vendors are exposed to similar risks of being harassed by the municipal or fiscal police (with an obvious exception of sexual harassment). Although most *dumba-nengues* are now somehow formalized and regulated and all vendors are supposed to pay a fixed daily tax, police raids against real or alleged violations of the regulations are common. During such raids the police routinely ransack vending stands, chase away,

verbally and even physically abuse vendors, rarely discriminating between men and women, old and young. These interventions therefore do not just disrupt commerce but also publicly humiliate vendors—women and men alike. Also, importantly, the threat of police harassment cultivates the sense of solidarity among vendors that transcends the gender divide.

The spatial and structural proximity of male and female street vendors leads to a lot of cross-gender interaction and cooperation that in more spatially and structurally segregated settings would not be possible. Vendors frequently engage in informal rotating credit schemes, a way to deploy resources necessary for larger financial transactions common in sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere. Such credit schemes, called *xitik* in southern Mozambique, involve vendors regardless of sex and cement mutual trust and equality of all participants. Likewise, breakdowns of *xitik* schemes due to lack of money, fraud, or a breach of trust are unrelated to the sex of participating vendors.

Xitik is probably the most structured type of cross-gender (or agendered) cooperation, but other more sporadic instances of such cooperation are also common and help promote a gender-neutral ambience. Thus men and women may lend one another small amounts of money (even though such favors among cash-strapped vendors are rare) or change high-denomination bills. Although vendors do not usually pool resources to buy merchandise in bulk at a discount because of the small scale and unpredictability of their ventures, the coordination of prices—explicit or implicit—does occur, again putting men and women essentially on an equal footing. Vendors may also ask other vendors—usually those selling nearby—to watch their stands if they need to step away. In addition to the solidarity in the face of police harassment, vendors develop cooperation in facing another threat to their businesses—pilferage. Antitheft vigilantism, even if not formalized, further stresses the commonality and interrelatedness of men's and women's situations. Finally, other kinds of informal social interaction—verbal (chatting, joking, etc.), through body language or observations—are also inevitable and, at least to some extent, are inevitably genderless.

RE-GENDERING THE WORKPLACE

The re-gendering of the workplace accompanies its de-gendering. Men's entry into street trade reestablishes gender differences and inequalities, manifested in the nature and status of products sold: men, for example, are more likely to sell construction materials than foodstuffs. However, the foodstuffs segment of the street market is by far the largest, requires the

least initial investment, and therefore for some men may become the only option available. To avoid the embarrassment associated with foodstuffs, sales and to protect their gender status, men often team up with their wives' vendors and remain in their shadow by taking care of the logistics—acquisition of products from suppliers or initial treatment and sorting of products to be sold—in sum, of more “difficult” and “responsible” parts of the business chain.

Where “real” gender differences are impossible to establish, the symbolic ones replace them. Male vendors often say that women vendors tend to be loud, emotional, and verbally offensive and are prone to squabbles and scuffles with other vendors and with customers—ascribing them characteristics typical of a “women’s” work style. Men, in contrast, are usually self-portrayed as reasonable, calm, and conciliating.

The gender hierarchy is also recreated through different aspirations of men and women. Whereas most women view street commerce as a natural and ultimate form of employment (along with domestic services), men see it as a temporary stumble in their working careers, anticipating upward mobility either to higher volume/capital trade (ideally involving supply chains in South Africa) or finding *emprego* or *serviço* outside of commerce (unless, of course, they plan eventually to quit the urban labor market and return to farming). Underlying either scenario is men’s strong wish to get off the streets into more secure, lucrative, and prestigious jobs, commensurate with their dominant gender status. Characteristically, even the interviewees who had been selling for years still harbored such desires.

Although the street commerce environment tends to reduce the gender barriers, these barriers spring back up once vendors leave the gender-leveled terrain of *dumba-nengue* and reenter the gender-charted world around it. There, gender boundaries remain particularly potent in male vendors’ leisure socializing—hanging out, drinking, or sports—that is, in activities where traditional gender ideology and stereotypes are further cultivated.

MALE VENDORS, FAMILY, GENDER RELATIONS, AND HOUSEHOLD DECISION-MAKING

Reflecting the dialectics of de-gendering and re-gendering, the impact of men’s work in this traditionally female occupation on gender relations and, specifically, on family decisions in the household is equally complex. On one hand, men doing female work deprives them of an important economic and social leverage in their relationships with their spouses. On the other hand, it makes them try to regain the terrain lost at work by holding

on to preeminence in important household decisions. These dynamics are further complicated in cases where street commerce is a family business involving both spouses as partners: on one hand, sharing the same business contributes to greater equality between the spouses; on the other, in most such joint businesses, the wife is usually a junior and subordinate partner. Although in the absence of a control group it is difficult to fully assess the complex influence of men's participation in street trade on household gender and decision-making dynamics, some general contours of gender relations and power-sharing in the household can be delineated from the interviews.

The interviewed men's answers and reactions to questions dealing with their relationships with their wives convey the contradiction between the patriarchal ideal and reality. Men subscribe to the traditional patriarchal gender hierarchy and functional division within the household: they consider themselves heads of their households, vindicate the traditional gender division of household labor, and claim the initiative in most important family undertakings. At the same time, however, men vendors also acknowledge frequent discussions and consultations that they have with their wives regarding issues that matter for their families' well-being; while claiming the initiative in discussing these important issues, they do not assert a monopoly on final decisions. Perhaps in no other matters these dynamics are more obvious than in childbearing-related matters. While the interviewees liked to claim preeminence in family fertility decisions, when probed for how such decisions are made they usually agreed that their wives were more competent in reproductive and family planning questions and that their competence and/or their physical conditions ultimately drove the couple's decisions to have no more children (usually phrased in terms of temporary "rest") and its choices of specific family planning options.

CONCLUSION

Although men's entry into street trade does not eliminate gender inequality, the processes of de-gendering and re-gendering that it entails do seem, on balance, to diminish it. This case therefore illustrates how the leveling of the gender playing field can occur not just through the more typically observed process of women's entry into men's work world, but also through a less noticeable yet increasingly common process of men's involvement in occupations traditionally seen as female.

The reassessment of gender relations that male vendors are forced to experience and accept is projected on to their households. Even though the

world of work and that of home often remain separated, the increasing egalitarianism of the workplace may help undermine inequality at home and assert greater role for women in family and household matters. This tendency is particularly strong when both spouses are in the same trading business: although their partnership is seldom fully equal (or is seldom seen so), cooperation in work fosters collaboration in household decision-making.

Of course, one should refrain from an overly optimistic assessment of the gender changes illustrated in this study. Gender inequality does not disappear in the process or as a result of men's entry into traditionally female jobs—it is just attenuated and recast. Such occupational crossovers, although on the rise (men's presence in Maputo's street commerce has increased visibly since this study was conducted), are still rarely seen as normal and desirable. Yet, the road to gender-equitable development does not have to lie through a total erasure of the gender division of labor. Even in economically advanced societies with high levels of women's participation in the labor force and considerable gender equality, strong gender occupational segregation persists (Haavio-Mannila and Kauppinen 1992). The future of Africa's gender equality may not be very different from today's Western model. Yet the sub-Saharan path to that future may indeed be unique. Paradoxically, as this study suggests, the segment of the urban population least integrated into the modern urban economy and therefore most economically disadvantaged may approach gender equality at a faster pace than the rest of society—exactly because its poverty and social vulnerability deprive men of important leverage of gender domination.

NOTE

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16. Men, Movements, and Gender Transformation in South Africa

Robert Morrell

INTRODUCTION

Since the ending of Apartheid in 1994, South Africa has passed a constitution that is amongst the most progressive in the world. It forbids discrimination on the grounds of gender, sexual orientation, race, class, age, and creed. The new policies and laws have understandably not overthrown patriarchy or removed men from their domination of public life, politics, and earnings. But there have nevertheless been shifts in gender power. In parliament, the number of women members stands at just under 30 percent, while half of all the deputy ministers and a quarter of all ministers are women (Zulu 1998). These can legitimately be seen as victories for and of feminism.

In this chapter, the response of men to recent gender developments in South Africa is discussed. I argue that men have responded in widely differing ways. While it has been common to think that men stand in the way of gender transformation, there are signs that this is not uniformly the case. There are indeed instances where men are actively contributing to campaigns for gender equity.

