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THE PATRIARCHAL TRAP: DECONSTRUCTING THE “REAL MAN” IN CONTEMPORARY ANGLO-AFRICAN LITERATURE

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Tanja Gruber, BA

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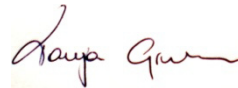
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1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this thesis is to outline how a patriarchally organized social system maintains the construction and perpetuation of one-dimensional and limited gender roles; in particular, how it maintains and perpetuates an idealized stereotypical image of a “real man” in Anglo-African literature. Further, by closely investigating the main male characters, I want to show how the attempt to correspond with this particular “real man” image puts tremendous pressure on each of them – not only within the novels, but also within society in general.

In other words, opposed to an essentialist assumption of masculinity as something “natural” and inherent, I want to indicate how gender images – especially the image of a “real man” – are constructed and how they are passed on in form of traditions and social norms, causing men to become the actual victims of these idealized images themselves.

For this purpose I will closely investigate five novels – of which two are set in postcolonial Tanzania and three in postcolonial South Africa – and outline characteristics that are closely linked with the stereotypical image of a “real man”. This will be followed by an analysis of how the main male characters put these shared and valued characteristics in question and challenge them. Thereby, I will show how gender construction is a fluid process which is constantly influenced by socially defined expectations and social norms and thus will indicate how misleading the assumption of essentialist masculinity is.

The selected novels tell the stories of male protagonists who – by trying to fulfill socially constructed gender expectations – have to face serious pressure by not being able to meet these expectations. In other words, by trying to correspond with a very restricted gender image, the main protagonists get caught in a social system which they themselves maintain, namely patriarchy. Although the protagonists have to prove their “real manhood” in completely different contexts and environments, the challenges they have to face are very similar. Ranging from a failed circumcision which automatically deprives the initiate of a culturally accepted existence as “real man”, over a father and husband who is torn apart between rural tradition and urban modernity, to the son of a South African Boer who shatters the ideal image of the raw white South African manhood farmer by revealing his homosexuality, the social environments of the protagonists differ significantly, but, nevertheless, exposes them to the same pressure. An additional aspect which interferes with the performance of socially expected

masculinity is the weakness of the body; in particular, in the form of HIV and Aids, which is also the main theme of one of the selected novels.

However, by suggesting alternative markers for gender identities, the novels also give reason for being hopeful when it comes to breaking the cycle of perpetuating idealized gender images; especially when it comes to the one-dimensional and idealized masculine image of a “real man”. This change is particularly depicted by the fifth novel which will be analyzed, because it deals with the conscious reflection of social gender expectations and the consequent destructiveness of a “real man” image.

Thus, although the protagonist’s desire for “passing” as “real men” is challenged through different circumstances, the underlying theme is the same: namely the existence of a specific image which is deeply rooted within society, irrespective of location, age and social class of the male protagonists. By providing examples from the novels *A Man Who Is Not a Man* by Thando Mgqolozana, *Silent Empowerment of the Compatriots* by Gabriel Ruhumbika, *Kings of the Water* by Mark Behr, Sindiwe Magona’s *Beauty’s Gift* and *Parched Earth* by Elieshi Lema, as well as research findings gained in Sub-Saharan Africa, I want to outline the common characteristics between Tanzanian and South African “real man”-constructions in contemporary literature. In addition, I want to discuss how literature can be used as source for ideas in regard of further research.

Before moving on, however, I briefly want to explain the motivation behind this topic. During my exchange semester at the University of Dar es Salaam from 2012 to 2013, I became aware of the significant weight that is attached to gender roles and gender expectations within an East-African society. For instance, during lectures and open discussions, girls hardly ever contributed a statement, while their male colleagues almost always voiced their opinion, even when it was not related to the topic. It became obvious that men were “trained” to talk while their female counterparts were socialized to remain mostly quiet.

A further observation was that gender expectations have a significant impact on health-related issues, in particular, on the transmission of the HI-Virus. For instance, the use of condoms in different contexts is often highly stigmatized and thus rejected. For example, women who ask their partner to use a condom are considered to be prostitutes, while in turn, when men ask their partners to use condoms, they are considered to be sick.

Therefore, I am very interested in the meaning that is associated with gender, in particular with male identities in a Sub-Saharan context. By analyzing five contemporary

Anglo-African novels from Tanzania and South Africa, I want to outline the deliberate quest for a “real man”. The novels share a list of reappearing characteristics which are strongly connected with the construction of male identities and maintained as well as perpetuated within a patriarchally organized social system. These are, for instance, generational struggles, shame and silence, superiority of elders, domination over women, aggression, violence, sexual control, homophobia, denial, rejection and withdrawal. These characteristics will emerge repeatedly in the contexts of the male protagonists and thus be an essential part in indicating the constructedness of one particular stereotypical gender image. The historical and geographical context in which I want to place my study is postcolonial urban and rural Tanzania as well as postcolonial rural South Africa.

Regarding the structure of this thesis, it will start out with a clarification of the terminology in use, followed by a brief explanation of gender studies which will be the methodology I am going to apply. Third, I want to provide an overview of the current state of research in regard of men as the “new” targets in women- and gender studies. Fourth, I want to draw a connection between fact & fiction, by addressing the question of how literature can be seen as an artifact of real issues or at least as source of inspiration for further social and historic research, for instance. Fifth, I will move on to the main part which will be an analysis of the selected novels according to the above mentioned characteristics.

The first novel constitutes an essential part of this thesis, not only because of its fitting title called *A Man Who is Not a Man*, but also because of its very basic and traditional concept of manhood, namely the journey into manhood through the rites of passage. The book tells the story of a young South African whose process of becoming a man more or less fails because of the negative outcome of his circumcision. Shortly after the surgery his health situation worsens rapidly and he has to do the “unthinkable” which is going to a hospital – the forbidden place. This in turn is interpreted by his social environment as an obvious sign of weakness and is therefore not corresponding with the expected gender image. Although the main protagonist is suffering severe pain and a life-threatening infection, he is only encountering disappointment and anger, instead of empathy and support.

The second novel, *The Silent Empowerment of the Compatriots*, deals with the emergence of new gender identities in urban Tanzania within Nyerere’s national cultural project in the early 60s. The novel presents the destiny of two families over the

course of fifty years who are experiencing and living this change between “old” and “new” Tanzania. It outlines how traditional rural values clash with the rise of a new urban life style. In particular, how this development influences the lives of the two main protagonists and to which extent it affects their existence as “real men”.

The third novel, *Kings of the Water*, is set in a completely different context, namely the farm of a white South African Boer family which presents the setting of severe intergenerational conflicts as well as the betrayal of typical patriarchal values. Moreover, the novel also presents shifting power dynamics between dominant white apartheid farm owners and post-apartheid black South Africans. Further, it shows how homosexuality and the consequent shame and silence heavily interfere with the construction of “real manhood”.

The fourth novel, *Beauty's Gift*, will address the question of how the performance of a “real man” image is significantly shattered with the emergence and expansion of the HI-Virus since the early 1980s. It outlines the impact of HIV/AIDS on gender construction, and in particular on the construction of a “real man” image.

Finally, the last novel *Parched Earth* presents, as mentioned earlier, a conscious reflection on the devastating effects of strictly defined gender expectations. Since the basis of the existence of a “real manhood” image is the functioning of a patriarchal structure, the novel perfectly outlines how these concepts are mutually dependent. In addition, it also indicates how the members of a patriarchal society suffer from the pressure and consequences of this structure.

Although, set in different contexts and environments, the selected novels share the same theme which is the quest for the “real man”. Before going deeper into the analysis of constructed masculine images, I briefly want to move on with a clarification of the terminology I am going to use in this thesis.

2. TERMINOLOGY

The methodologies which will be applied for this analysis is gender theory and to some extent also discourse analysis. Therefore, it is important to provide a brief overview of the following basic concepts: gender, gender performativity, script, practices and hegemonic masculinity as well as discourse and text, followed by a brief discussion of the concept of patriarchy and its relevance to the selected novels.

2.1 GENDER

By using the term “gender” in this thesis, I am referring to ‘a conceptual division between sex and gender’ (Barker187). Hereby the former refers to the biology of the body and the latter to ‘the cultural assumptions and practices which govern the social construction of men, women and their social relations’ (187). Thus it can be said that not every woman or every man share the same interests due to their biological characteristics, but rather that men as well as women are determined by categories such as ‘class, ethnicity, nationality and other cultural forms and practices’ (186). Therefore, as it will be outlined in the course of this thesis, men and women might live in very close proximity, but be confronted with absolutely different challenges and expectations due to the different social environment they live in.

To further clarify the notion of gender, it can be seen that a great variety of disciplines has become aware of the cultural construction of gender and consequently has realized that due to their constructedness certain attitudes are commonly only attributed to men and others only to women. In order to “pass” as a “normal” man or woman, we constantly have to perform a role which is defined by the society we live in. However, although different societies have different perceptions of how men and women are supposed to behave, there are some gender-expectations which are generally more common than others. One example for a typically socially constructed gender expectation is the division of tasks and responsibilities when it comes to activities around the home. Men, for instance, ‘are seen as being responsible for the productive activities outside the home while women are expected to be responsible for reproductive and productive activities within the home’ (Gupta 02). As a consequence women are socially conditioned to “accept” and perform their capability of having children, while men are expected to (financially) support and provide for them’ (Gupta 02). Therefore, gender relations are characterized by an ‘unequal power balance’ which disadvantages women by leaving them economically dependent on their husbands (Gupta 03)’. At least this is the notion that has been circulating widely within feminist as well as women and gender studies.

A rather recent branch of research, which I am interested in, is the role of men in this power hierarchy. Ranging from theorists to NGOs, people have been repeatedly claiming the role of men as perpetrators opposed to the role of women as victims. However, this claim overlooks the fact that not all men have equal power. A relatively new development within gender research has made aware of the actual gap in

knowledge that exists about men and the power structure they live in. In fact, the 'dominance of men in the public record has obscured the fact that little is known about masculinity' (Morrell 605). Theorists have realized that men 'have generally been treated in essentialist terms' (605). Studying masculinities thus means having a closer look on the construction of masculinity in a local context (Conway 101).

As can be seen from the selected texts used in this thesis, in the context of South Africa as well as Tanzania, a broad range of masculinities can be identified. As explained by Morrell: '[u]nder colonialism positions of domination and subordination were created along the lines of race, bequeathing to the region the language of white men and black "boys"' Consequently, '[c]olonialism created new and transformed existing masculinities' (Morrell 605). However, not only the power division along racial lines changed South African and Tanzanian masculinities, but –in particular in the South African context –also the patriarchal nature of apartheid. These influencing factors were followed by 'gendered crises of violence and the HIV pandemic' (Conway 101).

2.2 GENDER PERFORMATIVITY

As mentioned before, fulfilling certain social gender expectations or in other words "passing" as a "normal" man or woman requires performing a role, designed according to social rules. Thus, when analyzing gender theory, the concept of "gender performativity" comes into play. Explaining it with the words of one of the most important gender theorists, namely Judith Butler, gender performativity can be described as 'a repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a rigid regulatory frame which congeals over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a 'natural' kind of being' (qtd. in Cameron 420). Or in other words, the performance has to be repeated over and over again in order to appear credible. Indeed, as Cameron puts it: '[g]ender has constantly to be reaffirmed and publicly displayed by repeatedly performing particular acts in accordance with the cultural norms [...] which define "masculinity" and "femininity"' (420). Eventually, the constant repetition of a certain behavior will lead, according to Butler, to the expected „naturalized" gender identity (Brook 14).

2.3 DISCOURSE AND TEXT

By dealing with the analysis of culturally produced meaning and values, it is basically unavoidable to use the terms "discourse" and "text". Beginning with the term

discourse, it not only has 'to do with language, meaning and context', but with meaning that goes beyond language in use (Jaworski and Coupland xi). In other words, discourse can be understood as 'a system of statements which constructs an object' (Parker 04). Its relationship with "text" is constituted in the idea that discourses can be found 'at work in *texts* [which] are delimited tissues of meaning reproduced in *any* form that can be given an interpretative gloss' (Parker 05). Thus, any form of communication – '[i]n some cases we could imagine an "author" behind it' – can be seen as text (05). Thus, also images, sounds, objects and practices such as advertisements, writing, speech, fashion systems, non-verbal behavior and even bus tickets or architecture can be understood as cultural text (Parker 05).

Concluding, the discourse of a "real man" is made up of a variety of different texts, such as political campaigns, medical articles, advertising campaigns and also fictional literature. Therefore, there is a strong link between fact and fiction which I will investigate more closely later in this thesis.

2.4 PATRIARCHY

Societies around the world are organized by patriarchal structures. Therefore, it is essential to understand the meaning and legitimacy of this system and how Western as well as African cultures are structured by it. Patriarchy can basically be explained as 'the elevation of "the idea of the leadership of the fathers", to a position of paramount importance in society' (Coetzee 300). The concept of patriarchy has a long history, dating back to Biblical times where it '[specifically refers] to the sons of Jacob, (as well as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and their forefathers)' (Coetzee 300). Despite its long history, 'the ideological nature of patriarchy' has not lost anything of its importance over time (300). On the contrary, societies around the world have normalized and internalized the values of patriarchal structures. In fact, as outlined in Coetzee's article, patriarchy is "'one of the strongest ideologies in cultures world-wide..." (qtd. in Coetzee 300).

In the course of this thesis it will become obvious that patriarchal structures are very important for the making of "real men", especially in the context of Mark Behr's novel *Kings of the Water* and Elieshi Lema's *Parched Earth*, in which the weight of patriarchal values is striking. By analyzing these novels, I want to show how patriarchy in general and, in the context of *Kings of the Water*, the South African "Afrikaner patriarchy", in particular not only have devastating effects on the individual, but also to a larger extent on the society as a whole. In Boonzaaier & Sharp's view

...patriarchal tradition of the household is one of the most beautiful legacies of the Afrikaner ... As main characteristic of the old farm house-hold we can mention that it was a community of authority. In this small community the father was the highest authority. In other words, he was at the head of the specific authority structure. Since every authority structure can have only one head, the woman was under authority of her husband ... the mother, on the other hand, was pre-eminently the loving and understanding party who cared and served in silence (Boonzaaier:1988 155).