It should not be surprising that men in South Africa have responded in varying ways to shifts in gender power. Class and race remain major factors in society, while colonialism and apartheid have had differential impacts on men. For this reason it is important, while noting the rich literature on the responses of men in first world countries (Messner 1997; Schacht and Ewing 1998), to allow for and explain different patterns of response.

THE TERRAIN OF GENDER CHANGE

Gender changes in South Africa has occurred against the backdrop of globalization and has reflected the legacies of colonialism and apartheid. The economy remains racially skewed, with distinctive gender features as well. Black men are by and large limited to skilled and semiskilled jobs in the cities. Most women are under or unemployed and many continue to live in the countryside. The ending of apartheid provided the conditions for the emergence of a black middle class that gained access to state positions as well as to the boardrooms of the corporate world (Budlender 1996; Bond 2000; Marais 1998; Michie and Padayachee 1997; Taylor 1997).

A significant gender gap still exists. Rural women are still the poorest, least literate, and educated group in the country. In rural areas 69.9 percent African women live in poverty compared to 64.3 percent of African men (Budlender 1998: 15). Women-headed households are on the increase, giving women more independence, but these households are more prone to poverty than male-headed households. In 1995, 23 percent of African women over 25 years had no formal education compared to 16 percent of African men (Budlender 1998: 16). The fortunes of African men have varied. The rise of a wealthy middle class must be contrasted with rising unemployment. Millions of young black men live on the margins. Prospects of employment are exceedingly poor: the formal economy continues to shed jobs at an alarming rate—149,000 nonagricultural jobs in the year, June 1999–June 2000 (South African Reserve Bank 2000: 13).

Amongst white men, there have been changes too. They continue to dominate in the professions and businesses, but young white men are now finding access to these positions more difficult. Among the lower, primarily Afrikaans-speaking, middle classes there has been a downward pressure. In 1999 the unemployment rate for economically active whites was 6.9 percent (compared to 29.5 percent African unemployment) (Statistics South Africa 2000: 13, 37). White beggars, a sight seldom seen since the poor white problem of the 1930s, have once again become visible.

AIDS has had a major impact on society. South Africa has the highest rates of new infection in the world. In a district of KwaZulu-Natal where reliable records are kept, the incidence of HIV jumped from 4 percent in 1992 to 29 percent in 1997 (Whiteside and Sunter 2000: 52). For each man infected, the rate is 1.37 women (Thomas and Howard 1998: 96). The number infected with HIV stands at about 4 million (10 percent of the country's population). The actual impact of the disease on gender relations is unclear though, for the moment its effects are felt primarily by young black, heterosexual working class men and women.

GENDER TRANSFORMATION?

Measured in policy terms, steps toward gender equity have been striking, but on the ground, progress has been much slower. This can partly be explained by the nature of gender transformation itself. It is more like the Industrial than the Bolshevik revolution—slow (Segal 1990). The expectation that gender transformation will continue rests on an assessment of the state's role and policies, as well as the recognition that many nongovernmental and governmental agencies exist to promote gender justice and there are other impersonal forces (e.g., AIDS) inadvertently forcing gender changes. In this latter, futuristic sense, gender transformation is taken to mean change that addresses gender inequalities, that improves the position of women in society, that is associated with and contributes to the development of a peaceful and democratic society. In many Third World countries, however, the position of the poor and of women has deteriorated (Walby 1997: chap 2). Gender transformation is not an ineluctable movement. For it to continue, men (and women) must contribute.

Internationally, in the last ten years particularly, there has been a growing recognition of the need for men's movements to support gender transformation. The arguments made to support this can be summarized as follows: Men have a vested interest in gender change because they, along with women, also suffer the consequences of the present order. Men historically have often been interpolated as the "cause" of gender oppression but in order for the situation to improve, they have to be encouraged to lend their energies to a campaign for gender peace and equality. Men can contribute in many ways—organizationally, ideologically, politically. They can assist via their collective efforts as well as their individual efforts, the latter referring to attempts to create new models of masculinity and new ways of "being men." The inclusion of men and masculinity into considerations of how to achieve gender justice has been most striking in organs of the United Nations. Success at this level has been augmented by initiatives by states (government ministries, e.g.) and men's organizations (Breines, Connell, and Eide 2000). And yet it is recognized that many, often the majority, of men's movements are not oriented toward gender equality or supportive of feminism (Connell 2000: 9).

In South Africa, violent masculinities have been more in evidence and the colonial and apartheid past longer and more oppressive than in most countries around the world (Morrell 1998). Under these circumstances, one should be particularly alert to responses that do not fit into existing patterns of understanding.

MEN'S MOVEMENTS OR MOVEMENTS OF MEN

South Africa is a country of movements, spectacularly in the 1980s and 1990s when populist and nationalist movements were particularly active in the struggle to overthrow apartheid. These were by and large militant groupings of young black men who had borne the brunt of state repression. Yet, despite this, women participated, though seldom in leadership positions other than in organizations designed exclusively for women such as the ANC Women's League. But this is not insignificant. Elsewhere in the continent, women have been particularly marginalized. Examining, for example, the situation in rural Zambia, Kate Crehan concludes "women's experiences in mainstream politics . . . within parties and in government (are similar). Unless women keep to the prescribed spaces and roles in the political women's corner, they are where they are not supposed to be" (Crehan 1999: 139). Despite the fact that many women are still denied a voice in domestic decision-making, prevented from occupying leadership positions and, in very general terms, underrepresented in the public sphere, they are in a substantially more powerful position than their sisters elsewhere on the continent. Part of the reason for this is the success of the women's movement in the country. The political participation of women in women's only and mixed gender movements has as its corollary the participation of men working together with women. The goals of such movements vary a lot. For the purposes of this chapter, it needs to be noted that some men work for gender justice in movements not exclusively male and which therefore cannot be considered strictly speaking as men's movements. Yet, there is reason to be flexible in the process of analytical inclusion and exclusion. Connell's examination of gender politics points out both the limits of men's movements in terms of gender transformation and the importance of organizing around the principle of gender justice (Connell 1995: 228–229). Pursuing gender justice involves engaging with "complex equality concerns." This process can obviously include men and women if one allows a broad definition of feminist. Karen Offen (cited in Schacht and Ewing 1998: 10) suggests that a feminist is somebody who is committed to recognizing the validity of women's lives and the values they claim as their own; conscious and critical of discrimination against women; and advocates the elimination of that injustice. Beyond this is the practical goal of providing "an agenda for achievable community change" (Schacht and Ewing 1998: 8). The acknowledgment that men and women can share a joint gender politics alerts us to the importance of seeing power not only as oppressive—a construction which propels analysis into a binaried analysis of men against women. It suggests too that men and women have in

various contexts found reason to work together against forces that threaten on grounds of class, or race or ethnicity (Carby 1982). In the sections below I keep an open mind and work, where appropriate, with this inclusive frame to consider movements not exclusively male but which have a clear program and commitment to gender justice.

The term “men’s movement” refers to an organization or grouping (formal and informal) consciously constituted to appeal to men as gendered subjects. The distinction needs to be made between a movement of men (e.g., political parties, armies) and a men’s movement. In the case of the former, while gender politics in the form of masculinist discourses, domination of public positions, and decision-making is clearly evident, these are not central to the organizing principles, which may in fact be framed in gender neutral terms. In this case, the dominance of men is held to be unintended, coincidental, or accidental. In the case of the latter, a men’s movement consciously organizes and mobilizes men. Its members are men and its purpose is to address specific gender challenges facing men.

In South Africa, as elsewhere in the world, men have organized for different reasons. Some have responded to the erosion of privilege while others have focused on issues (such as domestic violence) involving men. Internationally a distinction has classically been drawn between “the men’s movement” and the “new men’s movement.” The men’s movement is regarded as reactive, antifeminist, and committed to the restoration of male power. The new men’s movement is held to be profeminist and committed to gender justice. Here energies are directed toward developing new male role models that differ sharply from orthodox patriarchal models of men-in-charge. In reality, the binaried distinction is too stark. It highlights the politics of these movements as determining of their character, whereas with respect to membership and reasons for organizing, there are commonalities between the two movements (Kimmel 1995; Schwalbe 1996).