As can be seen from this quote, the main characteristics of the patriarchal ideology which organized life on the Afrikaner farm house-hold were the existence of 'the community of authority', on the one hand, and the (Afrikaner) father as the only and "highest authority" of this community, on the other hand. The strong connection between patriarchy and the constructed images of masculinity in general will be closely investigated in the context of the selected novels.

2.5 SCRIPT, PRACTICES AND HEGEMONIC MASCULINITIES

As mentioned before, gender is a social construction and has to be constantly reaffirmed through defined performances. Thus by referring to the term "masculinity", we cannot speak of a 'fixed, essential identity that all men share', but rather of a 'fluid and dynamic identity that is socially and historically constructed' (qtd. in Lynch, Brouard and Visser 16). Or in other words, '[t]here is not one universal masculinity, but many masculinities' (Morrell 607) which develop through the influence of different factors such as race, class and education. Moreover, certain life event, such as severe illness like HIV/AIDS or physical weakness in general is argued to 'interfere with the script of being a "real" man' (Lynch, Brouard and Visser 16). Disease and physical weakness are, for instance, the main themes in *A Man Who is Not a Man* and *Beauty's Gift*. These factors will play a significant role when analyzing masculine identities in this thesis. Regarding race, class and education these factors are very influential in the development of a "real man", particularly in *Kings of the Water* where masculinities develop in the power hierarchies of white Afrikaner farm owners and black workers.

When 'studying men through the lens of masculinity' (Morrell 630), it becomes obvious that in society there is one image of masculinity which is more common or more dominant than others. It is an image that is usually associated with an "ideal" or "normal" masculine identity. This specific masculine image is also known as "hegemonic" masculinity. It is the 'ideal that men measure themselves against, and are measured against by others' (Brown, Sorrell and Raffaelli 586). Further, a hegemonic

masculinity 'subordinates other masculinities in the successful projection of what it is to be a "real man"' (Conway 101). In other words, 'hegemonic masculinity silences or subordinates other masculinities', by positioning them 'in relation to itself such that the values expressed by these other masculinities are not those that have currency or legitimacy' (Morrell 608). However, this silencing or subordinating of other masculinities is not a consistent process, but rather a 'contested and shifting' one and in addition, in many places the constructions of masculinity is even contradictory (Conway 101). The aim or result of this constantly shifting process is to 'create a "gender consensus" which orders society and legitimates the power of certain groups of men' (101). According to Morrell, among the defining features of a hegemonic masculinity are 'misogyny, homophobia, racism and compulsory heterosexuality' (608).

When looking at African masculine identities, a number of other crucial factors add to the creation of a hegemonic masculine image, such as politics, religion and history. For instance, especially in South Africa the apartheid policy adds different factors to the development of a hegemonic African masculinity as compared to other African countries. Nevertheless, as Morrell explains, although domination over women is often a characteristic which binds masculinities together, there are still groups of men who are excluded from this idealized hegemonic masculine image, as, for instance working class, black and gay men (608). Therefore, no matter which cultural group is put under scrutiny, hegemonic or normative masculinity is never just a "natural" or essential fact but a matter of social constructions which are, in turn, subject to constant change.

One common characteristic in the performance of hegemonic masculinity, men usually have to prove that they are striving for a heterosexual relationship by getting married and fathering children, but also by having financial resources (Lynch, Brouard and Visser 19). Other common but more subtle connotations with normative masculinity are aggressive behavior, dominance over women, 'virility, the appearance of being strong, and emotional and physical control' (Brown, Sorrell and Raffaelli 587).

Fulfilling this list of "typical" male characteristics and the necessity of constantly reaffirming certain practices is, as mentioned before, part of gender performativity. It is a performance that follows a certain "script" which in turn supports the existence of a specific discourse, namely a 'discourse of a dominant idealized masculinity, where masculinity is constructed in terms of what defines being a "real" man' (Lynch, Brouard and Visser 19).

In summary, within patriarchally organized social systems, there are dominant forms of masculinity which support and maintain 'relations of inequality'. Nevertheless, this state of inequality is not entrenched within the respective social system, but is constantly challenged. In fact, 'the control of one type of masculinity is "never totally comprehensive" nor does it "ever completely control subordinates"' (Morrell 606).

3. FATHERS, UNCLES AND GRANDFATHERS – SOURCES OF "IDEAL" MANHOOD AND GENERATIONAL STRUGGLES

One significant aspect for the maintenance of a "real man" discourse is the interaction between generations. According to different studies dealing with African masculinity, 'older men who value a traditional construction of a virile heterosexual masculinity' constitute an important reference point for young men (Lynch, Brouard and Visser 19). At the same time, older generations are not only considered as source of advice and support, but also as source of significant pressure. They are often associated with the past and therefore with traditions and the "true" values of a society. This is particularly true in a postcolonial context where young Africans are confronted with Western values and often blamed by elders for not remembering their roots.

Another study, also dealing with masculinity, sexuality and HIV/AIDS, which was conducted in Namibia and South Africa in 2001, outlined the influence of older generations and the challenges young people are facing through them. The informants referred to 'fathers and uncles but most described grandfathers and old head men as reference points when asked what it used to mean to be a man' (Brown et al. 590). At the same time, however, the young informants explained that in order 'to fulfill the definition of manhood [...] western ideals of status' such as 'having money, many girlfriends, and a car' were essential (590). Further associations with contemporary images of masculinity, as outlined in the next chapter, are urban lifestyle and education.

In the past, and currently in rural settings, agricultural wealth (e.g., cattle and a large millet field) was emphasized. However, modern markers of wealth have replaced or been added to those traditionally associated with masculinity, particularly in urban areas; now one must also have a car, money, education, and a job (Brown et al. 594).

Or, as put straight by a girl in research conducted in Zambia, the ideal boyfriend has to have the "'four C's" (car, crib, cash and a cell-phone) (qtd. in Brown et al. 594).

4. URBANIZATION AND WESTERN VALUES: NEW CHALLENGES FOR THE PERFORMANCE OF A HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY

By focusing on a post-apartheid African context, additional challenges in performing hegemonic masculinities are playing a role. These are urbanization, on the one hand, and the influence of western values, on the other. One example for the significant impact of urbanization on masculinity is outlined by Robert Morrell. In his article “Of boys and men: masculinity and gender in Southern African studies” he analyzes the connection between urbanization, work during apartheid and masculine identities:

In the earliest days, they undertook women’s work. While this was a wage-earning activity which was in a sense empowering and part of a process developing the job as a key feature of being a man, it was also demeaning. The kinds of jobs were menial, brutal or unmanly(622).

Further, he points out that ‘[w]ork was a ticket into the city – without work, apartheid officials would imprison and deport African men to the reserves. It was for this reason that work increasingly became a mark of masculinity’ (626). Thus, although the jobs had a negative connotation, it becomes obvious that masculinity was closely connected with work, migration and urbanization.

Nevertheless, as mentioned earlier, there is not one static image of masculinity, but, depending on the context, several images which are constantly challenged and in the process of change. Therefore, young black men in post-apartheid South African had to face different challenges when moving to urban areas as opposed to young men in post-colonial Tanzania. One of the novels which I am going to analyze in this thesis explicitly shows the new challenges urbanization brought on young men who were moving from rural Tanzania to the big cities of the country. In order to better exemplify the impact of urbanization on masculinity, I will have a closer look at Nyerere’s cultural project in post-colonial Tanzania later in this thesis. However, before going into more detail on urbanization politics and its consequences for masculine identities in Tanzania, I briefly want to return to social expectations and the pressure it exerts on men who are trying to fulfill a socially constructed heteronormative script.

5. BEING A “REAL MAN”: FULFILLING THE HETERONORMATIVE SCRIPT

It goes without saying that the most typical characteristic of a “real man” image is his heterosexual relationship. The significant social weight of this characteristic can be found, for instance, in research conducted in Namibia, where ‘an element of

contemporary masculinity [...] is the importance of having girlfriends and non-marital sexual partners' (Brown et al. 590). Also, according to the study, it is common for men who work in urban areas to have girlfriends there, while their wives and families are back home in rural villages (Brown et al. 591). In fact, participants of the study pointed out that having many girlfriends helped to 'achiev[e] high status as a man' (591). Similar results were found in Lynch, Brouard and Visser's study about masculinity which was conducted in South Africa, where participants claimed that it is 'normative for men to have multiple sexual partners, which supports the dominant discourse of male sexuality in literature' (20).

Thus, it can be seen that being in a heteronormative relationship is inextricably linked with proving one's hegemonic masculinity. The consequence, however, that goes along with this social norms, is that young men are facing a lot of pressure. Not only, because they have to "prove" their manhood by engaging in a heterosexual relationship with ideally more than one woman and by fathering at least one children, but also by being able to offer them material wealth. If young men, however, fail to show these required idealized characteristics, or in other words, if they fail to perform the hegemonic gender image, they most likely have to face severe consequences:

Men who do not show "sufficient" interest in women through having several sexual partners or who contest the heterosexual norm through homosexuality, are constructed as "a problem". They are viewed as different from the accepted norm and intervention from elders or from traditional healers is required to return the person to what is viewed as "normal" (Lynch et al. 20).

Thus, the pressure of fulfilling the "script" of a hegemonic heteronormative masculine image is inevitably connected with the fear of being threatened by homophobia and the marginalization and 'stigmatization of men who have sex with men' (Gupta 06).

Homosexuality, in fact, represents a 'key challenge to hegemonic masculinity' (Bujra 11).

By looking at an African context, sexual relationships between men are, except for South Africa, hardly acknowledged. Unfortunately, rather the opposite is true. A hostile attitude has been 'reinforced by some leaders who claim that homosexuality is totally un-African, a colonial import which has corrupted Africans, and cater only to foreigners' (qtd. in Nyoni and Ross 223). In Kenya, Uganda, Zimbabwe and also Tanzania, for instance, homosexuality is not only denied, but has even been declared as criminal act (Bujra 11).

As a consequence men who have sex with men (MSM) not only have to face stigmatization but also a great health risk, because „official silence" and discrimination

are a great challenge for the exchange of medical information between health care providers and MSM (qtd. in Nyoni and Ross 223). In addition, the notion that homosexuality is seen as being ‘an act “against African tradition”’ complicates the work of health care providers and the attempt to implement HIV/AIDS campaigns focusing on men and homosexuality in the context of the epidemic (Bujra 11). Severe and hostile reactions ‘from African men in positions of power, which suggest that the notion of diverse forms of sexuality [appear as] extremely threatening’ to society (11).

Before exemplifying how urbanization, gender expectations, generational influence and postcolonial politics played a role in the performance of “ideal” manhood, I want to draw attention to the relation between fact and fiction and how this idea is important for this thesis.

6. FACT AND FICTION: LITERATURE AS MANUFACTURED EVIDENCE

In the beginning of this thesis I have provided a definition of discourse and that it consists of different culturally produced texts which can be understood as a form of communication, behind which we can even imagine an author. Consequently, I am convinced that a novel constitutes a basic and very obvious form of communication in which an author conveys a message to his or her audience. Therefore, a novel serves as culturally produced text which, in turn, reflects but also perpetuates a certain discourse. Interesting for this thesis is the question of now how are novels, discourses and history connected.

An explanation can be found in Nancy Rose Hunt’s “Between Fiction and History: Modes of Writing Abortion in Africa”. Hunt is interested in ‘how novels disclose history – history as social process, and history as forms of remembering’ (04). A further useful answer to this question is provided by Lilian Osaki and Lisa María B. Noudéhou, both Senior lecturers at the Department of Literature at the University of Dar es Salaam.

In the introduction to *Tell me, friends: Contemporary Stories and Plays of Tanzania*, submitted by students and staff at the University of Dar es Salaam, they point out that during the review of the texts that were submitted for this collection, they found that these ‘contemporary narratives are strongly engaged in addressing social problems’ (Osaki and Noudéhou vii). This can be seen as a connection between history and novels – fact and fiction. Further, they argue that ‘authors in Africa understand their role as one in which they speak on behalf of and to the societies in which they live’ (vi). Moreover, they claim that ‘a literature which is engaged in addressing social problems is actually

the norm, not the exception, in Tanzania' (vi). Osaki and Noudéhou also emphasize the intention of Tanzanian authors, such as Gabriel Ruhumbika or Abdulrazak Gurnah, who have 'written novels that evaluate contemporary policies and look to both the past and the future in an effort to provide guidance on how better to develop a strong and peaceful Tanzania' (x). Therefore, the reader might find advice in novels that deal with relevant social issues. This intention to provide guidance to the reader is also reflected by Penina Muhando Mloma, a Tanzanian playwright:

"I think when I do my writing I want to pick any problem which is troubling the people in Tanzania at the present time. Because I see myself as having a duty to try to help the society either in showing where the problems are or trying to suggest solutions to problems or at least to make the people aware that the sources of this and that problem are in this and that thing" (qtd. in Osaki and Noudéhou ix).

Keeping this strong social engagement of African and in particular Tanzanian authors in mind, Hunt argues that historians should not shun away from looking at novels in order to find new evidence as well as new ideas for their research (04). However, as she also points out, historians should neither read novels 'as texts reflecting African social realities, nor as texts substituting for social scientific description, but as constitutive objects whose forms comprise [...] remembrance' (04). Further, Hunt explains that 'novels remind us [...] that social facts are mediated daily in enormously complex ways by the positioning of those observing, experiencing, and performing them' (18).

Thus, I argue that fictional literature is an example for a culturally produced text which is strongly connected with discourse production. Therefore it provides an idea of specific social realities of a certain context and time. To exemplify the connection between fact and fiction, the next chapter will deal with the social realities of a specific society, namely the Xhosa in South Africa and how these realities are reproduced in fictional literature. The novel which I am going to analyze will outline how traditions, intergenerational conflicts and social pressure affect young men's attempt to "achieve" a hegemonic heteronormative masculine identity.

7. A MAN IN THE MAKING – CIRCUMCISION RITES IN *A MAN WHO IS NOT A MAN*

Beginning with the most basic definition of masculinity, it is without a doubt a reference to the physical differences that exist between men and women. In particular, the existence or non-existence of a penis. *A Man Who is Not A Man* by Thando Mqolozana outlines the tremendous cultural importance that is associated with male

circumcision within South African Xhosa culture. In fact, within this group the tradition of male circumcision is an inevitable part of a young man's life. Since only by going through the rites of a circumcision, young boys can be acknowledged as "real men" in their society. These rites, also, include a number of other themes which are related to masculine behavior. For instance, intergenerational conflicts, violence, dominance over women, peer pressure and the pressure to maintain tradition. However, as mentioned earlier, in order to closely investigate masculinities, a closer look at the specific context is required. In fact, 'male circumcision rites need to be understood within a highly complex contemporary socio-sexual context' (Vincent 433), which I will try to do in this thesis.

Mgqolozana's novel deals with the issue of a botched traditional circumcision and the consequential physical as well as psychological impact on the initiate. The author explains in detail the pain, trauma, shame but also the courage of the protagonist who, against the rules of the tradition, is left to himself in the mountains without any supervision. The outcome is devastating. After the circumcision, Chris, the young initiate, has to take care of his wound without proper explanation and guidance. Soon after the circumcision, his penis gets infected and Chris' condition is getting worse from hour to hour. Eventually, he has to be taken to the hospital where his condition stabilizes again. However, according to Xhosa tradition, being treated at a hospital must be avoided at all costs, since "Western treatment" interferes with the local customs and thus the result cannot be accepted as a "proper" circumcision. Therefore, Chris not only runs the risk of being perceived as a "failed man" because of him being treated at the hospital treatment, but also because of the consequent deformation of his penis due to the negative development of the circumcision.

The novel reveals what lies beneath the mysteries of this deep-seated cultural tradition: tremendous social pressure, a lack of communication and support by elders as well as double standards with regard to moral values. The tragic progress of the failed circumcision makes the protagonist rethink the sense of the tradition and leads him to reassess for himself what it really means to be a man.

7.1 Themes in *A Man Who Is Not A Man*

'Ritual male circumcision is among the most secretive and sacred of rites practiced by the Xhosa of South Africa' (Vincent 431). Consequently, there are hardly any reports or documentation about this tradition available. Thus, it becomes very difficult to

understand the complex meanings, values and expectations associated with this specific tradition. Nevertheless, Mgqolozana's novel, together with the research that has been conducted on circumcision rites among the Xhosa, shows a strong overlap in a number of themes. These are, for instance, isolation as part of the transition into manhood, the strong differentiation between circumcised and uncircumcised men, whereby the latter are treated 'like dogs' (Vincent 440). Other common themes are the acknowledgement of violence and punishment among men for not behaving according to social expectations, intergenerational tensions, silence and shame, of which all are maintained and perpetuated within patriarchal hierarchies.

7.1.1 Separation and isolation from the mother

'Male circumcision rites are symbolically saturated' (Vincent 434). One of the main themes and symbols, as already mentioned, is the seclusion from the village as well as the strict separation from women, or to be more precise from the initiate's mother. This becomes clear in Mgqolozana's novel *A Man Who is Not a Man*, when the main protagonist Chris shares his thoughts about women and the strong bond between some initiates and their mothers:

By talking of sex, my brother and I would be violating the law of the mountain. We, at least I, the initiate, wasn't supposed to even think about snorts [women]. Local folklore had it that city boys struggled more than their village counterparts when it came to endurance at the mountain. [...] There were many stories about city boys attempting to escape from the mountain, shedding tears during the aftercare, or secretly drafting letters to their mothers – which would be later confiscated and made public narratives – and other unmanly things like that (Mgqolozana 102).

Even after the circumcision, when Chris, despite his hospital treatment and the deformation of his penis, is finally acknowledged by the community as a "real man", he can only feel happiness about being taken care of his mother again.

That woman was my mother. [...] After my long and lonely time of hurting and sadness, here was someone referring to me as her baby, telling everyone that even now, there was no reason why she could not still put me on her back. I had shed many tears of sorrow but at this moment came tears of joy (Mgqolozana 157).

However, it does not only come with the rites of the circumcision that Chris discovers his strong feelings for his mother, but already much earlier after he had moved back from the hectic and dangerous life of Cape Town to a small village in the country side where his mother is taking care of him. This is when he becomes aware of her

boundless love for him. In fact, he realizes her deep love for him when she gives him a large amount of money to spend as he pleases.

I understood that the money was an expression of the regret and love she felt for me. '[...] You are my first-born son and you cannot be replaced. I want you to know that I love you with all my being' [...] Her words brought me to tears. My mother was being a mother to me. It dawned on [me] that this, here was the thing I had wanted, the thing I had craved more than any other thing (Mgqolozana 35).

Thus, although isolation and seclusion from the initiate's mother is an essential part during the rites of passage, the emotional bond remains strong. The young initiates run a high risk to do 'unmanly things' when trying to get in touch with their mothers during the time in isolation. Concluding, their journey into manhood requires a high level of emotional strength to cope with the circumcision process.

7.1.2 Silence and language for "real men"

Another major theme in the novel as well as in the relevant research findings is the pervading silence which not only goes along with the circumcision rites but which permeates the whole community itself. In the novel, for instance, topics such as sickness, death or suicide are either dealt with silence or incomprehensible metaphorical riddles by elders. For example, when Chris thinks about the attempted suicide of his uncles, he realizes that '[n]o one knew why he had done it. Such things are not talked about in village culture, at least not openly' (Mgqolozana 26). Also when the family talks about death in general, the topic is only addressed in metaphorical terms. This is clearly visible in the following passage in which a friend of the family talks to Chris' grandparents about the high number of young people dying in their village these days. It is not mentioned why they die, but instead they are only compared with dying flies.

'Yes, Sbali,' grandfather would join in at this stage. 'You know...mmh...in the old days...mmh...people used to die of old age. Today...mmh...today, this youth dies like flies,' he would say. 'If you know flies, Sbali,' Oom Dan would agree, adding some more flies. 'Like flies, tata.' Grandmother would add a few flies of her own, albeit resignedly. At this point she would leave the room to make some tea. 'Flies, Sbali kazi.' Oom Dan would add some extra leftover flies, as if to allow her time to leave the room (Mgqolozana 28).

When it comes to the articulation of circumcision rites, one phrase which is repeated throughout the novel sums it up perfectly: '[w]hat happens at the mountain stays at the mountain' (Mgqolozana 83). Thus, for the time of the circumcision the site where it is taking place – namely the mountains – becomes a separate world for the initiate where no people, except for some old wise men, are allowed to visit and where

even a different language is spoken. Surprisingly, however, it is actually the different language that constitutes another important theme related with the rites of passage. In fact, as part of the circumcision rites the initiate has to learn the “language of manhood”.

the crucial terminology and its appropriate use, the code language that is shared between men and must be used by initiates at the mountain. “You might do everything right and come out healed but you remain a boy if you cannot articulate your manhood [...] but each and every man has the responsibility to articulate his way into manhood” (Mgqolozana 65).

In fact, as Vincent found out in his research, initiates have to attend certain initiation schools where they learn *isiSomo*, a “bush” language which is only taught there (438). Also, in case the initiates are caught speaking Xhosa instead of *isiSomo*, they are punished. This attitude can also be found in the novel, when Chris finds himself at the hospital together with two other initiates, confronted with the question of how to communicate with them.

As initiates, we were meant to speak in the code language of the mountain. To open your mouth wrongly was to subject yourself to scrutiny and give yourself away. Far better to remain silent and anonymous in such circumstances (Mgqolozana 123).

Thus, instead of sharing his experience and emotions with the other two initiates, all three of them prefer to remain silent. This becomes clear when Chris recounts his final day at the hospital, ‘it had been dominated by the usual screams of our silence in the word, broken periodically by deep burdened sighs and the restless twisting and turning of defeated warriors’ (136).

7.1.3 Harassment, shame and stigmatization of the uncircumcised

Another theme which appears in the context of circumcision rites is the enormous social pressure young initiates have to face. In fact, as Vincent points out, many Xhosa males voluntarily opt for circumcision in order to avoid harassment, not only from older people, but, in fact, also from women. They not only make this decision because of the peer pressure, but because of ‘the desire to gain respect’ (Vincent 439). In the novel, Chris is repeatedly told by his grandfather – who should actually have accompanied him as a supervisor during the ritual but who was too drunk to be present – that he should stop being so fragile. On the way to the hospital, all his grandfather could say was “I don’t know what has gotten into the youth of today. You are so fragile. Mmh.” Of which Chris had the impression that ‘he made it sound like he was incorporating all the youth of South Africa in that statement’ (Mgqolozana 112). In fact, although it is more or less

the grandfather's fault that Chris' condition has turned so bad, he still blames him for going to the hospital. 'Kwedini, let me see this penis of yours...I don't understand how fragile you children of today are...it's difficult just to nurse your own manhood back to health! What is it they teach you in these schools of yours...rha!' (Mgqolozana 117).

On top of that, instead of finding safety and comfort in the hospital, Chris and the other initiates are confronted with even more humiliation caused by the treatment of one of their nurses. Thus, Chris not only faces harassment by older people, such as his grandfather, but also by a woman whose actual task should be to help and support her patients and not to ridicule them or to put them under even more pressure:

She was openly insulting us for having landed up at the hospital – we cowards! She was bringing home to us the disgrace of our being survived by our empty huts at the mountain, impressing on us our invalidity, the manhood rejects that we had become by fleeing to the hospital and the sub-human status that we were about to assume in society as a result. Her reaction might seem extreme, but it was typical of the mockery and censure that we could expect to encounter outside (Mgqolozana 122).

Consequently, it is only understandable that Vincent concludes in his research that in addition to '[t]he concern for their physical well-being' comes 'the anxiety surrounding possible hospitalization and its accompanying inevitable loss of respect should their circumcision go wrong' (440).

Another important theme worth investigating is the significance of the social pressure that goes along with the strong division between circumcised and uncircumcised men. Mgqolozana's novel as well as research articles, dealing with circumcision in Xhosa culture, outline the comparison of uncircumcised men with dogs. As Vincent resumes, '[t]he image evokes the idea that the uncircumcised male is not yet fully human and cannot be regarded as capable of moral behavior or moral responsibility' (440). Moreover, an uncircumcised man is perceived as being 'not yet a fully functioning member of human society' and therefore has limited rights (440). This comparison of the initiate with a dog is outlined in a crucial scene in the novel when Chris has finished his time in the mountains and is, according to the tradition, being picked up by men of the village and brought back to the community. When the crowd is moving up the mountain, a dog gets loose and runs ahead towards Chris. He, however, is so angry at the men about the agony they have brought upon him, that he hurts the dog severely. From a distance he can hear his uncle replying to someone else's objection, saying 'Madoda, since when do you mind a fight between two dogs? A dog is a dog is a dog. Dogs fight each other every day. Dogs have ripped each other's testicles since I was

a young boy. I say again, what is new in a fight between two dogs?’(Mgqolozana 149). Chris, who of course is totally taken aback by these remarks, can only wonder how his own family members can call him a dog (149).

The novel ends with Chris having more or less successfully accomplished his journey into manhood. He admits that although the circumcision itself has healed the proper way, his penis is deformed and that he therefore sees himself as a ‘statistic’ and, in the eyes of some, as ‘a flawed man’ (Mgqolozana 178). Also, towards the end of the novel, Chris starts reflecting on the unexpected path on which the circumcision rites have taken him. He not only begins to question the whole tradition, but also the credibility of the elders. In fact, the moment when the crowd is moving towards his hut, eager to see his ‘failed manhood’, he asks himself if it is ‘true that today I am who I am because of my own sins? Am I the failure of my own making? Or does all of this flow from the sins of the fathers?’ (Mgqolozana 146). He suddenly cannot only comprehend the attitude of the village members, their curiosity and anger, but the complex cultural constructions that motivates their reactions.

I was an outcast in my community, the object of scorn and scrutiny. My failure was not only mine, but the culture’s. This made people angry because they held their culture and practices so dearly. They saw me as the bad apple, projecting a negative impression of what they’re made of (Mgqolozana 150).

Concluding, Chris realizes the pressure that rests not only on him, but also on others is based on deeply engrained expectations within his culture. Only a few days after the crowd has taken him back to the village and celebrated his newly acquired status as a “real man”, Chris receives the message that he is accepted at a renowned South African university. He imagines how he would deal with his experiences of the rites of passage in his PhD thesis and how he would analyze the negligence he had to face by the elders of his community, especially by his grandfather.

I would expose the lack of care from the very parents who then argued that we rubbished their valued culture. I would show that it was those men like grandfather who, in fact, betrayed their own culture. They accused us of wrongdoing and called us “fragile”, but it was due to their negligence that aftercare complications like mine occurred in the first place. It was because of the sins of our fathers that we initiated ended up with permanent trauma, robbed of the respect of our community and ostracized by our society as men who weren’t real men (Mgqolozana 130).

From what Chris shares with the reader, it seems that the relationship with his grandfather did not improve again. He provides only a brief glimpse of how his life continues as student who returns to his home village every now and then to find his

grandfather being not able to address what has happened in the mountains. Chris explains that much bigger than the actual physical damage is the mental damage he has to suffer. The relationship with his grandfather has been reduced to superficial conversations, such as about the weather. As Chris outlines, he is 'still waiting for a word of apology from his grandfather, though he has made some gestures that imply guilt and regret in his thoughts' (Mgqolozana 179). In fact, he is craving for his grandfather to comment on his 'manhood, and the "failure" of it. To come out with it directly in the same blunt way that he never minced his words when he accused [Chris] of being fragile' (Mgqolozana 180).

In fact, Chris is not only confronted with intergenerational tensions, exemplified by the tense relationship between him and his grandfather, but he is becoming aware of the pressure which originates from the socio-cultural structures which rule the community he lives in. He realizes that men like his grandfather act the way they do not because of pure malevolence, but because of a long-held belief system which Chris does not simply adhere to, but which he starts to question and to challenge. In fact, Chris seems to be struggling with his "newly" acquired masculinity much later in his life when he consults young initiates on their rites of passage: 'I've had to learn to be a real man among real men, while simultaneously being an ordinary man among ordinary men. Oh the energy it takes to live the life of a split man! Constantly having to defend myself through silence for my unique path into manhood' (Mgqolozana 182).