The location of men’s movements within the gender terrain will be assessed in terms of their commitment and contribution (or otherwise) to the goal of gender justice. The work of U.S. sociologist Mike Messner is used to assess the location of men’s movements in South Africa. Because Messner’s arguments are framed in a developed context, they cannot be adopted holus bolus to explain all aspects of the South African situation. The particular place of race and class in South Africa requires sensitive analysis. Nevertheless, his framework is an exceedingly helpful starting point. He locates a movement in relation to three criteria: institutionalized privileges, costs attached to adhering to narrow conception of masculinity, and differences and inequalities among men. Messner argues that the emphasis of each movement in relation to these criteria results in “critically

important political possibilities, limits, and/or dangers” (Messner 1997: 12). Those organizations that concentrate on addressing the costs of masculinity and/or focus on addressing specific issues between or among men tend *not* to address the institutional and interpersonal power of men over women.

Messner is highly sensitive to the issue of race and attempts to theorize gender liberation in tandem with racial liberation. In offering a critique of gender-insensitive groupings of black men, he suggests that “the only thing that makes ‘men of color’ a distinct group is the central role they play as racialized ‘other’ in the social construction of ‘white masculinity’” (Messner 1997: 97). Here, race is considered as a fluid identity without a specific relation to a material base and without a particular historical location. When applied to South Africa where race has a specific history and an ongoing correlation with class powerlessness that reflects the colonial past and the period of apartheid, this approach requires some qualification.

MEN’S ORGANIZATIONS

There are not many men’s organizations in South Africa and in their absence, it is difficult to talk of one or many men’s movements. In the sections below, I survey the different types of organizations that do exist and attempt to classify them using Messner’s three key indicators.

DEFENDING MALE PRIVILEGE

Organizations that fall into this category prioritize the defense of male privilege. They are bound to an essentialist reading of men that bolsters hegemonic masculinity and excludes many men on grounds, for example, of race and sexual orientation. They stress the significance of men’s “losses” for ideological rather than therapeutic reasons.

Organizations in this category are prone to emerge as a backlash to gender transformation. A number of Australian studies of education have shown that where feminist policies have been implemented, male teachers and learners have often responded negatively (Kenway and Willis 1998; Lingard and Douglas 1999: 158). In South Africa this response is also apparent.

There are two types of backlash—one attempts to limit the gains of women, another produces a counterargument that boys/men are disadvantaged (Lingard and Douglas 1999: 3). Frank Brummer, a white, working class man, probably spoke for a great many South African men when he

said: "The ANC Women's League promises women the world, but they won't be able to deliver. In my household, we're both equal, but I am the boss" (Cohen 1997: 13). Brummer's view has had organizational expression. A number of small movements have developed in the 1990s to defend male privilege. The most articulate has been the South African Association of Men (SAAM), established in 1994 by a University lecturer, Kieran O'Malley and a Johannesburg businessman, John Loftus. Its goal was to fight discrimination against men in order to "restore the tattered remains of the male image" (quoted in Lemon 1995: 61). It dedicated itself to challenging feminism that exhibited "an often-vicious loathing of traditional masculinity" (O'Malley 1994). The organization had little support and was primarily white, middle class, and heterosexist. One of the major concerns its establishment reflected was the erosion of white male privilege. In a 1999 legal case to test the scope of affirmative action legislation designed to advance women and black people, a participating lawyer commented: "Pale males have been very fearful of the new legislation (Affirmative Action), fearing it could lead to their extinction" (*Independent on Saturday*, August 14, 1999). But the new dispensation has proved less threatening than white prophets of doom imagined and at the time of writing, SAAM has all but disappeared.

A second type of loose organization has developed around the concern of fatherhood. In various cities, organizations like TUFF (The Unmarried Fathers' Fight) have been established. They have demonstrated against "unfair" laws that deny fathers custody of or access to their children and have taken up these issues in the media. Unlike SAAM, men's organizations concerned with paternity issues are more enduring. Their bona fides have been questioned by lawyers and feminists who wonder whether these men actually believe in shared parenting and parental responsibility or are just concerned with challenging the increased power of women (de Villiers 1998).

STRIVING FOR GENDER JUSTICE

Quite a different set of organizations are to be found when one looks at those fighting for gender justice. In terms of Messner's model, these organizations are committed to contesting male privilege. Many are also concerned with the costs of masculinity and to a lesser extent support the struggle of other masculinities for recognition. This is not to say that issues of homophobia are unimportant. Rather it is to say that they are not accorded primacy and little effort is made to work with gay organizations. The organizations are mostly nongovernmental (as opposed to civic) and

have been established to work with men to address pressing issues. Most of the organizations were recently established and, in one way or another, address issues of relational and domestic violence. South Africa has a frighteningly high incidence of rape and domestic violence. It has the highest rate of rape in the world. Estimates range from one million women to 1.6 million women, men, and children (out of a population of 42 million people) raped a year (*Weekly Mail and Guardian*, July 2–8, 1999; Women Against Child Abuse press release, November 19, 1999). Although the figures are disputed, this translates into one rape every 30 seconds. Domestic violence, recently made the subject of criminal prosecution, has become a recognized problem. The extent and severity of such violence is notoriously difficult to determine, but a recent study conducted in black working class localities in Cape Town found that 25 of the 26 relationships investigated were characterized by routine violence by the male partner (Wood and Jewkes 1997). Most of the victims are young, black, working-class women. Much of the violence occurs in intimate relationships and is triggered by the insistence for sex by the male partner. “Boys frequently felt offended when girls fail to respond to their approaches. This is perceived as girls’ ‘snobbishness’—not wanting to mix with poorer boys. Girls are believed to want relationships only with boys or men who are prosperous” (UNICEF/NPPHCN 1997: 35).

In 1994, Agisanang Domestic Abuse Prevention and Training (ADAPT) was established in Johannesburg by a nurse, Mmatshilo Motsei, herself a victim of domestic violence. Initially it operated more as a shelter for battered women, but in 1997, it reoriented its activities toward men. The organization grew rapidly, recruiting members mainly from among young black working class men who have themselves been in violent relationships. It trains these men as counselors who in turn involve themselves in mediation, therapy, popularization, and gaining media exposure for issues of domestic violence (Dugmore and Stirton 1997; Nkosi 1998).

Taking a slightly different approach to the problem of violent expressions of male sexuality is the 5 in 6 project. Operating in Cape Town, it was begun in 1993 to give workshops to men on domestic violence and violence against women in general. Its founder, Charles Maisel, chose to name his organization after a U.S. research project that found that five out of six men were not violent toward their partners. The organization has a database of 50,000 sympathetic men (supporters) around the country. It provides the skilled personnel to help men to talk about violence against women with a goal of creating “safe spaces” for men to open up and talk about their anxieties, worries, and emotions. While it works with men and women, it focuses on men. A recent project was the Everyday Hero Campaign in which men and women were asked to write stories about or

nominate positive men who would then be asked to support the organization and act as role models (Maisel 2000).

A number of other service organizations, supported by overseas funding, work with men to teach that "sexism hurts us all" (Horowitz 1997). GETNET (Gender Education and Training Network) is the foremost amongst these. It runs workshops around the country, working with trade unions and voluntary groups of men to develop self-understanding and to advance the broad goals of gender equity (Daphne 1998).

Some Trade Unions with strong records of feminist campaigning have begun to bargain for paternity rights as a commitment to equal parenting. The Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union, a union with predominantly female members, for example, has recently begun a campaign to get its male workers who are fathers more involved in parenting by negotiating paid paternity leave from employers (Appolis 1998).

The capacity of profeminist organizations to mobilize men for gender justice on any significant scale is open to question in South Africa as elsewhere (Connell 1995: 221–222). They are most successful in working with men involved with particular issues (like domestic violence). They have been spectacularly ineffective in trying to generalize their appeal. In 1997, a Men's March was held in Pretoria to protest high rape rates. Thousands were expected, but only a few hundred participated. A similar march in Durban in 1999 was cancelled for lack of support and one in Johannesburg attracted only 70 *women*. The outraged organizer bemoaned the absence of support, pointing out that 7,000 people had supported a campaign the week before to protest cruelty to elephants (*The Daily News*, October 4, 1999). In the same vein, the international White Ribbon campaign, started in Canada to organize men against violence against women, has a membership dominated by women in South Africa. There is, therefore, no widespread support amongst men for organizations or campaigns that identify men's responsibility for violence and inequality and work toward gender justice.

DEALING WITH THE "CRISIS OF MASCULINITY"

A third type of men's organization can be defined by its response to the "crisis of masculinity." These organizations focus on the costs of masculinity and pay little attention to either the issue of the patriarchal dividend or of accommodating men from outside the mainstream. There are many such organizations. At the micro level, small groups of white middle-class men hold consciousness-raising sessions. Complementing

such initiatives are organizations like ManKind that offer courses on spiritual growth for men. This mirrors developments in Europe and America and has some connections with the mythopoetic impulse, though the scale of this American initiative is not matched in South Africa where introspection and personal transformation are normally tackled in the privacy and safety of suburban houses in the company of like-minded, racially similar men (Morrell 2000). There are no wildmen retreats for South African men. In terms of gender politics, the atomized nature of these men's groups renders them insignificant. At the other extreme, the scale of the newly launched Promise Keepers of South Africa makes this organization highly significant.

In September 1998, the Springbok cricketer and current team selector, Peter Pollock, founded Promise Keepers South Africa. The impetus seems to have come from his religious convictions (he is a member of the charismatic Rhema Church) but was also a response to a perceived social crisis. Chairman of the organization, Dr. David Molapo, outlined this situation: "Our families are crumbling. Daddies are not at home, they are not assuming responsibility." In September 1999, 30,000 black and white men and boys gathered at a rugby stadium in Pretoria to launch the organization. The call for support was given a patriotic slant by Molapo. "South Africa needs men of integrity who are committed to God, their families and their community" (*The Natal Mercury*, September 20, 1999). But the major recruitment device was for men to attend in order to find their true selves, "the men they were born to become" (*The Weekly Mail and Guardian*, September 17–22, 1999). The Promise Keepers have no connections with feminist movements and adhere to strict Christian fundamentalist principles. The organization has committed itself to fighting crime and to reconciliation—"going beyond skin colour. We're looking at each other as brothers" (*The Weekly Mail and Guardian*, September 17–22, 1999). The engagement of Promise Keepers South Africa with social problems and not just "the crisis of masculinity" requires, for the moment, a suspension of judgment about its relationship to transformation. Its ability to bring black and white people (men) together is an achievement in this racially divided country that is not without gender implications.

GAY ORGANIZATIONS

The most organized and visible of men's organizations are gay. For Messner, they are to be understood as energetically engaging with men's differences

but are less concerned with the patriarchal dividend (possibly because they believe that they do not benefit) and the costs of masculinity.

Isolated and regionally specific groupings emerged amongst white urban men in the 1970s. These fused with the establishment of the national Gay Association of South Africa (GASA) in the early 1980s. The membership was small and mostly white. During the 1980s, the gay movement failed to associate itself with antiapartheid organizations and was thus sidelined (Gevisser 1994). It was only in the 1990s, and particularly since 1996 when the new constitution guaranteed protection from discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation, that a national gay movement became prominent. In the 1990s, membership came to include black gays and lesbians, including the charismatic former antiapartheid activist Simon Nkoli (who died of AIDS in 1998). The National Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality (NCGLE) was founded in 1994. It currently has 70 organizations affiliated to it. It is exceptionally active in lobbying, testing laws, and in supporting those who choose to "out." It has succeeded in making a major impact in the area of sexual politics by taking up high profile cases and encouraging "outing." Judge Edwin Cameron is possibly the most visible of its members. It has also become involved in broader political campaigns, opposing right wing, supremacist or exclusivist organizations, and working closely with feminist groupings. But its ability to work with other organizations remains constrained by high levels of homophobia.

The AIDS pandemic now has the full attention of gay organizations. Many of their leaders have become AIDS activists being themselves HIV positive. The Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) is led by Zackie Achmat, a gay activist. It has succeeded in becoming the most visible and effective AIDS organization in South Africa, drawing people (men and women, black and white, gay and straight) into an energetic campaign against the government's refusal to provide anti-retroviral drugs for AIDS sufferers. If there is any reason to think that the shape of gender politics and especially the men's movement will change, it is because AIDS is now killing predominantly heterosexual African men and women. This is providing a tragic bridge between a range of gender organizations and those (e.g., populist and nationalist groupings) hitherto undisturbed by gender politics. On the other hand, HIV/AIDS also has the capacity to strengthen divisions among men's movements. White, especially middle-class, men are largely exempt from the depredations of AIDS and may retreat into a racially exclusive gendered response to this continental affliction.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN MEN'S FORUM

Some organizations do not fit easily into Messner's model. The South African Men's Forum (SAMF) is the most notable of these. It is a predominantly African middle-class organization dedicated to "restoring the soul of the nation." This voluntary organisation was established in 1997 after an appeal to concerned men to gather to forge a new vision of South African society. Worried about rising crime rates and the lack of a culture of responsibility and concern, Bongani Khumalo, a senior executive of the parastatal, ESKOM, brought 300 men together for a conference. "A call went out for men to unite in rejecting and condemning brutality against women and children as well as to address other social ills sweeping through the country." The initiative was "men-centred and men-driven" (Khumalo 1998). Members were not the young black men to be found in ADAPT but prominent middle-class (mostly but not exclusively black) men in business, education, government, service organizations, and lobby groups (such as "Gun Free South Africa"). The all-male gathering condemned violence against women and asserted the need for men to take responsibility and to promote peace. SAMF shares with the gender justice organizations, a commitment to peace and nonviolence and enjoys good relations with women's organizations. Its all male character and the patriarchal implications of its program, on the other hand, give it something in common with organizations protecting male privilege—restoring male authority—and those (like the Promise Keepers) who focus on men and their gender wounds but fail to challenge the distribution of gender power.

WHAT ABOUT RACE?

How does race play out on the terrain of gender politics? To answer this, I need to discuss the relationship between writings on race and gender. The relationship of race to subordination and marginalization is central to an understanding of gender in South Africa. Colonialism and imperialism created race as a marker of inferiority. These forces destroyed the autonomy of precolonial polities, initiated men into new ways of war and injected violence into the gender identities of men (Mama 1997).

Social formations before imperialism contained fluid and more equitable understandings of gender that were destroyed by the imposition of colonial rule and its culture and language (Amadiume 1987). In some precolonial African societies, women were powerful and respected, and functions and roles were not defined strictly in terms of gender. Decisions were

consensual rather than conflictual, and gender neutral mechanisms existed to deal with disputes. Social life stressed community not just in temporal but spiritual (e.g., ancestral) terms. Gender was part of a variety of relational understandings subsumed under a general assumption about humanity. In this understanding, humanity is what is common amongst people and is what unites them. What remains of a precolonial worldview is open to question. Yet, there is little doubt that its imprint lives on in culture and affects understandings of gender.

African men have historically been active in resisting, accommodating, and attempting to end class and race oppression. Class and race oppression had a specific gender impact on black men: it emasculated them. They were called “boys,” treated as subordinates, denied respect. Furthermore, in their home areas in the countryside, where they formerly enjoyed gender power over women and where their masculinity had been affirmed, their status and power was eroded. Where black men resisted class and race oppression, they were also, simultaneously, defending their masculinity. This often involved efforts to reestablish or perpetuate power over women.

How might these two observations affect an understanding of African men and men’s movements? In answering this question, we need to distinguish between race as a lived identity and race as a historically received, materially located identity. It is not the case, for example, that observations about race in societies where it is a contested marker of inferiority based on the exclusion of a minority are necessarily translatable into contexts such as South Africa. Having noted this reservation, it is useful to cite bell hooks on the reasons for black disaffection with feminism: “Many black women refused participation in feminist movement because they felt that an anti male stance was not a sound basis for action. They were convinced that virulent expressions of these sentiments intensify sexism by adding to the antagonism that already exists between women and men” (hooks 1998: 267–268). Furthermore, “Black women (and men) have not joined feminist movement not because they cannot face the reality of sexist oppression; they face it daily. They do not join feminist movement because they do not see in feminist theory and practice, especially those writings made available to masses of people, potential solutions” (hooks 1998: 272).