7.2 Traditional male circumcision among the Xhosa – fact & fiction

According to Vincent, the traditional male Xhosa circumcision 'involves the symbolic death of the boy who is reborn a man. The shedding of the old self is necessary to the emergence of a new self' (443). In fact the differentiation between the uncircumcised boy and the circumcised man is tremendous. Vincent speaks of a stigmatization of the former which has sharpened in recent times. Consequently the increasing pressure that young uncircumcised Xhosa boys are suffering from, forces them to adopt risky behaviors: 'While traditionally the initiation of a young man was a communal responsibility, it is now much more of an individual project in the experience of many' (Vincent 444). A traditional circumcision means a change of a man's status within the community as well as the acquisition of a number of social privileges and rights, such as, among others, the right to marriage and 'the right to inherit, to take part in family courts,

to attend the Chief's court [or] to participate in feasts and beer-drinking ceremonies' (Vincent 442).

However, in contemporary Xhosa society the motivation behind circumcision in order to acquire the right to marriage 'has become subverted into an emphasis on the right to sex and other material resources', such as alcohol, food or clothing (442). Indeed, interviews with young Xhosa men outline, '[a]ccess to sex is cited by many [...] as among the most significant of resources to which initiation polices access' (442). The consequence of this paradigm shift is that the tradition of circumcision which once had the intention to convey 'responsibility and control has transformed into a focus on the right of access to sex as a primary marker of manhood' (Vincent 444).

In Mgqolozana's *A Man Who Is Not A Man*, it is actually not the case that circumcision is seen as access to sex by the initiate Chris, but more by the rest of the community. As final step of his initiation, a ceremony in the 'house of the lamp' is organized, in which his journey into manhood is supposed to end by having sex with a girl who is appointed to him (Mgqolozana 159). However, a girl is not only appointed to him, but other girls are appointed to a room full of men who are the same men which had stormed up the mountain to see with their own eyes that Chris has failed to become a man. Chris points out that he 'hasn't been particularly interested in the proceedings of the house of the lamp up to this point, knowing full well that it was all pretence since [he] was not considered to be a man in the eyes of many in that room, (Mgqolozana 161). However, the ceremony required from him to be a "real man" in every aspect, because 'if your girlfriend was allocated to sit between another man's legs, you had no say in the matter. You just had to take it like a man, like. What happens in the house of the lamp stays in the house of the lamp' (Mgqolozana 161). Although this scene reemphasizes one of the already discussed issues of silence that goes along with the initiation rites, Chris' questioning of the tradition and the behavior of the men of his village disrupts the homogenous image of an unreflected perpetuation of traditions and customs.

Thus, although Vincent's research in particular points out the shift in motivation behind circumcision within the contemporary Xhosa culture, it would be interesting to find out how and to which extent the young initiates reflect on socio-cultural behavior, customs and culture within their community. Therefore, despite the many parallels that can be seen within the novels and mentioned research findings, such as the silence that goes along with the circumcision rites, the "bush language" that has to be acquired by the initiates, shame, social pressure, the stigmatization of uncircumcised men and the

physical isolation of the community as well as the emotional separation of their mothers, Mqolozana's novel provides an inside perspective and a better understanding of the circumcision rites young Xhosa men are confronted with.

8. MALE CRISIS AND URBAN DECADENCE IN *THE SILENT EMPOWERMENT OF THE COMPATRIOTS*

The second novel which is dealing with socially constructed gender identities, and in particular with masculine identities, is set in postcolonial urban Dar es Salaam in Tanzania. *The Silent Empowerment of the Compatriots* by Gabriel Ruhumbika compares the lives of two men, and how their interpretation of being a "real man" is influenced by traditional values, social pressure and new Western ideals. However, before going to deconstruct these two masculinities, it is necessary to provide a brief historic overview of Tanzania's early postcolonial period, in particular, of the national cultural project of Tanzania's first president Julius Nyerere. Further, I want to discuss how the country's inner conflict between traditional African values and Western modernity had an impact on gender roles –especially on male gender images. By looking at this particular background information, the identification of parallels between fact and fiction will become clearer.

8.1 From "young losers" to "sugar daddies" –gender trouble in postcolonial Tanzania

The independence from Great Britain in 1961 brought a very special challenge for the new leader, President Julius K. Nyerere, and his ruling party TANU¹. The young nation had to prove itself on a 'world stage that would be simultaneously modern and marked by a difference from the West' (Ivaska 17). However, colonial anxieties about the city and its 'deep reluctance, even refusal, to recognize Africans as urban or modern subjects' (Ivaska 07) somehow continued throughout the early postcolonial politics of Tanzania. Thus, Nyerere's national cultural project of "ujamaa villagization"² put significant emphasis on 'the rural as the ideal site for the performance of Tanzanian citizenship' (Ivaska 16). In opposition to the constructed image of a 'healthy, productive rural ideal–epitomized by scenes disseminated widely in the press of young and old, men and women, even politicians, laboring in ujamaa villages' stood the image of the

¹ TANU: the Tanganyika (later Tanzania) African national Union („National Culture“ in Andrew Ivaska's *Cultured States*).

‘city as decadent, unproductive, and emasculating’ (Ivaska 17). In fact, as Ivaska also points out, in the center of the early national cultural project was the ‘idealization of the rural’ (18) which not only showed similarities to colonial rule, but also entailed struggles over a number of themes such as ‘women, work, sex, and masculinity’ (35).

Among other topics was the reimplementation of polygamy which was banned during the colonial period. In fact, in the discussion of what was an essential characteristic for the national cultural project, a large number of men argued that polygamy was ‘a key part of African tradition’ (178) which had to be respected as “‘good traditional customs’” (qtd. In Ivaska 174).

However, the national cultural project turned more and more into a gender issue in which young men ‘perceived themselves as losers’ (Ivaska 35). They saw an increasing number of educated women migrating to the city and finding jobs as nurses, waitresses, secretaries or social workers. The young men themselves, however, often migrated to urban centers without being able to find an employment. Above all, they had to witness how these young, employed and independent women engaged in romantic liaisons with wealthier and much older urban men, the so called “sugar daddies”, instead of moving back to their families in the rural areas.

For young men, migrating to the city usually meant to quickly make money and to ‘return, respected and admired, to the village to marry on one’s own terms’, while for young women migration meant to start a completely new life (Ivaska 92). Thus, young men who tried to ‘circumven[t] the control that elders in rural areas held over marriage options’ (92), by migrating to the cities, were “punished” on different levels. Not only did they not find jobs to earn money for the bride price, but the women they wanted turned to wealthy sugar daddies. Therefore, urban centers in postcolonial Tanzania were sites which were heavily influenced by complicated gender issues and generational struggles in which young men ‘were unable to compete in material terms’ (92).

This is in fact similar to Morrell’s research findings dealing with masculinities in South Africa where for ‘working class men [...] their tenuous access to the labour market and wages reduces their power over women’ (609). The consequence of this development in Tanzania was growing male anxiety and frustration disguised as rage which turned into aggressive behavior against young urban women. Physical attacks on women, especially those representing independence and modernity by wearing a

² „ujamaa“: „Connoting familyhood and solidarity, ‘ujamaa’ was President Nyerere’s term for his political

miniskirt, were on the rise. '[A]mbiguous figures' such as 'secretar[ies], schoolgirl[s], and girlfriend[s] of sugar dadd[ies]' were at the center of male aggression (Ivaska 97). Simultaneously, however, did sugar daddies or "big men"³ serve as 'models of masculinity', (Ivaska 205) 'to which many young bachelors aspired' (Ivaska 209). Although young men were frustrated about the superiority of the "big men" or new elite, their image as being powerful and virile with almost unlimited access to resources and women appeared to young men worth striving for (209).

Concluding, the early 1960s and 1970s were determined by anxiety and '[f]rustration of unmarried, urban young men who viewed many single city girls as gold diggers determined to use romantic liaisons as a vehicle for gaining market' (Ivaska 185). The urban centers at that time were scenes of movement and change, but also of complex struggles over gender and generational issues. In fact, as stated by Morrell, 'African urban life was spawning the new black masculinity', or in other words, although 'oppositional to the state, but still imbued with strongly held views about the place of women, the new masculinity incorporated work as a central feature of its identity' (625). Therefore, the background of the emerging crisis of masculinity was shaped by a political discourse which was influenced by the need to open towards international markets and modernity, but at the same time, by the desire to maintain Tanzanian tradition and customs.

Young men, who were migrating to the cities, were all of a sudden confronted with numerous problems which challenged their ability to fulfill the expected hegemonic masculine image. By looking at Nyerere's national cultural project and the influence it had on gender roles in Tanzania, it becomes obvious that institutions such as the state 'have their own gender regime [...] in which the influence of hegemonic masculinity is important' (Morrell 609). In fact, the state can have a deep impact on 'the arrangement of gender relations which distributes power unequally' (609), or in other words, the state is "'the main organizer of the power relations of gender'" (qtd. in Morrell 609). In addition, with the orientation of the state towards western modernization, a connection between masculinity and capitalism becomes visible. As outlined in Morrell's research,

philosophy, which after 1967 was often used to name a brand of 'African socialism'" (Ivaska15).

³³ The new Tanzanian political elite was also known as "'wabenzi' or 'wa-404' (common appellations for the political elite named for the Mercedes Benz and Peugeot 404 cars they drove)" (Ivaska 198), but also as "naizesheni" or "nizer". These terms refer to the "beneficiaries of the Africanization of government and, to a lesser extent, of business, who were widely viewed as leveraging their new positions into wealth that they conspicuously consumed about town" (Ivaska 25).

‘masculinities have changed along with capitalism’ (610). Further, he argues that “‘public domain masculinity’ emerged to overshadow the private domain as part of process of the development of capitalism and modernity’ (610). To exemplify this assumption of the state as institution influencing gender relations and the connection between changing masculinities and capitalism, I want to have a closer look at the earlier mentioned novel *The Silent Empowerment of the Compatriots* by Gabriel Ruhumbika.

8.2 “Real Men” in Ruhumbika’s *The Silent Empowerment Of The Compatriots*

Praised by Osaki and Noudéhou as one of the authors that strongly engages with social problems, this fictional text constitutes a powerful historical novel which gives the reader an insight into how post-colonial politics were connected with the development of new urban gender roles. The novel is mainly set in the context of Nyerere’s national cultural project of the early 1960s and 1970s and deals with gender and generational struggles that followed the movements from rural to urban centers. The characters range from young rural men who migrate to Tanzania’s urban centers in order to find work, over to “new city girls” who engage in superficial relationships with the new political elite, also called “sugar daddies”, in order to gain material wealth. The novel presents Tanzania’s fragile situation as being torn apart between Western modernity and Nyerere’s “ujamaa” policy that highly valued the rural Tanzania and its hard working people.

Ruhumbika’s novel accompanies two Tanzanian families over the course of fifty years: the poor working family of Saidi opposed to Nzoka Mwanakulanga’s rising national bourgeois family. Both families represent the country’s postcolonial struggles in the light of Nyerere’s new political system, as well as an instable economy, and a strong commitment to a new nationalism. The novel emphasizes the clash of old traditions and values with an insatiable desire for new material goods and superficial lifestyles. Soon the fates of the two families lead them into opposing directions. While Saidi’s family is trapped in a vicious circle of poverty, Nzoka Mwanakulanga highly benefits from being among the new political elite. His extreme selfishness, greed, as well as unlimited access to new wealth and materialism stands in stark contrast to Saidi’s “good old” morals and values.

The novel is an ideal example for a culturally produced text that connects “time, history, and the narrative” (Hunt 03). It not only reflects the political discourse of the

early postcolonial Nyerere government, but also a postcolonial gender discourse in which new gender identities emerged. The question of what it means to be a “real man” strongly determines Saidi’s as well as Nzoka’s life.

8.3 Saidi – fulfilling the traditional Tanzanian hegemonic masculine image

Although Saidi grows up in colonial Tanzania facing severe brutality and degradation through European masters, his life is determined by an incredible willpower to survive. In the early years after the country gained independence from Great Britain, Saidi is able to make money and a solid living. However, back then the society cannot acknowledge his strong will and success, because due to the fact that he is neither married, nor does he have children, he is not yet perceived as a “real man”.

Women too, however beautiful, did not concern him with the result that his friends doubted whether he was a real man, because they had never seen him with a woman. And so when he felt he should get married he had no fiancée or a young woman he knew well enough to want to be engaged to (Ruhumbika 49).

However, as I have mentioned earlier in the brief overview of Nyerere’s national cultural project, marriage is a matter which involves the whole family. Tanzanian parents are strongly involved when it comes to the marriage of their children. Also in Ruhumbika’s novel, Saidi’s mother comes as his greatest support when he reveals his “real man” dilemma.

And indeed in no time Grandma Ntwara had looked for and found a fiancée for his [sic] young man, and that same year, 1962, Saidi was married [...] Their wedding celebrations were held at Grandma Ntwara’s Magomeni home, and what a great occasion it was! And Saidi started his life of an adult man with a household to look after (Ruhumbika 51).

Soon, Saidi had fulfilled the social expectations of marrying, having lots of children and building a home for his new family. Saidi is aware of the fact that fathering many children is seen as God’s blessing and simultaneously the only possibility to revive and continue his grandparent’s great clan (Ruhumbika 02). For Saidi these facts are the characteristics for real manhood. Actually, not only for him, but also, of course, for his mother who was pleased about her son’s development.

“My son, you have now become an adult! You were married and with children, yes, but you hadn’t grown up! But now that you have decided to build for your wife and your children a home of their own, you are a grown-up!” she congratulated his [sic] young man (Ruhumbika 56).

Thus, as the mentioned passages outline, in the context of a traditional rural Tanzanian society, the essential characteristics of “real manhood” are marriage and having children. However, Ruhumbika also “uses” Saidi to express critique on stereotypical male behavior, such as alcohol abuse and aggression. Saidi introduces the reader to his sister-in-law Tabu and their shared memories of her former husband whose name is not mentioned. Although Tabu’s former husband had a respectable position as accountant at the University of Dar es Salaam, he used to drink and beat his wife even during pregnancy.