CONCLUSION

Men have responded in various ways that both advance and oppose the feminist goals of gender justice. With the exception of the Promise Keepers who have been able to mobilize tens of thousands of men on occasion,

however, the men's movements have not reached large numbers of men. Nor do many of them give much indication that they have the capacity to endure.

The organizations that constitute a pro-feminist movement have attracted financial support and provide the strongest indication of a sustained capacity to contribute to the goals of gender justice. Backlash organizations come and go and seem symptomatic of men's discomfort with the process of gender transformation. They capture media headlines from time to time but do not pose a threat to state-supported gender transformation. In a similar vein, organizations that engage with the costs of masculinity reflect a deep concern amongst South African men about their place in the new society. While this response has the potential to strengthen the impetus for the restoration of the patriarchal family (e.g., as in the SA Men's Forum), it also can contribute to men engaging constructively with issues of masculinity.

The lack of popular support for men's movements is a major indication of their limitation. On issues with a clear gender justice agenda, the support of men has been dismal. Very few men, for example, have attended marches against rape. On the other hand, marches organized around AIDS-related issues (against drug companies whose charges are prohibitive and against the state's AIDS policy (or lack of it)) have attracted sizeable support from men and women, black and white. There are still good reasons to organize and mobilize.

Understandings of gender and oppression are not uniform and this is particularly important in a context where black people, hitherto oppressed on racial grounds, are now fully fledged citizens in a country with a democratically elected, black majority government. What is also relevant is the economic effects of globalization. Most black men remain unemployed and see little change in their circumstances or prospects. Women have suffered the consequence of anger and feelings of impotence. All of this has implications for organization and gender change.

A feminism that interpolates men as gendered subject first and foremost will fail to gain the support or attention of most black men. A feminism that acknowledges the importance of other identities, especially race and class, and locates itself in the context of history and globalization is more likely to succeed.

So, can movements make any difference? They can, but not necessarily alone. They are critically important in countering "the powerful pull of dominator ideas and images that are constantly regenerated by religious and scientific authorities, politicians, educators and, in our time, the mass

media" (Eisler 1998: 241–242). Movements can promote the idea of partnership as opposed to the idea of domination. They offer a vision of this as a possible, working solution to life's challenges.

Men's movements can contribute to challenging "dominator ideas" in a number of ways. They can create institutions that "require men to listen to women and open spaces for apology and dialogue (which) might clear the way for a collective wisdom to emerge" (Braithwaite and Daly 1994: 211). They can engage in what Connell (1995: 240) calls a "politics of pure possibility" and reach out beyond a constituency of men to collaborate with feminist organizations. This is critical because the project of gender justice requires that "there must first be a breakdown of the solidarity among men which exists across age, class, race, ethnicity, and sexuality. An acknowledgment of the diversity of men rather than their common claim to masculine privilege is required before productive alliances with women can begin to be forged" (Lingard and Douglas 1999: 50).

The great tragedy of AIDS has generated a host of initiatives which are bringing people together in a gender politics of caring rather than hating. Numerous organizations that work with men and women are emerging. These organizations overlap with initiatives around domestic violence and bring the focus onto changing men's behavior rather than identifying men as "the problem."

In the last decade, there has been a shift from a focus on men to a focus on masculinity. In South Africa, this allows the importance of race and class to be recognized. It also permits new forms of organization to emerge that do not interpolate men as intrinsically having the same interests just because they are men. This is an alien concept to many men as demonstrated by the failure of men's marches.

South Africa's human rights culture faces a struggle to realize itself in the face of economic difficulty and a climate of violence. But it contains a vision of a freer, more humane world. Concluding her study on the plight of American men, Susan Faludi called for a new paradigm that involves learning "to wage a battle against no enemy, to own a frontier of human liberty, to act in the service of a brotherhood that includes us all (men and women)" (Faludi 1999: 608). Perhaps it is new gender forces, men and women, that hold the key to gender justice in South Africa.

NOTE

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17. Sexuality, Masculinity, and Infertility in Egypt: Potent Troubles in Marital and Medical Encounters

Marcia C. Inhorn

Africa is a continent with high rates of infertility, including a so-called infertility belt around its center (Ericksen and Brunette 1996; Larsen 1994). Although much of this infertility has been attributed to infectious scarring of female reproductive tracts (World Health Organization 1987), “male factors” remain an under-appreciated but a significant cause of infertility in Africa and elsewhere (Irvine 1998), contributing to more than half of all cases of infertility globally. Among the male factors leading to infertility is sexual dysfunction, including problems of impotence, ejaculation, and intromission (vaginal penetration), whereby sperm are unable to enter the female reproductive tract. Indeed, problems of sexual potency and male infertility are conventionally conflated in the popular discourses of many societies, as both are associated with losses of “virility” and “manhood” (Webb and Daniluk 1999).

Although most cases of male infertility have nothing to do with sexual dysfunction, some do. In Egypt, the focus of this article, male sexual dysfunction is one of the “hidden” and thus grossly under-appreciated causes of infertility, a finding also reported from South Africa (Van Zyl 1987a, b). That high levels of male sexual dysfunction may occur in African countries such as Egypt is not surprising: on the one hand, male sexual dysfunction may be due to organic causes such as diabetes mellitus and nutritional deficiencies (particularly of zinc), which are major problems in Egypt (Amin 2001). In addition, Egyptian males may be at greater risk for sexual dysfunction because of “lifestyle factors” (e.g., heavy

smoking) that result in disrupted vascular flow to the sexual organs. Other cases of sexual dysfunction may be due to psychosocial factors, such as lack of heterosexual desire on the part of homosexual men forced into marriage in one of the “most-married” societies in the world (Inhorn 1996).

No matter the cause, male sexual dysfunction is profoundly threatening to notions of hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1996) in a society where masculinity is homosocially competitive and the same Arabic term is often employed for both sexual “virility” and “manhood.” Furthermore, infertility, in Egypt as elsewhere, is *the* medical condition that most clearly casts doubt upon a man’s ability to impregnate a woman through “normal,” heterosexual, penetrative sex. Infertility is a “sexual” condition, one that challenges normative male sexuality, masculinity, and paternity in places like Egypt, where “to be a man” means to be a virile patriarch who begets children, particularly sons (Ali 1996; Ouzgane 1997).

This chapter examines the marital and medical troubles of mostly poor urban Egyptian couples, childless because of male sexual dysfunction. The findings and arguments in this chapter are based on two periods of field research (1988–1989 in Alexandria and 1996 in Cairo), in which my focus of investigation was the problem of infertility, including its causes and consequences.¹ Nearly half of the infertility cases in the first study were attributable to a “male factor,” and 13 percent were due to sexual dysfunctions, which were reported to me by wives but never reported to, nor charted by, a physician. Similarly, in the second study, several women reported that their husbands were “infertile” because of sexual dysfunction or were experiencing sexual performance problems as a consequence of infertility treatment. Thus, in most of these cases, the sexual dysfunction was the primary cause of the infertility, preventing the husband from successfully penetrating and ejaculating into the wife’s vagina.

This chapter explores the gendered dimensions and consequences of male sexual dysfunction in this patriarchal cultural setting, where this impairment of male bodies—glossed as “weakness” of the male sexual organ—is a profoundly emasculating, embarrassing, and thus “invisible” subject. Furthermore, it is a problem with tremendous impact on women’s lives, not only in terms of their sexual fulfillment, but in terms of their gendered identity, given that women, and not men, are “blamed” for reproductive failings and expected to seek treatment for them. That women deemed “infertile” as a result of their husbands’ sexual dysfunction are put in a tremendous bind should become clear in the following case study, which illustrates many of the themes of this chapter.

THE CASE OF NARIMAN, HER IMPOTENT HUSBAND,
HER EGYPTIAN DOCTOR, AND HER AMERICAN
“DUKTURA”

When I first met Nariman² in the halls of the University of Alexandria's infertility clinic, this Ruebenesque local beauty—who wore a long dress and head covering that accentuated her brilliant aquamarine eyes—was 33 years old, married to a diabetic husband more than 20 years her senior, and, with the exception of three early miscarriages, had been unable to become pregnant with her husband, Naguib, over 16 years of marriage. Naguib had been Nariman's “choice” when she was only 17. The eldest daughter of a “severe” father who remarried twice after Nariman's mother died (when Nariman was only 11), Nariman could not wait to escape her unfortunate circumstances in a small Upper Egyptian village. She saw Naguib, her semi-educated, older, first cousin,³ as a way out of the confines of her abusive father's home in a sleepy southern Egyptian town.

Upon marriage, Naguib took Nariman to his family's apartment in a working-class neighborhood of Alexandria, where he was employed as a semiskilled wool analyst in a textile factory. Naguib, his father, and his brother, who shared the small, two-bedroom apartment, were kind to Nariman, and her primary role was to serve the needs of her male in-laws.

However, over the years, Nariman has become increasingly dissatisfied with the quality of her marriage, and has come to the conclusion that marrying an older man—versus the many young suitors who once wanted her and asked for her hand—was a big mistake. Indeed, with her twinkling blue-green eyes, wide revealing smile, and voluptuous body of very generous proportions—considered the ultimate in sensual beauty by most lower-class Egyptian men—Nariman claims that there are, even now, many men who still “want” her if her husband dies or divorces her. Such an outcome, furthermore, is not considered unlikely in Nariman's poor urban neighborhood, given Naguib's advanced age and the fact that Nariman has never produced any children for him, thereby increasing the possibility that he might leave her.

However, despite her stoic public acceptance of her purported infertility, Nariman knows that the primary cause of her long-term childlessness can be due to one cause only: her husband's impotence and his low libido, which she deems her “biggest problem in life.” Even though three semen analyses have revealed that Naguib is not infertile, his impotence has rendered their marriage childless, a situation that Nariman must endure. As Nariman explained in one of six lengthy interviews I conducted with her in

the hospital where she had come seeking treatment:

My husband doesn't want sex often, maybe one time a week. I want it more than that, because I want a baby. Sometimes, my body also wants it. We have fights about this all the time. But sometimes his "thing" [i.e., penis] is not standing. Actually, most of the time, 90 percent of the time. Of course, it makes me upset . . . But he is shy to go to a doctor for this problem [i.e., impotence], because it's a shame for a man. So I went one day to a doctor for men [i.e., andrologist] instead of him. This doctor gave me some medicine—cream to put on his thing—but it didn't work. Sometimes when it stands, it is very weak. And when he is able to have sex, only half of the time he "brings" [i.e., "comes," ejaculates]. But the biggest problem is his "weakness." And it *is* a problem. My feelings have changed toward him; they've gotten worse. Not having children is not a problem for him; he's very happy. But I'm not. Although I don't like him, I still take care of all his needs. I do everything for him.

One of the things that Nariman does "for" Naguib is seek treatment, because he refuses to consult a physician about his sexual problems, probably linked to his poorly controlled diabetes. In fact, Naguib believes that his problems may not be "medical" at all but rather due to an *'amal*, or an act of sorcery by a jealous male rival, which has rendered him *marbut*, or "tied" in his genital region. Naguib himself visited a *munaggim*, or traditional spiritist healer, who read the Qur'an over Naguib and wrote a *higab*, or amulet, which he was supposed to wear until the *rabt* disappeared. However, as a disbelieving Nariman pointed out, "This *shaikh* just wanted money. He took lots of money just to tell him lies. I myself don't believe *at all* in things like that."

Although Nariman herself has also visited many traditional healers, she has spent most of her efforts in the world of Egyptian gynecology, where she has consulted numerous male physicians about her childlessness. Remarkably, after more than a decade of "searching for children" in the world of biomedicine, Nariman has never been asked by a single physician about her sex life and its possible relationship to her ongoing childlessness. In fact, the most recent physician she consulted at the University of Alexandria Hospital prescribed ovulation-inducing medications and timed intercourse, telling her on which days she must "go home and have sexual relations with your husband." Because Nariman, a lower-class, uneducated woman, was thoroughly intimidated by this purportedly brilliant, but extremely busy and frankly supercilious academic physician, she found herself totally unable to tell him about her problematic sexual history, her husband's inability to perform "on demand," and her own reluctance

to ask her husband for sex, which was against “Egyptian traditions and customs.”

Thus, when Nariman befriended me, the American female “*duktura*” with the demonstrated ability to speak frankly in a foreign language to male Egyptian gynecologists, she pleaded with me to write the problem of her husband’s impotence in English on a piece of paper, which she could then hand to the famous doctor and “run.” Instead, I suggested to Nariman that we go together to speak to the physician. She consented, and, although the exchange with the doctor was tense, he immediately changed his treatment protocol, eliminating the “timed intercourse” component and scheduling Nariman for future artificial insemination using her husband’s sperm.⁴ Privately, he revealed to me his aggravation that Nariman had never told him about her husband’s impotence after many visits to his infertility clinic. This had resulted, he said, in valuable time being “wasted.” Yet, this physician never took sexual histories from his infertile patients, thereby maintaining the sexual silences that had resulted in misguided treatment attempts.

SEXUAL TROUBLES IN THE MARITAL ENCOUNTER

Among some Egyptian couples, such as Nariman and Naguib, infertility may be a proxy for “troubled sex” in ways that Egyptian infertility specialists fail to recognize. Clearly, for this couple and many others like them, having “relations”—as sexual intercourse is politely referred to in the Egyptian dialect of Arabic—is a source of great anxiety and marital duress. In both of my studies in Egypt, I encountered couples for whom husbands’ inability to perform sexually had been an enduring feature of their marriages and had resulted in a failure of procreation for which wives were typically blamed. The problems, furthermore, were varied. Some men, such as Naguib, suffered from low libido and impotence. Sometimes, the impotence was total; in other cases, initial erections were quickly lost upon vaginal penetration. A few men were able to achieve an erection and ejaculate “on their own” (through masturbation or night-time “wet dreams”), but were unable to achieve erection for the purposes of marital intercourse. In one case, a man who had frequented prostitutes before marriage was able to achieve and maintain an erection only between his wife’s legs (the method he had learned with prostitutes), but lost his erection as soon he attempted to penetrate his wife’s vagina (so-called failure of intromission). In two cases, husbands’ impotence had led to unconsummated marriage

over several months, and very infrequent intercourse during the ensuing years. Furthermore, some husbands who were able to achieve an erection suffered from problems of ejaculation, including premature ejaculation occurring outside the vagina, and retarded ejaculation whereby sperm could not be released into the vagina.

These problems were typically reported as “upsetting” to both husband and wife, causing marital friction in many cases. Men were often humiliated by their inability to “perform,” but were either indignant or depressed and distant when their wives mentioned the problem to them or suggested that they seek medical attention. Most men were too “embarrassed” to do anything proactive about their “problem”; but their passivity meant that their wives suffered the social scrutiny and blame for the ongoing childlessness, including among husbands’ relatives. Wives, in turn, were profoundly demoralized—by the sexual dysfunctions themselves, by husbands’ refusals to discuss the problem or seek help, by the resulting lack of pregnancy, and by the burden of blame for the infertility that rested on their shoulders. A 30-year-old woman, married for two years to an impotent man, lamented: “When he enters [penetrates], it’s very weak, and it becomes small and comes out. I think it’s because he’s very nervous and always his nerves are tired. You can’t sit and talk with him, and I can’t open this subject with him because I don’t know what his reaction will be. He will get more nervous, and this will cause more trouble for him. But *I’m* the one getting treated. *I’m* supposed to be the reason [for the childlessness]. So *I* am in the bad position. Maybe that’s my share in life. I have to accept it and live with it.”

As apparent in this excerpt, Egyptian women seek to understand why their husbands are unable to have normal sex with them, and they tend to attribute their husbands’ sexual dysfunctions to psychological problems. Often, women resort to the language of “nerves,” a common Egyptian illness idiom, to explain their husbands’ sexual dysfunctions. In fact, many Egyptian women—even those without impotent husbands—consider their husbands “nervous” and irritable types, with whom they proceed cautiously when discussing sensitive subjects. Sexual dysfunction falls into this category, and is viewed by women as a “problem of nerves,” but it is their husbands’ “nervousness” that keeps women from initiating frank discussions about how this “nervous” condition might be treated.