And whenever he returned home full of booze, it did not matter whether his wife had just given birth or was nine months pregnant, he would slap and kick her and for no reason at all! Such animal behavior was what to him was being a real man, a “tough guy”, “formidable rock”, “true master of his wife!” ...he was no husband but a senseless brute (Ruhumbika 64).

In contrast, Saidi sees himself ‘as a self-respecting head of a household and a man who really loved and cared for his family’, who ‘not even once in his life did [...] think of alcohol, cigarettes, women, or any other kind of pleasure’ (Ruhumbika 65). This attitude stands in stark contrast to the attitude of Saidi’s old friend Nzoka who represents the new idealized masculinity of the urbanized Tanzania.

8.4 Nzoka – fulfilling the new Tanzanian hegemonic masculine image

Nzoka exemplifies the complete opposite of Saidi’s morals and values. He soon becomes one of the “big men”, the new political elite, whose reputation is the one of a womanizer and sex-addict. Although he is married to Bea, Nzoka does not miss a single chance to sleep with other of Dar es Salaam’s beautiful women. Among his “companions” are not only his secretary and the daughter of an Indian business partner, but numerous teenage girls, as well as an old friend including her own daughter and even a professor from Germany. For Nzoka, it is important to prove a woman that he is a “real man” by overpowering her.

This gender inequality, or in other words, the superiority of men over women is outlined by Ruhumbika several times. For instance, at one point one of Nzoka’s girlfriends remembers how her mother had told her ‘that obeying and serving her husband is the most important obligation of a woman on earth’ (Ruhumbika 124). Most explicitly presented is this gender imbalance and male dominance through the experiences of Nzoka’s secretary. Shortly before Nzoka receives another young lady in his office, his secretary’s thoughts are shared with the reader:

She was the very first woman to go through hell in that office, on the visitor's couches, even though she was the wife of a self-respecting husband with a high ranking job and a mother with grownup children who respected her a lot [...] [although] she was the victim of the despicable deeds of her Chairman in that office she was never again short of petty cash and money for whatever needed, leave alone the fact that her salary, which was already good, was immediately increased threefold. And so if she was a shameful wife and mother, so be it! Whatever the case her husband, a real African man, was bound to have lots of other women, even though she had never seen or heard of him cheating on her. And as to her children, they were the reason why she had to struggle to the extent of soiling her character and disgracing herself that way (Ruhumbika 111).

Nzoka, however, sees himself as being blessed by God for being successful, wealthy and never short of young and beautiful women. He assumes his lifestyle as being that of a "real man", 'for being the *kizito* of *vizito*⁴ and the man among men, a man with wives from the four corners of the world' (Ruhumbika 145). In fact even women knew how to distinguish 'real important men from those pretending to be so and chose Chairman Nzoka' (Ruhumbika 146). He also sees himself confirmed as a true man by being loved not only by one of Dar es Salaam's most famous and beautiful woman but even by her own daughter: 'Nzoka being loved by the mother and her daughter that way was further evidence that he was a man among men, *kizito* of *vizito*, a master among masters' (Ruhumbika 148).

Ruhumbika gives also more insight into the "naizesheni days", the time of the 'Africanization of government' and those who were benefiting from it (Ivaska: 25), as well as the gender hierarchies this 'Africanization' entailed. 'In those naizesheni days the trend was for men who got high ranking jobs to marry another wife, a more modern one than the mother of their children with whom they came from their lean years of the past' (Ruhumbika 128).

While Saidi had to struggle all his life long and often without knowing how to provide for his large family, Nzoka and his women never had to worry about material wealth. In fact, he, 'the *kizito of vizito* in the country had a total of thirty-two children, twenty-seven of them by his five wives and the remaining five by his concubines' (Ruhumbika 155). 'Even his five children outside his marriages, as well as their mothers, had no worry in this world [...] as long as they continued to recognize Chairman Nzoka as their master' (Ruhumbika 160).

⁴ Kizito = wealthy person, rich person; vizito (plural) = wealthy people, rich people; See africanlanguages.com;

8.5 Novels as source of descriptive evidence⁵

Ruhumbika's novel provides an interesting impression of how gender roles and gender expectations, in particular, the image of a "real man" in post-colonial urban Tanzania might have been influenced by new Western ideals and the simultaneous pressure of the state to maintain traditional values. He sheds light on the lives of young rural men and women who move into the urban centers of a new independent Tanzania to earn a living, but who are torn apart between traditional values and new temptations of the city where more and more people get trapped in a circle of exploitation and corruption. More important, however, is the depiction of gender roles and gender hierarchies within the novel. The city serves as symbol for sinful and superficial relationships. Nzoka, as representative for the new political elite, sees women as commodity. He collects them like expensive cars or houses. He needs them to constantly reaffirm his "real manhood". Like conquering and exploiting the city, he conquers and exploits women around him. While for women fertility and children begin to appear more and more as a burden, men consider them as "God's blessing" and a "natural" confirmation of being a "real man".

Concluding, Ruhumbika's novel provides information about discourses that were or are to some extent still present in Dar es Salaam's contemporary society. It raises a number of questions which could be further investigated, such as about Tanzania's early political elite and their sexual exploitation of young women. Further, through Saidi's commitment and loyalty to his wife and family, the notion of African men insisting on polygamy as expression of "real manhood" is put into question.

The novel serves as an example for a cultural text which reproduces certain discourses, but at the same time challenges them. On the one hand, the discourse of the "real man" who has to fulfill specific criteria to conform to a socially expected hegemonic masculinity is reemphasized, but simultaneously criticized. For instance, although many children are seen as a blessing, the novel questions the common belief that fertility is a symbol for health and thus also for wealth, as depicted through Saidi's struggle to support his big family, including the children of his two rebellious daughters. Consequently, as pointed out by Hunt, the novel should be considered as 'manufactured evidence' – as an 'artifact, whose construction deserves attention' (06). For this thesis in particular, it serves as discursive evidence for the existence of a plurality of

⁵ „Between Fiction and History: Modes of Writing Abortion in Africa" (Hunt 18)

masculinities which put the existence of hegemonic heteronormative masculinity into question. Since, as argued by Morrell, African working class men and other marginal groupings 'have their own distinct masculinities which challenge hegemonic masculinity and may have the potential to disrupt or undermine basic patriarchal assumptions about the dominance of men over women' (609).

Moving away from traditions and customs in *A Man Who Is Not A Man* over to the influence of urbanization and capitalism in *The Silent Empowerment of the Compatriot*, the next chapter will deal with homophobia – a topic which also consistently appears specifically in connection with patriarchy and its rigidly defined gender roles. In Mark Behr's *Kings of the Water* these clearly defined roles are not only challenged but shattered. The novel outlines homophobia as closely associated with the image of hegemonic masculinity.

9. PATRIARCHY AND HOMOPHOBIA IN *KINGS OF THE WATER*

Looking again on men and masculinity in a South African context, research shows that '[u]ntil very recently, men were a taken-for-granted category in South African history' (Morrell 613). This attitude was significantly influenced by white men who 'marched powerfully, dominantly and visibly across the historical stage', and therefore their status as 'bearers of oppressive gender, class and racial values' was almost naturally accepted (613). However, this assumption of white supremacy as reflection of a hegemonic 'white, ruling class masculinity' has to be put in question (Morrell 616).

Mark Behr's *Kings of the Water* challenges this general image of raw white masculinity in a remarkable way. In his novel he exemplifies how complex and multi-layered gender identities can be, especially in such a heteronormative and patriarchally organized space as the Afrikaner farm house-hold in postcolonial South Africa. Behr shows how homosexuality can shatter the idealized image of a hegemonic masculinity as well as patriarchal structures. The novel also outlines how homophobia, in turn, serves as a means to reinforce heteronormative masculinity as an ideal in a patriarchal society. As mentioned at the beginning of this thesis, patriarchal structures are essential for the making of "real men". In fact, Morrell claims that '[h]egemonic masculinity is a key element of patriarchy' (609). He argues that both, hegemonic masculinity and patriarchal structures, are developed and maintained in particular locations such as 'production, sexuality, reproduction and socializing children', but also in 'paid work, housework, culture, [...] violence [and] the state' (Morrell 609). Therefore, he resumes

that focusing on these specific locations enables one to understand hegemonic masculinity within a social context 'and as something which is constantly produced and contested' (609).

9.1 Deconstructing the patriarchal Afrikaner household

Having clarified the concept of patriarchy and its relationship with hegemonic masculinity, I want to continue with examples of patriarchy in Behr's novel. Also, I will outline the significance of these concepts in the context of apartheid as well as post-apartheid South Africa. Finally, I will show how the setting of the novel, namely an Afrikaner farm-household within the transition period from apartheid to post-apartheid is dominated by these concepts and how the farm can be seen as a microcosm reflecting the interrelationship of the above mentioned concepts in the macrocosm of South Africa.

9.1.1 Patriarchy – Praising the superior status of the father

The novel begins with Michiel Steyn returning to the family farm "Paradys" in South Africa. Michiel's coming back from a totally different world, namely from a life far away in San Francisco, where he lives with his lover Kamil – the son of a Palestinian mother and Jewish father. The only reason for Michiel to return to South Africa is the funeral of his beloved mother Ou Nooi. However, coming back to the farm also means to confront the traumatic past he experienced when growing up there. Michiel has broken every possible taboo; not only has he deserted church and his family, but also subverted what is seen as "normal" love between man and woman. He left the woman who bore his child and brought humiliation on his family. The consequence, his father – Oubaas – embodying the idealized hegemonic Afrikaner masculinity – loathes him, and his family does not know how to deal with him and the situation he has brought upon the family.

Michiel, one of three Steyn sons, is the one who constantly seems to clash with his father – who is the head of the patriarchal household and therefore not only in control of his own family but also of all the African workers on the farm. Michiel simply cannot fulfill the idealized masculine image his father society in general expects of him.

Afrikaner farms in the Apartheid era were a very special social setting in which different masculinities emerged, which, however, were constantly confronted with varying forms of domination and oppression connected by patriarchal structures. In fact, as argued in Morrell and others, 'the complexity of gender relations in South Africa' stem from a "'patchwork of patriarchies'" (Morrell 613). Or in other words, to think of South

Africa as being only 'under the thrall of one system of male rule' is too simplistic, but it should be rather assumed that there is 'a coexistence of many patriarchies in the country' (613), such as among Afrikaner, white English-speaking South Africans or black farm workers.

Nevertheless, in the context of this novel, I will focus only on Afrikaner patriarchy.

One of the first significant moments of the novel, in which Michiel's father Oubaas is presented as the dominating head of the authority structure of the farm also represents the triggering moment for Michiel to leave the family farm forever. It is back then, shortly after he returned to the farm after his sexual encounter with an Indian officer during his military service. Michiel is lying naked on the wall of the farm dam, his legs dangling in the water, when all of a sudden his father appears. Michiel 'dropped his hands to his crotch, vulnerable below the man who owned the dam, the orchard, the farm. The world' (Behr 58). In Michiel's view his father is not only the highest authority of the Afrikaner farm house-hold, but appears almost as a god-like figure who possesses everyone and everything - even the world. This superiority of the father is a characteristic which is also emphasized by Coetzee who points out that '[p]atriarchy assumes religious status' in which the "'rule by the fathers"' was made into an idol, a supposed god' (301).

9.1.2 Patriarchal structures – A constant rivalry for the leadership

Another incident where patriarchy is distinctly outlined as an authoritarian structure, which only allows one leader, is the constant rivalry between Oubaas and his second-born son Benjamin. Although there are three sons, Benjamin is from the beginning onwards referred to as 'the Chosen One' (Behr 22), because he, other than his brothers Peet and Michiel, 'was the one in three who did not betray a single expectation' (Behr 59). Benjamin's character is described to be similar to Oubaas', even 'radiat[ing] everything Oubaas wished for' (Behr 76). By 'accept[ing] himself as the ready repository of their father's every ambition', Benjamin symbolizes the ideal patriarchal successor (76). Although, however, Benjamin perfectly fulfills Oubaas' expectations of a "real man", they regularly 'locked horns' (76). In fact, Benjamin challenges the dominance of "the patriarch" by confronting him in ways the other two brothers would not have dared to. Michiel remembers that '[n]o argument on Paradys reached the pitch of those between Oubaas and the Chosen. Cut from the same cloth, they were like bulls aware of each other's strength, the older knowing only time kept the younger from bringing him down'

(Behr 77). Thus, although there were two white men of equal strength running the farm, there could only be one head on top of the patriarchal authority structure.

An additional characteristic of the patriarchal organization and idealized manhood is the idealization of aggressive behavior as well as the repression of emotions. In this respect, aggressive and suppressive patriarchal structures which rule life on the farm in *Kings of the Water* can also be seen as a microcosm representing the suppressive macrocosm of the apartheid regime in South Africa. As Coetzee points out, 'where the "macho image" is valued as the highest ideal of manhood, supposedly "real" men are aggressive, repress emotions and do not admit fears' (302). This socially accepted aggressiveness as part of hegemonic masculinity is visible in the novel in the clashes between "the old Oubaas" and the potential new Oubaas Benjamin. Michiel remembers an incident of his childhood where Oubaas said to Benjamin, 'today, mate, I'm going to knock the shit out of you here in kaffir-country' and Benjamin indifferently replies 'I'm waiting for you, Oubaas' (Behr 77). This argument is followed by a fight in which Benjamin, once more, can prove his strength and potential to be the next dominating head of the Afrikaner farmer-household.

Important, however, is that aggressive behavior should not be assumed as essential or inherent masculine characteristic, but rather linked to culturally constructed gender expectations. In fact, 'violence is not always functional to the maintenance of the hegemony of a particular masculinity; violence is related to or legitimated by gendered practices and discourses' (Morrell 609).

9.1.3 The military – An institution to maintain patriarchy and hegemonic masculinities

Having mentioned earlier that institutions such as the state play a significant role in the development of gender identities, I will discuss in this chapter how particular institutions such as the military can also support the legacy of patriarchy. This argument can simply be explained by the fact that 'the notion of "combat" plays [...] a central role in the construction of concepts of "manhood" and in justifications of the superiority of maleness in the social order' (Coetzee 303).