Although most sexually dysfunctional Egyptian men refuse to seek psychological help (deeming it profoundly stigmatizing), some do take their sexual problems to specialists. Egyptian “andrologists” treat men in urban areas for problems ranging from male infertility to sexually transmitted diseases. However, as seen in the various scenarios above, many men

are reluctant to take sexual problems to physicians, in part because they do not view sexual dysfunction as a medical problem and in part because they find the very act of sharing their sexual inadequacies with a male physician humiliating. Time and time again, women told me that their husbands were “shy” or “embarrassed” to seek medical attention, because of the great “shame” of sexual dysfunction in terms of diminished manhood.

Some Egyptian men, especially those of the lower class such as Naguib, are more inclined to visit a specialist if they can attribute their sexual dysfunction to a *rabt*—or sorcery act undertaken by an envious rival. Being “*marbut*,” or “tied” in the genital region, is not an endogenous problem having to do with one’s own mental state or physical condition. Rather, it is a very “social” disease—linked to jealousy and competition and thought to be caused by one less virile (Ali 1996). Thus, being impotent by virtue of a *rabt* is significantly less threatening to a man’s gender identity and masculinity, for it implies that a man is a person *to be envied* by other men, who might be driven by their jealousy to an act of vengeful sorcery. That Naguib had been successful in attracting a young, beautiful wife—whom he was able to “keep” despite the childlessness and the fact that others wanted her—was a sure sign to him that he had been “done in” by an *amal*, or act of sorcery that had caused him to be impotent. Indeed, among the rural and urban Egyptian masses, *rabt* is considered “*the male disease*” (el Sendiony 1974)—an ultimate form of masculine competition whereby men cause the demise of each other’s sexual organs.

As a very “culturally specific” condition, *rabt* can be resolved only through what el Sendiony (1974) has described as “traditional Egyptian psychotherapy.” Traditional healers, primarily the *munaggimin*, or spiritist healers who specialize in both the making and undoing of sorcery, are often visited by lower-class men such as Naguib, who pay these “*shaikhs*” relatively large sums of money to counteract the sorcery through a variety of methods. However, as seen in the case of Naguib, *munaggimin* often “fail to deliver,”⁵ suggesting that sexual dysfunction may have other causes beyond the psychologically disruptive effects of presumed sorcery.

As a result, wives such as Nariman—whose husbands refuse to go to andrologists and who fail to be cured by *munaggimin*—are faced with two thorny choices: to remain “quiet” and maintain the marital/sexual status quo, or to seek treatment for “their problem,” which is the resulting childlessness. Given that Islam is a medically “activist” religion, encouraging believers to seek solutions to their suffering (Inhorn 1994), it is not surprising that many Egyptian women are willing to resort to infertility treatment if it offers them a way to become pregnant without an erect phallus. Indeed, high-tech infertility treatments, as they are now practiced in parts of urban Egypt, have

bypassed sexual reproduction. But, as we shall see in the following section, seeking infertility treatment is, in and of itself, sexually disruptive in ways that many Egyptian women, such as Nariman, never anticipated.

SEXUAL TROUBLES IN THE MEDICAL ENCOUNTER

As seen in Nariman's story, Egyptian infertility physicians, most of whom are male, rarely ask their women patients about sexual practices or problems that may be hindering fertility outcomes. This is as true in public hospital-based infertility clinics as it is in private infertility clinics. For example, in interviews I conducted with 17 Egyptian gynecologists—about half of them from a public teaching hospital-based infertility clinic and the other half from private infertility clinics—all but three indicated that they did not routinely ask their women patients about sexual issues, feeling that it was incumbent upon their patients to report sexual problems to them. Furthermore, even in high-tech Egyptian in vitro fertilization (IVF) clinics, where husbands and wives are expected to seek treatment together, I was told by physicians that sexual history-taking (if present at all) is brief and superficial. Presumably, some men, particularly those ashamed about their sexual inadequacy, do not answer honestly and are never challenged by their wives or their attending physicians.

In the Egyptian medical encounter between physicians and infertile patients, an unofficial “don't ask, don't tell” policy is clearly in place—one that maintains sexual silences and virtual erasures of male sexual dysfunctions. As one woman with an impotent husband complained, “I never told [the doctor] about my husband's problems. He never asked me these questions; he just asked for the sperm. I'm not embarrassed to tell him, but he didn't ask me. I *would* tell him if he asked me, but he just talks quickly and I don't understand him well, and I am shy to tell him anything.”

Egyptian gynecologists offered many rationales for their lack of sexual history-taking, ranging from lack of time, to cultural prohibitions against inter-gender sexual discourse, to concerns over loss of (offended) clientele, to beliefs (on the part of many) that sexual problems will eventually “come out,” either through the admissions of frustrated wives or through diagnostic tests and treatments that reveal the absence of sperm. In some cases, physicians were slightly apologetic about their clinical lacuna, typically justifying it by pointing to their own lack of sex education and self-perceived inability to advise their patients on sexual matters. As one physician admitted:

I think we are ignorant about sexual relations between partners. And usually doctors didn't ask precisely or specifically about this point. Most doctors

themselves are ashamed to talk about this, so it is not well diagnosed. And if I ask about this, the patient, especially the infertile male, may leave and go to another doctor. Even when female doctors talk to female patients, this happens. But with infertility, they can't hide this easily, and women should tell us. But there's no teaching of doctors about *how* to ask, so it is not well examined.

In doctors' defense, it is true that Egyptian physicians do not receive comprehensive education in human sexuality. But it is also likely that sexual denial and discomfort in the clinical encounter persist, for three major reasons having to do with larger cultural forces. First, physicians as a professional group—consisting of individuals drawn mainly from the middle to upper classes—seem to maintain the privileges of elite status through the paternalistic social distancing of the lower and even middle-class patients who present to their clinics. Such medical paternalism is achieved through lack of disclosure of medical information, with physicians controlling what can be asked by patients and revealed to them; brief and often brusque communication styles; and use of English (including on patients' medical records and prescriptions) to obscure patients' understandings of their own medical conditions (Inhorn 1994).

Second, problems of medical paternalism are compounded by the persistence of patriarchal structures surrounding male doctor/female patient relations. Egyptian gynecology, one of the "prestigious" specialties, is a remarkably male-dominated profession. Because male physicians in this patriarchal setting view it as their socially sanctioned right to completely control the clinical encounter with female patients, frank intimidation of women patients, particularly those from lower social classes, is the unfortunate norm. Furthermore, marked cultural restrictions on what is considered appropriate male–female discourse are operative in gynecological encounters. Whereas frank "sex talk" is allowed between married women and between men, it is generally "tabooed" in mixed-sex settings, including the medical encounter between male physicians and their female clients.

These gendered patterns of sexual communication seem to be crystallizing even further as a result of heightened Islamic religiosity in the country over the past two decades (Inhorn 2003). As in other religiously conservative countries of the Middle East and Africa, more and more Egyptians are preferring true gender segregation in the medical realm—with female patients being treated by female physicians and male patients being treated by male physicians.⁶ Particularly among Egyptian Islamists, who consider themselves to be particularly devout Muslims and who dress in enveloping garb (including facial veils for women) to preserve their gendered modesty,

examination or treatment by a physician of the opposite sex is considered immodest and even sinful. Thus, many Islamist husbands will not allow their wives to discuss “sensitive” topics with—let alone be treated by—a male physician. Clearly, many Egyptian male gynecologists living in an increasingly gender-segregated, religiously conservative environment are aware of these cultural forces and are reluctant to lose “religious” patients by exploring the gender-sensitive, even “sinful” topic of sex. Ultimately, increasing Islamist influence in Egyptian medicine (including control over the Egyptian Physicians’ Syndicate) has the potential to put male gynecologists out of business if female patients refuse to visit them. Thus, few male gynecologists are willing to jeopardize their livelihoods by offending female patients (and their husbands) in these ways.

These social and cultural forces have affected the practice of Egyptian medicine in ways that are detrimental for women like Nariman, who remain sexually frustrated by their husbands, silenced by their physicians, and expected to cope with their unrequited motherhood on their own. Clearly, among couples for whom sexual dysfunction has led to infertility, greater openness in the medical encounter would be welcome. Yet, as it now stands, most Egyptian physicians use their power to give and to withhold information, to ask questions and answer them as they see fit. Unfortunately, in the area of infertility management, it is the exceptional physician who probes the lives of patients with sexual problems, many of whom are often desperate to discuss these problems but too intimidated to begin the process.