In *Kings of the Water* the military is an essential tool for the perpetuation of a "real man" image. Although, as Michiel confesses to his psychiatrist Glassman much later in his life, he would have had other options instead of becoming an officer and going to war in a foreign country, 'he was too ashamed not to be an officer' (Behr 40). Thus, within

the patriarchal structure he was growing up in, he had to prove his maleness by going to war and to risk his life.

Interestingly, however, is that of all possible settings it happens within the “hyper-patriarchal” context of the military that Michiel, a well-respected officer, subverts the indoctrinated idea of “normal” love between man and woman. He does not only desire man, but later he is also having sex with one. Being fully aware of the danger of his feelings, Michiel explains to Glassman ‘[t]he fear of another officer or anyone knowing – and [Almeida] was a full lieutenant – was terrifying’ (Behr 102).

Particularly representative for this clash between homoerotic desire and the “roughness” of ideal patriarchal manhood is the incident where Michiel and Lieutenant Almeida are lying in their beds next to each other, while the other officers are watching a war movie in an adjacent room. The only affection Michiel could allow in this emotion-forbidden context was letting his breath go in sync with that of the lieutenant. Michiel remembers that ‘they breathed for each other through the nets – over the rattle of gunships and bass growing louder, the clatter of Bren guns and explosions and the screams of people fleeing – touching only in breath’ (Behr 104).

The very thin line between hidden homoerotic desire and blank male brutality is also made visible when Michiel accidentally witnesses Lieutenant Almeida torturing a woman. In a state of shock Michiel represses his feelings about this encounter. Only many years later he explains to his friend Kamil that torture ‘was standard operating procedure’ and that ‘[s]ome version of this must have been going on in a hundred camps and police stations all over Namibia and Angola. And inside the country too’. Michiel further expresses his apparent indifference by claiming that ‘[i]t was a state of emergency. I was living in a war zone, Kamil, not Disneyworld’ (Behr 106). This again outlines the importance of the repression of emotions as means to express patriarchy.

Concluding, the military serves as an institution that suppresses the expression of positive emotions and supports the legitimacy of patriarchal structures. These two characteristics can also be found within the institution of the Afrikaner farm-household, as will be outlined in the following chapter.

9.1.4 Patriarchy – enforcing fear of „the other”

Already at the beginning of Behr’s novel, the repression of positive emotions as part of the patriarchal farm-household becomes visible. When Michiel arrives at the farm, he is more or less forced to help his old and feeble father with taking his bath, after they

have not seen each other for fifteen years. While Michiel leans over his father to clean his old and weak body, which once symbolized the strength of the dominating white patriarch, Oubaas now even needs help to clean his genitals. Nevertheless, despite his weakness, Oubaas starts to verbally attack Michiel. He accuses him, for instance, for his selfish behavior towards Karien and the rest of the family, and thereby proves his still existing psychological superiority over Michiel. Oubaas asks him, for instance, '[h]ow could you leave [Karien] when she was pregnant?... That was not how I raised my sons' (Behr 34). But instead of reacting to Oubaas' obvious provocation, Michiel remains silent and continues to cleanse his father. He, however, cries out 'Jissis... A man halfway through his thirties who still cannot explain himself. Stand up for yourself! Is it possible that you are even more pathetic than I remember? (Behr 35)'. Michiel, bewildered by his father's blunt accusations, replies 'Even today, Pa, when you will not allow me to mourn my mother. Even -... Is there no mercy in you?' Oubaas, who is fully expressing the emotionless heteronormative ideal of the patriarch, cries out: 'Mercy! You sound like a woman, for Christ's sake. If you must be this thing you are, can't you at least pretend to have balls? I have nothing to say to you' (Behr 35).

In the eyes of his father, Michiel is, because of his homosexuality, not even considered as a human being, but only as a "thing" without "balls" – the epitome of masculinity. In fact, the only emotion Oubaas can express for his son is contempt. He still cannot deal with the fact that Michiel is not the tough, aggressive, emotionless Afrikaner farmer which his father wanted him to be, but the "other" that cannot be acknowledged and accepted. Michiel realizes that 'the insistence that [Oubaas'] son – this son – be the one to bathe him is not some grand gesture of reconciliation. No, this is born from a disdain still simmering all these years later' (Behr 27). In fact, Michiel's return to South Africa to attend his mother's funeral turns out to become 'a father's showdown with [his] son' (Behr 28).

Thus, in support of patriarchal structures and ultimately in support of an idealized hegemonic masculinity, familiar characteristics appear to be constantly repeated: intergenerational tensions, as visible between Oubaas and Michiel, silence when it comes to Michiel's sexual orientation and the repression of positive emotions.

9.1.5 Language as means to maintain hierarchy

A characteristic which already emerged in the context of male circumcision rites within the Xhosa culture in South Africa, as means to maintain and express hierarchy

within the Afrikaner patriarchy, is language. The formal address of the master was not only obligatory for African workers on the farm, but also for Afrikaner children. Michiel remembers '[t]he absence of personal pronouns', when he hears Alida, an African servant, asking '[a]nd is Oubaas ready now for Oubaas's bath', which was '[s]imilar to the way Afrikaans kids never addressed their parents or other white adults without the honorific' (Behr 20).

Indeed, language as a strategy of patriarchy to 'sustain its position of domination' (Coetzee 303) is visible throughout the novel. One of Michiel's memories is the already mentioned scene at the dam, where Oubaas finds him naked, after he had disgraced himself and the family. Michiel proposes the idea of going overseas instead of back to the military base from which he had been suspended. Oubaas immediately rejects this suggestion and wants him to go back and prove his maleness. Michiel protests, 'I can't go back, Oubaas. Not to Salisbury Island. Oubaas knows people. Oubaas knows the Minister of Agriculture. Oubaas can at least help organize a transfer for me. To another base. Port Elizabeth or Simonstown' (Behr 58). The use of short and simple sentences and the use of the formal address "Oubaas", instead of the personal pronoun "you", makes him sound like a servant, which clearly expresses his submissive position.

In fact, when Michiel returns to the farm to attend his mother's funeral, he immediately becomes aware of the burden that is attached to the formal address "Oubaas" and the discomfort it causes in him. Therefore, when he enters the farmhouse '[h]e cups his hands around his mouth and calls down the hallway: 'Pa! He won't, he resolved way back, ever again speak the word Oubaas' (Behr 15).

Nevertheless, there is one incident where Michiel seems to fall back into the dominating authority structures of his father. It is in his first night again on the farm, when he wakes up after having a nightmare of his father hanging on a burning branch. Michiel is so worried that he sneaks into his father's bedroom, who is awake and asks: '[i]s dit jy, Alida?' and Michiel replies '[i]t's me, Oubaas...[n]othing, Oubaas. I couldn't sleep. Sorry for waking you.... Goodnight, Oubaas' (Behr 183). It is unclear whether the way Michiel addressed him happened out of confusion, because it was in the middle of the night, or if Michiel talked in this way because he felt again intimidated by the authority of his father. Nevertheless, it becomes obvious, once more, that language is an essential means of maintaining hierarchies within patriarchal authority structures.

9.1.6 The control of sexuality

The most effective means to maintain the legitimacy of a patriarchal authority structure, however, is the control of sexuality, which is also the central topic in *Kings of the Water*. As Msibi explains in his essay '[f]or the legitimacy of patriarchy to be in place, compulsory heteronormativity is promoted' (71). Patriarchal authority structures can only function 'through heteronormativity' in which 'gender roles are entrenched and held up as fixed' (71). Further, he points out that in order to 'hold hegemonic masculinities in place' deviance, in form of emancipating women or same-sex desire, is punished (71). Heteronormativity does not accept same-sex desire but requires men to be attracted only to women and vice versa. Further, in a patriarchal view, women are regarded as 'intellectually and physically inferior to men', which in turn legitimizes the idea of "'the father as the head of the family", to a position where it engulfs all other relationships' (Coetzee 301). Regarding post-apartheid South Africa, Msibi explains that '[t]he emancipation of women' and 'a visible "gay" identity destabilizes men's positions in society, creating the need for men to reassert themselves' (70). This reassertion of ideal masculinity leads to different forms of oppression which are 'linked to class, gender performance and race' (Visser 1347). The aim of these forms of oppression is, according to Visser, of course, the attempt to maintain traditional patriarchal values and sustain the 'hegemony of a racial heteropatriarchy' in South Africa (Visser 1347).

Sex and Sexuality as means to exert power and control during the apartheid regime were subjected to 'particular heavy censorship' (Posel 128). Above all, 'sex across racial boundaries' was strictly prohibited (128). This regulation was, according to Posel, 'driven by typically colonial anxieties about rapacious black sexuality.' Among many other assumptions, this image also served as a stereotype supporting the colonial project. Further, since, as mentioned above, homosexuality violates the legitimacy of patriarchy, it was criminalized by the apartheid regime. This in turn caused a 'deep-seated and widespread homophobia', which consequently 'deterred the open expression or assertion of any sexualities deemed transgressive' (Posel 128).

The overall goal of the apartheid-apparatus of rules and regulations was the preservation of 'the "purity" of the white "race", by preventing the sexual sully of the white body' (128). The apartheid regime was aware that 'sexual menace' was not a danger coming exclusively from Africans, but 'was seen lurking within the body of the white nation too' (128). Consequently, it was imperative for the regime to prevent 'white dissidence and preserve the rigorous of a "civilized" way of life' (Posel 129). Of course,

these ideologies and stereotypes have not disappeared with the end of the apartheid regime, but are still present in every patriarchal society. As Izugbara notes about sexuality and sexual conduct in Nigeria:

[they are] socially produced and fed by oppressive patriarchal subjectivities and ideologies that try to instill a sense of what is normal sexually-speaking for us all. ... These are oppressive, male-biased discursive subjectivities[, which] have three familiar traits: They are, (1) homophobic (i.e. support the hatred and fear of men who step out of or challenge traditional male roles), (2) penis-centered (i.e. glorify and idolize traditional imageries of masculinity and male sexual prowess and encourage the objectification of women and their body), and (3) male-privileging (encourage the ideology of (a) double standard (, in) which males feel morally and physically edified by multiple sexual encounters while women are held as morally and physically tarnished by the same) (Izugbara 02).

As already mentioned in an example before, in Oubaas' view Michiel is not a "real man". In fact Oubaas calls him "a thing" which he cannot except on his farm. He insists on Michiel to return to the same Defense Force base where he had subverted the patriarchal ideology of the military by having sex with a male officer. Oubaas wants him to face himself and prove his "heteronormative" masculinity. 'I will not acknowledge this thing and what you are. Be a man, for once. Go back for your national service and face yourself. After that we can talk' (Behr 58). For Michiel, however, there is no need to return to this base to find out more about his own identity. Therefore, he answers: 'I'm facing myself right here, Oubaas. I don't need to go back to the army to know who I am, Oubaas' (58). The consequence of this statement is of course the expulsion from the farm - the heteronormative space, or, in other words, Michiel's fall from Paradys. Oubaas leaves him no other option and tells him: 'Then you will not set foot on this farm again. That's life, Michiel. You play by the rules or else you don't play at all' (58). Consequently, Michiel obviously violates the rules of the patriarchal Afrikaner house-hold and the heteronormative ideologies of the apartheid regime. To escape this homophobic, suppressive and intolerant regime he has only two options: He leaves the country and goes into exile or, like his older brother Peet, commits suicide to avoid facing the shame he has brought upon the family.

9.1.7 Religion & the denial of homosexuality

Another strategy to sustain patriarchal values is the assumption of religious status. Patriarchy perpetuates a 'system of values in order to justify its objective' (Coetzee 301). This objective or "final ideological destination is in line with the will of God" (301). Similar to the military and the Afrikaner farm house-hold, church does not officially

acknowledge homosexuality or any other form of same-sex desire. When Michiel returns back to the farm he remembers a conversation he had back then with Dirk who has been the dominee of the local Dutch church. He explained Michiel that

[t]he church is clear on these issues. The Word tells us it is an abomination. But I do not believe it is for us to judge. Does God not also say, love the sinner and hate the sin? I suggest you return to the army and ask them to refer you to someone; in the army with me were men who were cured of such urges by psychologists (Behr 73).

Thus, in the religious context of *Kings of the Water*, homosexuality is considered to be a sin and people with same-sex desires are regarded as sinners. Moreover, it is seen as an illness of which one can be cured by psychologists. However, this discriminating attitude of religion goes far beyond the novel, affecting probably every individual who 'engages in same-sex relations' (Msibi 60). Since as Msibi also points out '[p]eople who engage in same-sex relations are often viewed as sick, subhuman, and dangerous' (60).

Interesting in this context is how surreal the dominee's advice is presented: while Michiel is listening to the dominee's suggestion, he at the same time feels sexually attracted to him and starts fantasizing about him. Michiel imagines 'his own cock disappearing between the beautiful dominee's soft lips, his fingers caught in the thick black hair' (Behr 73). Thus Michiel is not only ignoring Dirk's religious advice, but is subverting the indoctrinated religious value system by having fantasies which are, of course, unthinkable in the absolute patriarchal authority structure of the church, since 'the argument of religion [represents] morality as communicated through presumably Christianity' (Msibi 58).

Religion is and has been essential in perpetuating patriarchal values. As Msibi notes about the religious influence in present Uganda, 'Evangelical organizations, which are thriving throughout Uganda, have been instrumental, not only in initiating homophobic sentiments, but also in spreading them' (59). Further, he points out the significant influence of church by saying that 'Pentecostal churches and organizations influence every sphere of public life in Uganda' (59). For the former Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi, homosexuality was not only "'against African norms and traditions'" but he insisted in repeating Christian values by saying that "'even in religion it is considered a great sin'" (Msibi 62). It goes without saying that the influence of church in promoting what is considered to be "normal" sexual behavior, that serves an exclusively procreative function is not only true for African countries, but for countries around the world (Sanders 101). How effective religion is as a means to condemn homosexuality is

emphasized by Msibi who claims that ‘God becomes a perfect tool to silence [...] same-sex practices, and, after all, who wants to go against God?’ (68).

9.1.8 The “eternalization” of patriarchal values

Hand in hand with the use of religion as a strategy to support the domination of patriarchy goes the ‘eternalization’ of patriarchal values. This means that ‘structures of domination are kept intact by portraying transitory, historical states of affair “as if they were natural, permanent, untouched by time”’ (Coetzee 304). In *Kings of the Water*, for instance, the denial of homosexuality not only appears to be “natural” during the apartheid regime, but also later during the transition period to post-apartheid. The African National Congress initially also denies the existence of gays and lesbians in South Africa. This is outlined at the presentation of the ANC Freedom Charter at an ANC meeting which Michiel is attending. A person among the audience asks about gay and lesbian rights and receives a disturbing answer:

Gay men and lesbians are jumping on the back of the democratic movement and exploiting the struggle for their own ends. I don’t see them homeless or hungry or suffering. Where does this business come from? It’s very fashionable over here in the West. It will disappear along with colonialism and racism. We haven’t heard of this problem in Africa until recently. In a liberated South Africa people will be normal. Tell me, are lesbians and gays normal? If everyone was like that the human race would die out (Behr 132).

This quote presents homosexuality not only as a Western import and therefore “un-African”, but also as something abnormal. In *Kings of the Water*, the “normalized” perception of homosexuality as an abnormal behavior dramatically affects Michiel and especially Peet’s life. As mentioned earlier, the control of sexuality is crucial in the maintenance of patriarchal authority structures. ‘Any variation in sexual activity and sexual partners from heteronormativity is’ therefore, ‘considered “pathological,” “deviant,” “unnatural,” and condemned in the strongest possible terms’ (Tamale2003).

Apart from that, people engaging in same-sex activities are not only confronted with society’s rejection, but also with the stigma of HIV as a ‘signifier of “bad” sexuality – rampant and polluted’ (Posel 139). Sexuality, especially homosexuality, is therefore seen as ‘a locus of moral shame – the shame of ways of life which ... [are] hidden by refusals to talk openly about them’ (139). In fact, shame and silence as consequences of a suppressive patriarchal authority structure are distinctly outlined in Mark Behr’s *Kings of the Water*. Both characteristics will be discussed in more detail in the context of homophobia in the following chapter.

9.2 Shame and silence as response to homophobia

The most outstanding example for shame and silence is Peet's suicide. In the course of the novel Michiel reveals that, although all of the three Steyn brothers were good swimmers, his oldest brother had drowned in the ocean. However, Michiel later in his life finds out that Peet had committed suicide because he was not only homosexual but because he also had AIDS. Other than Michiel's sexual orientation, Peet's had remained a secret until long after his death. Peet could not live with the pressure and the shame he would have had to face when confessing his homosexuality and his illness. Growing up in a stereotypical male world consisting of violence, a lack of emotion and the rejection of everything that deviates from the patriarchal norm, he saw no escape other than committing suicide.

While the beach symbolizes the end of Peet's life, it stands for the beginning of a new life for Michiel, since it is the beach where his homosexuality is "discovered". In fact, it is a whites-only beach where he gets caught having sex with a colored officer. Later Michiel realizes that this incident - a 'simple mistake' and Peet's 'simple drowning', as it was called by the partner Peet had back then, 'might have had to stand in for simple truth', which, however, 'would have been unbearable. Unspeakable' (Behr 88).

Michiel and Peet's homosexuality prove to be an unspeakable truth in a compulsory heterosexual society. Michiel, who becomes aware that he had lost his only ally in this suppressive homophobic patriarchy, explains to his mother many years later how proud he is of not being the "only" one. He confronts his mother, who had always been silent on this issue, with the fact that Peet had not 'simply drowned', but committed suicide.

No, your eldest was not hemophiliac or a mainliner. Let me present it in terms Benjamin would use: you and Oubaas had a sixty-six and two-thirds percent success rate – two homos out of three. Now he snorts: When it comes to real Afrikaner farm boys that ain't half bad, Ounooi. You raised two of us. That statistic in my world is a mark of pride (Behr 90).

Silence is indeed a central issue in the novel. When Michiel returns back to the farm after fifteen years, helping his father – the man who drove Peet into suicide and Michiel into exile – with having his bath, he is again reminded of the silence that has always been between them. 'You and I have never had much to say to each other.... Silence has always reigned between us' (Behr 32). Silence, however, not only reigns between Michiel and his father, but had also been between him and Karien whom he had left disgraced and pregnant. When spending time again with her, he realizes that after all the things he had done to her; they still respect and trust each other. It becomes true for every character in

the novel that '[a]t the heart of human relationship is language and the notion of solidarity, two things melded together to constitute what we call trust' (Behr 172).

Nevertheless, the environment in which the Steyn brothers and Karien grew up was mostly characterized by "compulsory silence" which characterized the patriarchal structure of their everyday lives. The family kept to be silent about Peet's death and the reasons for it. Michiel's homosexuality is not acknowledged and silenced until he returns to the farm many years later and also Karien's failed abortion had been kept a secret. Michiel understands that '[y]ou need not plunge a blade into someone's heart to lose trust. One may do so simply by keeping quiet about what you can almost not imagine to be true' (Behr 172).

The restrictive silencing of non-normative behavior on the farm house-hold is representative for the apartheid regime and also, of course, for any other form of suppression. Dominant patriarchal structures simply may not be questioned; they just function by keeping everyone in place. In the novel the transition from apartheid to post-apartheid is also characterized by breaking the silence. When the family discusses the future of the farm, Dirk explains that 'here there's this obsession with remembering. I think it's because people can talk freely for the first time' (Behr 149). It could also not have happened before the change of the regime that Ounooi promoted the dialogue about HIV and Aids in the community. Michiel learns only after his return to the farm, how important the topic had become to his mother and how much she had done for the community by addressing its problems. She and the mayor had realized that '[s]ilence is killing our people' (Behr 93). Of course, this is not only true for the community, but, in fact, rather for Ounooi herself who has not only lost Peet, but in a way also Michiel as consequence of the compulsory silencing. Two out of three sons had challenged the hegemonic Afrikaner masculinity and consequently had to pay a high price for it.

9.3 Homosexuality as western import

As mentioned in the previous chapter, homosexuality was initially presented by the African National Congress as a Western import or as an "un-African" business. In fact, although it was South Africa which became the first country in the world to implement the rights of gays and lesbians in its constitution (Sanders 105), the African National Congress was initially very reluctant to acknowledge the existence and thus the rights of gays and lesbians. Moreover, state officials still repeatedly express their inherent homophobic attitudes and on top of that also deny the dramatic extent of the HIV/Aids

problem in South Africa (Posel 140). The reason for this is mainly, because HIV and Aids are associated with rampant and “bad” sexuality reflecting the ‘moral character of the nation’ (Posel 145) which in turn, repeat Western stereotypes about the ‘sexual practices of black men’ (Posel 144). Consequently, for numerous politicians involved in the post-colonial nation-building project, it is essential to step out of stereotypical images that had helped to suppress African cultures during colonialism.

Unfortunately, these ambitions have tremendous effects, not only in South Africa, but many other African countries. In Zimbabwe, for instance, President Mugabe unmistakably stated that ‘homosexuality had no home in Zimbabwe’ (Sanders 101). According to him, the “tradition and culture in Africa does not allow that” and further he also suggests that ‘homosexuality is a European import, alien to African culture’ (101).

Is homosexuality really alien to Africa? Sanders, Msibi and Armory, for instance, claim that one must distinguish between ‘situational same-sex activity’ and a gay lifestyle (101). Evidence suggests that the former must have existed in many African cultures in pre-colonial times. In fact, according to different research, same-sex activities were particularly common in royal residences in order to express power and hierarchy over younger men. Sanders provides examples from the pre-colonial Zande kingdoms of Sudan where same-sex activities were common to make ‘men out of boys and provided them comfort and status’ (102). Or King Wanga II from Buganda who could not understand why Christian missionaries

forbad him to continue having homosexual encounters: “Is it true”, Mwanga asked, “that you forbid the satisfaction of certain natural desires?” At which the missionary answered “Yes, outside the conditions imposed by God” (102). This rejection of any sexual encounter that does not pursue a procreative function confirms my earlier argument that religion plays a tremendous role in supporting the legitimacy of patriarchy and consequently its homophobic attitude.

However, as Sanders also explains same-sex activities occurred within ‘the “common good” [of the] “family life”’. This means that a man could, for instance, engage in situational same-sex activities but also be happily married to a woman. Therefore, it was less out of desire that motivated men and women to same-sex activities but rather a ritual or traditional aspect of their culture. This, however, does not mean that men who were exclusively attracted to other men did not exist. Evidence only suggests that there is a major difference to a (Western) ‘public gay lifestyle’ (107) in which, as Msibi

explains, the focus is 'on identifiable, visible, individual[s] who engage in same-sex activities' (Msibi 56). Therefore, he and other researchers argue that [h]omosexuality in the sense of a gay lifestyle is 'a concept that does not come out of Africa' (56).

In fact, the "'homosexual role'", was an invention that 'developed around the nineteenth century in the West to denote a kind of sickness for those attracted to the same sex' (56). The term homosexuality was used to 'label those engaged in same-sex relations as deviant' (56). Only through the imposition of sexual control by Western societies such as missionaries and the apartheid regime, have same-sex activities in Africa be condemned. The result of strict controls of sexuality, which still exist in many (African) countries, maintain the dangerous closeting and silencing of countless individuals.

In fact any deviation from heteronormative behavior was encountered with silencing. The farm is a place with clearly defined gender roles. Women, as symbol for fertility, are there to make sure the lineage of strong working men continues. Homosexuality consequently is not accepted, since it deviates from what is seen as "normal" love between men and women. Moreover, it of course violates the procreative function of sexuality and therefore the possibility for strong, (white) male successors.

However, not only does a deviating sexual orientation constitute a threat to the traditional gender image, but also disease; in particular, the infection with the human immunodeficiency virus, or in short, HIV. Looking at socio-medical research as well as primary literature dealing with the topic in an African context, a strong relationship between the virus and the performance of gender roles becomes visible.

In the following chapter I want to closely look at Sindiwe Magona's novel *Beauty's Gift* which tells the story of four women whose best friend Beauty dies because of AIDS. As a consequence, the four friends Edith, Cordelia, Amanda and Doris decide to change the fate of their own lives. In order to avoid an infection with the deadly virus, they all swear an oath: they will not have unprotected sex - not even with their husbands. Moreover, they also decide to find out their own HIV status as well as that of their partners. This decision, however, soon turns into a crucial test for their partnerships, since their partners cannot understand at all the sudden change of attitude among the four women.

The novel, in fact, conveys the image of the unfaithful husband, who not only puts the lives of his wife and children in danger but in a metaphorical sense also the future of Africa. Since the main protagonists are all female and the story is told exclusively from

their point of view, I want to contrast this one-sided female perspective on HIV/AIDS with male realities recorded in socio-medical research conducted in Tanzania and South Africa.

10. HIV/AIDS – A THREAT TO HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY IN *BEAUTY'S GIFT*

Before analyzing gender roles and culturally constructed gender expectations in the context of the novel *Beauty's Gift* and in contrast with socio-medical research findings, I want to provide a brief definition of the terminology I am going to use as well as a short overview of the HIV/AIDS situation in Tanzania and South Africa. When using the term HIV/AIDS, I am referring to the following explanation by Alan Whiteside:

Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) is caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), which crossed from primates into humans. Although isolated cases of infection in people may have appeared earlier, the first cases of the current epidemic probably occurred in the 1930s, and the disease spread rapidly in the 1970s (01).

10.1 HIV/AIDS in Tanzania and South Africa – a brief overview

Information provided by the Tanzanian Commission for AIDS (TACAIDS) and United Nations (UNAIDS) shows that Tanzania and especially South Africa are two of the countries which are, without a doubt, severely affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. According to HIV and AIDS estimates of 2012, the prevalence rate among adults aged 15 to 49 was 5.1% in Tanzania and 17.9% in South Africa. In 2012 the number of people living with HIV in Tanzania accounted for 1,500,000 and for 6,100,000 in South Africa respectively (UNAIDS).

According to TACAIDS, the majority of new HIV infections in Tanzania are among people aged 25 - 49. The report also shows that the HIV prevalence is higher among women (6.2%) than among men (3.8%), which is also true for South Africa where data reveal that '[y]oung women between the ages of 15 and 24 years are four times more likely to have HIV than males of the same age. On average, young females become HIV-positive about five years earlier than males' ⁶In addition, a comparison between urban and rural areas in Tanzania shows that HIV prevalence is higher in urban areas for both, women and men (TACAIDS 2012).

⁶ Global Response Progress Report 2012

<http://search.unaids.org/search.asp?lg=en&search=global%20aids%20response%20progress%20report%20south%20africa>

However, as the survey also outlines, a comparison of the 2007-08 and 2011-12 HIV prevalence indicates that this number has declined slightly by 0.6% among adults aged 15-49, but is still higher among women (TACAIDS 2012). Regarding the main mode of HIV transmission in sub-Saharan Africa, it is through heterosexual intercourse (qtd. in Bastien 761).

What is important for this thesis is how ideas revolving around HIV/AIDS are built on the perception of medical research as “true” knowledge on the one hand, and on socially constructed gender roles, on the other. Initially, research findings argued for the existence of a normative heterosexual masculinity and its negative impact on the HIV/AIDS epidemic. This argument was soon followed by the recognition of a plurality of masculinities and thus their social construction. Therefore, as outlined in the following chapter, prevention strategies pursued a variety of different aims. From initially targeting women as being responsible for behavior change due to men’s perceived uncontrollable sex drive, over to the perception of condoms as highly emasculating objects, and finally to the idea of men as the actual victims of health care programs.