Yet, there is something paradoxical about this “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy: at the same time that physicians ask little or nothing about their infertile patients’ sex lives, they place extraordinary sexual demands on infertile couples—extending matter-of-fact directives to women about when they should ask their husbands (or bring them in) for semen samples and when they should go home “to have relations with your husband.” Indeed, many diagnostic and therapeutic procedures in infertility management are sexually demanding, requiring physician-directed, scheduled intercourse, as well as frequent (even urgent) semen samples produced through masturbatory ejaculation into a plastic cup. Such “sex on demand” is problematic in Egypt for two reasons.

First, Egyptian gender norms, at least among the lower to lower-middle class, prohibit women from initiating sex, as sexual initiation is deemed a solely masculine act and prerogative. Thus, women “ordered” by their infertility physicians to “go home and have relations with your husband” or to “tell your husband to produce a semen sample” are typically disconcerted,

deeming themselves entirely incapable of asking their husbands for sex or semen. In some cases, a wife may be so unnerved by being perceived as “needing” sex—or, alternatively, she may be so concerned about a husband’s unpredictable reaction if she asks for it—that she may lose the nerve altogether to follow through with the physician’s instructions. Clearly, for women such as Nariman, the distress of asking a husband for sex is intensified when male sexual performance is implicated as the very reason for the infertility. Thus, the “good women don’t ask for it” policy characterizing Egyptian marital relations, at least among the lower class, means that infertility diagnosis and treatment is threatening to both the performance of sex and gender in this cultural setting.

Second, infertility diagnosis and treatment often leads to male sexual performance difficulties, as well as decreased male sexual satisfaction, a finding that has been widely reported from around the world (Daniluk 1988; Greil et al. 1990; Hurwitz 1989; Takefman et al. 1990). For Egyptian men, the task of producing a semen sample may be experienced as deeply emasculating: typically, they show up under duress at a hospital-based or otherwise crowded infertility clinic, only to be given a plastic container and asked to produce a specimen (on their own) in a unisex clinic bathroom, while others wait outside. Even for men without obvious sexual dysfunctions, the performance anxiety and sense of public humiliation may be profound. One highly educated IVF patient described her husband’s failure to produce a crucial semen sample—and her resultant anger at the cavalier response of the treating physician—as follows: “Unfortunately, I told [the IVF doctor] that my husband has difficulty in making a sample in the clinic, and I asked can we do it at home. He said, ‘No, it’s better at the center and come on Friday [i.e., the Egyptian weekend]; you’ll find no one there, and he’ll feel free and feel so good.’ So, the doctor told us at the last minute, ‘Come on Friday, and he will do it [masturbation] easily.’ When he went there, he found many, many, many people. It was crowded even on a Friday. It was in September, so the weather was very hot. And it was a small, small bathroom right beside the nurse’s office. And he started sweating and couldn’t do it. After that, he was very upset and said, ‘I hate marriage.’”

She continued, “My ovaries had started to work, and I took all the expensive medicine, and then there was no use, because he couldn’t provide a semen sample. [The doctor] said, ‘Oh well, you can try next time.’ I was angry, and I told him, ‘You are not a doctor. You are not honest. You’re wasting the time and money of people. We are not people from a village to be told ‘Come here. Do this. Do that.’ These doctors are savage—against humanity.”

THE FUTURE FOR THE SEXUALLY DYSFUNCTIONAL

What can be done in Egypt to alleviate the suffering of sexually dysfunctional men and their long-suffering “infertile” wives? A number of emergent changes may go a long way toward bringing the problem of sexual dysfunction into the open and helping those men (and their wives) who suffer from this problem.

First, some Egyptian physicians are beginning to perform sexual counseling services. Despite the protestations of many physicians, sexual counseling is *not* impossible in Egypt—and may, in fact, make a physician popular and successful. For example, two gynecologists I interviewed, one male and one female, had incorporated aspects of sexual counseling into their thriving private practices. They described, in frank but graphic terms, how they dealt with sexual problems ranging from unconsummated marriages, to lack of orgasm, to premature ejaculation and erectile dysfunction. Both were proud of their “successes,” and were pleased with the babies subsequently born from some of these sexually troubled unions. This aspect of physician counseling—even in the absence of more direct psychotherapeutic intervention—has been shown to have therapeutic effects in other settings (Rantala and Koskimies 1988).

Although Western commentators tend to recommend psychological counseling services for sexually dysfunctional infertile couples (Daniluk 1988), psychological therapy per se will probably never become widely popular in Egypt. Even highly educated patients in Egyptian IVF centers refuse initial psychological consultations, which have been tried but then discontinued by some clinics. Nonetheless, this too may be slowly changing. Egyptian psychologists trained in the West are beginning to set up sex therapy practices in urban Egypt, where they cater to high-paying elites as well as occasional charity cases. One such “sexual healer,” who preferred to be called by a pseudonym, talked to a Western reporter about her Cairo-based practice, in which she uses references to religion and “the man’s duty to attend to his wife’s sexual needs” as a therapeutic vehicle (Thompson 2000: 27). This therapist argued that education is a “key component of her treatment, particularly for unconsummated marriage, which trails homosexuality as her most common case” (Thompson 2000: 27).

Furthermore, new technologies are changing the nature of sex and sex education in Egypt. Satellite dishes and black-market videos are bringing Western sexual ideas and practices (including pornographic ones) directly to Egyptians of all social classes. In addition, Egypt is now the site of a number of new medical technologies designed to overcome the effects of male sexual dysfunction. One of these is sildenafil citrate—or Viagra—the

new oral treatment for erectile dysfunction (ED) that has created a veritable “revolution” in the treatment of impotence in the West. Despite import restrictions, Viagra is sold as a popular “street” drug in Egypt, with considerable media attention and brisk sales. Indeed, new pharmaceutically based cures for impotence—and Egyptian men’s desires to use them—may serve as one of the most effective vehicles for eventual normalization of this otherwise hidden and emasculating problem.

Finally, new reproductive technologies which literally bypass sexual reproduction have reached Egypt over the past decade and provide a means of overcoming male infertility as well as infertility due to male sexual dysfunction. In particular, the “newest” new reproductive technology, intracytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI), a variant of IVEF, has created a revolution in the treatment of multiple forms of male infertility. With ICSI, as long as one viable spermatozoon can be retrieved from a man’s body—including through testicular biopsy or aspiration—this spermatozoon can be injected directly into an ovum under a high-powered laboratory microscope, leading to subsequent fertilization and pregnancy. The introduction of ICSI in urban Egypt constitutes an encouraging development in overcoming infertility due to sexual dysfunction, and may well presage other future developments in the realm of medical technology.

In conclusion, emergent medical technologies, new forms of medical counseling and sex therapy, and new forms of global media may create openings for the transformation of sexuality, masculinity, and infertility in Egypt as it enters the new millennium.

NOTES

A longer version of this essay appeared in *The Journal of Men’s Studies* 10, 3 (2002): 343–359.

1. The first study was based in the University of Alexandria’s Shatby Hospital, the major public ob/gyn teaching hospital, which catered to a large population of mostly poor infertile patients from the northwestern Nile Delta region. There, I conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews, involving both reproductive and sexual histories, in the Egyptian dialect of Arabic with 190 women, 100 of whom were infertile and 90 of whom were fertile “controls.” Returning to Egypt during the summer of 1996, I spent three summer months conducting in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 66 mostly affluent Egyptian couples in two private hospital-based in vitro fertilization (IVF) clinics located in exclusive suburbs of Cairo. Seventy percent of the husbands suffered from a male infertility problem, including, in some cases, sexual dysfunction.
2. All names are pseudonyms.
3. Cousin marriage is a common practice in Egypt among all social classes.

4. Because donor insemination is religiously prohibited in all Sunni Muslim countries including Egypt (Meirow and Schenker 1997), artificial insemination with husband's sperm (AIH) is the only form of artificial insemination performed in the country. It is not as sexually "demanding" as timed intercourse, given that semen can be donated at one's leisure and stored for future use.
5. *Munaggimin* generally have a poor reputation in Egypt as unscrupulous charlatans who deal in the sacrilegious business of sorcery (Inhorn 1994).
6. At the time of the 1996 study, only one female physician was involved in offering IVF services in Cairo. As the director of an IVF laboratory, her role did not normally include clinical consultation with patients.

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