10.2 Condoms – a ‘tacit threat to heterosexual identity as “real” man’ in fact & fiction

During the 1990s, promoting the use of condoms as effective means to reduce the heterosexual transmission of HIV/AIDS was seen as interfering with the image of the “real man”. In particular, the condom was regarded as an object which ‘disrupts the natural performance of the male sex drive’ (Vitellone 152). Interestingly, this was not only a phenomenon noticed in a sub-Saharan context, but also in Europe, Australia or America. In fact, Vitellone claims that ‘it is widely suggested that the practice for unsafe heterosex embodies and is constitutive of hegemonic heterosexual masculinity’ (153). Further, she argues that the idea of ‘unsafe sex as embodying normative heterosexual masculinity’ (153) was so deeply ingrained in different societies that even in the context of HIV/AIDS, the condom was seen as ‘a tacit threat to heterosexual identity as “real” man’ (qtd. in Vitellone 157). In the context of the AIDS epidemic, the promotion of condoms did not only interfere with a ‘dominant sexual practice of unsafe sex’, but even with a whole discourse of the male sex drive (153). However, parallel to the emergence of the discourse of the uncontrollable male sex drive, a discourse of safer (hetero) sex also emerged.

Since the late 1980s, the phenomena of the male sex drive—as an uncontrollable spontaneous instinct—has been interpreted in many feminist analyses of AIDS culture as socially constructed through the discourse of safer (hetero)sex (Vitellone 154).

The consequence of these two discourses was the need for HIV/AIDS campaigns to target women as the ones taking responsibility. Since men were depicted as ‘unspecified force which women are asked to control, the force against which they need protection’ (qtd. in Vitellone 155).

10.3 Women – between protection and accusation

Vitellone points out, ‘a “real” and “natural” heterosexual masculine identity is perceived to be achieved only through the practice of unsafe heterosex’ (156) or in other words, “real men” are supposed to perform a ‘non-negotiable, spontaneous, uninterrupted [...] sex drive without condoms’ (156).

The idea of women taking responsibility of themselves and their partners is outlined at several instances in Magona’s novel *Beauty’s Gift*. For instance, the four friends decide for themselves that they will not continue exposing themselves to the threat of getting infected by their partners. Moreover, the socio-cultural dimension of the epidemic is openly addressed by the community leader Mrs Mazwi in the context of Lungile Sonti’s funeral. His twin brother Lunga had only died of AIDS a few days before him, their parents had decided to turn this sad occasion into a chance to educate the community about the deadly virus. The community leader Mrs Mazwi who ‘was very involved in the affairs of the community and greatly respected for it’ and who had also taught Lungile when he was younger, was among the speakers at the funeral (Magona 84). Although the speakers before her also addresses the topic, none of them does it in such a direct and clear way as Mrs Mazwi:

For, my children, let us not beat about the bush, this is your funeral. This is your disease. This is your time of judgment....” [...] “we are, fortunately, not doomed to die. Don’t let sex kill you. Use condoms. Stay faithful. Test and test again. Testing gives you a tremendous advantage... (Magona 84-85).

This message is also clearly taken up by the four friends who argue that ‘Aids will continue to kill us as long as we refuse to take responsibility for our actions’ (Magona 72). Consequently, they decide not to have sex without an AIDS test and if their partners refuse, they would insist on using condoms. When Amanda confronts her husband Zakes with the idea of getting an AIDS test, he is shocked and immediately assumes that she is

suspecting him of not being faithful. 'Zakes jumped off the bed. "Are you accusing me of something?" he growled. "What? Out with it! Or are you fooling around?"' (Magona 80). Similar to Zakes' outburst is the reaction of Edith's husband Luvo who has stopped speaking to Edith and accused her of disloyalty. Under tears she explains to her friends, "'[h]e asked me what kind of a wife involves outsiders in her marriage, [...] [i]t's enough that we *talked* about condoms!'" (Magona 89). Much worse was the reaction of Cordelia's husband Vuyo who, not only leaves her and moves out of the house, but who even hits her in the face upon which her 'left eye was swollen shut' hidden behind sun glasses (Magona 80). Cordelia reveals to her friends that after the discussion she had with her husband '[she] wouldn't entertain him without the use of a condom. So, he went and found himself what he calls "a one-night thing"' (80). Although her friends remind her that it was no secret that Vuyo was not faithful, Cordelia tells them that "'this time he admitted it openly"' (80). In return, she confronts him with the intention to do the same, upon which he threatens to kill her (80). Surprisingly, Cordelia is not intimidated by his reaction, but in fact explains: "'So, as far as I am concerned, Vuyo can go to hell! It's all over between us'", since, as she justifies: "'No one has the right to expose another to Aids"' (80).

In Bujra's article about AIDS discourse and activism in Africa, Tanzanian men confessed that the idea of women, especially their wives 'taking control of her own protection, by refusing sex or demanding the use of a condom' was shocking (Bujra 13). Asking for a condom was automatically associated with prostitution leading them to the conclusion that their wives were prostitutes. Further, the idea of women telling their men what to do was unthinkable (Bujra 13).

In Magona's novel women are depicted as the sole victims of this disease, but simultaneously also the ones who are taking action in the fight against it. As the novel suggests, their wish to use a condom is automatically linked with an accusation of disloyalty of the husband and thus immediately rejected.

In opposition to this rather simplified and one-sided masculine image, Vitellone argues for different reasons for the rejection of condoms. For men, the use of condoms was not only associated with controlling their natural sex drive and thus with the 'feminization of the heterosexual male body' (157), but also with homosexuality. This was due to the fact that the virus was initially only put in connection with

homosexuality.⁷ Consequently, as mentioned by Vitellone, using protection was perceived as equal to having queer sex, and thus a 'fear of perversion [was] transformed into a fear of safe sex' (qtd. in Vitellone 157).

10.4 Crucial comparison: Black masculinity vs. White masculinity

Another interesting association with the use of condoms was found in villages in rural Tanzania. In a research conducted between 1999 and 2002 in northern rural Tanzania, villagers argued for the importance of a 'barrier-free sexual intercourse' (Plummer et al. 33). Since, according to them, using a condom would prevent conception or birth which in turn was seen as acting against 'God's will' and therefore regarded as interfering with a natural process. Using a condom was associated with a European practice that would lead Tanzanians to forget their own culture (Plummer et al. 33).

A comparison between Africa and the West also comes up in Magona's *Beauty's Gift*. In fact, in two instances, a reference is made to a cultural difference between Africa and the West. The first happens when the four friends argue with Moses and Thandi at the funeral of Lunga Sonthi about the use of condoms. The discussion was initiated by Moses who was explaining that it must have been the twins' girlfriends who had infected them, since, as another man, Gabula, confirms, '[e]verybody knows that is how men get Aids' (Magona 69). Cordelia, in return, asks how they can be sure about that when men are the ones who have more partners. At which point Moses objects that "'not all black men are promiscuous – ngamahenyu!'", at which Cordelia fires back "'And what about the millions who *do* cheat on their wives, huh?'" Upon which, Gabula turns to Moses to join the conversation:

"[t]his suster, she is unreasonable, mfoweth!"

[Cordelia:] "And Africans dying like flies from Aids is reasonable?"

"Aids is not a black thing," countered Moses.

"Uh-huh?" How many white Aids orphans have you counted lately?"

Cordelia shot back. "African mothers, faithfully married women, are killed by men who will not stop sleeping around!" (Magona 70)

After the heated discussion with Moses and Gabula was over, the four friends continue discussing the topic. Doris points out to Amanda that 'those men may be ignorant, but they are right about one thing. Aids is not a black disease.' At which point Amanda cries out "[o]f course Aids is not a black disease!" "But Doris, let's be honest, in

⁷ See "The identification of HIV/AIDS" in Whiteside's *HIV/AIDS: A very short introduction* (01).

this country, more black people are killed by Aids than any other group, than all the other groups put together!" At which point Doris, however, clarifies that there are more black people in South Africa than any other group (Magona 72).

The second incident where Africa is compared with the West in the context of the HIV/AIDS epidemic is when the community leader Mrs Mazwi is questioning the role and responsibility of the South African government, by making a reference to South Africa's apartheid history.

Where is the government, with our children dying? [...] But can you think what would have happened had this Aids pandemic come during apartheid? We would have cried 'Genocide!' had the apartheid government dragged its feet the way our democratically elected government is dragging its feet now – even as our people die in their thousands. ... (Magona 86).

Mrs Mazwi also blames the government for spending the money on arms instead of medicine. In fact, she blames the leaders of the country for not spending money on the so much needed antiretroviral drugs for people infected with HIV. She even goes so far to compare the epidemic and the role of the government as 'genocide of the poor' (Magona 86).

However, it was not only the issue of African tradition versus "new" European practices that influences the debate around the use of condoms in a literary as well as a socio-medical context, but also a number of other reasons. Especially among men - no matter if they had experience with condoms or not – was a widely used argument that condoms would reduce sexual pleasure and therefore be unacceptable.

This argument is also represented in Magona's novel, in the debate between the four women and Moses and Thandi, when Cordelia raises concern about whether the girlfriends of twin brothers Lunga and Lungile Sonthi had used protection. Moses and Thandi's response to Cordelia's concern are only 'disparaging laughs' (Magona 69). On top of that Moses roars "'Jaa! The brothers say using a condom is like eating sweets with the wrapper on!'" (Magona 70). Cordelia, however, not satisfied with this reaction, asks Moses about his personal opinion, upon which he – not expecting this question – only 'scratch[es] his short-cropped head nervously' (70). The connection between condom use, emotional control and the fulfillment of hegemonic masculinity is also outlined in Bujra's article about AIDS discourse and activism in Africa. The demonstration of condom use to a group of young men by AIDS activists was encountered by 'hysterical embarrassment and glassy eyes [which] spoke of a most "unmanly" loss of emotional control' (Bujra 14).

However, besides reducing pleasure and the associations with homosexuality and being emasculating, research findings show that there are other reasons for not using condoms. For instance, different studies conducted in sub-Saharan Africa revealed that people believed that condoms were already contaminated with the HI-Virus. In addition, it was assumed that they were old and ineffective and only for that reason given to them for free from health services (Plummer et al. 36). A further common misbelieve was that villagers could avoid infection by not having unprotected sex with city dwellers, because it was known that the AIDS prevalence was higher in the cities than in rural areas (Plummer et al. 36).

In summary, in the context of HIV/AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa, research suggests that condoms not only interfere with the image of a normative heterosexual hegemonic masculinity, but also with traditional African values and believe systems and are therefore rejected. As Magona's novel *Beauty's Gift* shows, these motifs are also reflected in South African fiction and thus part of larger discourse about gender expectations.

Another interesting perspective, however, is revealed in the research findings of Lynch, Brouard and Visser, which point out that it is not the condoms which are the actual threat to the performance of a hegemonic masculinity, but HIV/AIDS itself. In the following chapter, I want to outline how disease in general and the HI-virus in particular challenge the fulfillment of socially constructed gender expectations.

10.5 HIV/AIDS – a challenge for the performance of a hegemonic masculinity

The emergence of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa has brought a tremendous challenge to the performance of a hegemonic masculinity. Participants of Lynch, Brouard and Visser's research claimed that a positive status heavily interferes with the performance of a traditional masculine image due to the following reasons: First, they argued that the virus gets in the way with having a partnership, since 'living with HIV makes it difficult to have an intimate or sexual relationship with a partner and to eventually marry' (20). Performing the "real man" image by having multiple sexual partners is therefore significantly challenged. Second, the characteristic of fathering many children is put in question, since '[h]aving children is also seen as problematic as conceiving a child with an HIV-negative partner introduces a level of risk to the child and the partner' (20). Third, since another defining characteristic of the "real man" image is the exertion of control over others, particularly over women, the virus ultimately leads to the disruption of the male position in power. Because in order to

disclose one's HIV-positive status 'one has to disclose to others that there is something that one cannot control' (Lynch et al. 21).

Participants of this research were also aware of the continuous pressure coming from socially constructed gender expectations. They pointed out that each of them was, as a man, expected 'to be a person who is going to be employed, [to get] a job and [to have] responsibilities. And to have a family and to get married' (Lynch et al. 19). Consequently, with not being able to attain these signifiers of "real" masculinity, infected men fear 'a loss of status as a man', which in turn forces them 'into silence, as they cannot reveal any perceived weakness or vulnerability' (Lynch et al. 21). The outcome of this fear entails that men try to 'delay seeking help to avoid appearing vulnerable' (Lynch et al. 21).

Nevertheless, it is not only the issue of being unable to attain these signifiers in order to prove "real" masculinity, but in addition growing fears of one's most intimate partner. Bujra argues that there was a big difference in what male research participants said in private and what they said in public. It turned out that for both, men and women, the biggest fear was getting infected by their own partner. For men, however, it seemed to be a rather new experience, since they 'expected to be secure in their control over women and their sexuality' (Bujra 13). Therefore, the idea that exactly this control could be threatened by an infection with HIV/AIDS through their own wives is definitely something that heavily interferes with fulfilling socially constructed gender expectations.

In the context of Magona's novel *Beauty's Gift*, the fear of losing control might explain the behavior of Hamilton, Beauty's husband, and, to some extent, also the behavior of Doris' fiancé. In Beauty's last days, when she is already too sick to take care of herself and is therefore taken to her mother's home, her friends visit her in order to find out more about her condition. At that point, Beauty has not told them yet about her tragic fate. However, when she is about to tell them, she gets interrupted by her husband Hamilton, whose 'voice barks from just inside the door, "[that] this damn visit is over!"' (Magona 48). Hamilton, '[i]mpeccable in a double-breasted navy silk suit', positions himself in the doorway, 'holding it open, waiting.

"Can't you people see she's tired out?" he says, nostrils flaring. They hadn't heard the door open, hadn't heard Hamilton slink in. Now silence reigns. [...] Hamilton angrily snatches off his sunglasses. Then he repeatedly waves them over his right shoulder, his thumb jabbing the way out. (Magona 48)

What might appear as very protective behavior in the first instance slowly turns into very questionable attitude, because soon after this incident, only Amanda is allowed to visit Beauty. Since, according to Hamilton, it would exhaust Beauty too much. On top of that he –against the wishes of Beauty’s parents –moves her back “to her own home”, and her mother Mamkwayi is forced to come and nurse her daughter under Hamilton’s supervision (Magona 49). A few days later, the four friends meet again; Doris, Edith and Cordelia– still not knowing what Beauty is suffering from – ask Amanda about her condition. She, however, cannot yet tell them the secret Beauty has revealed to her and thus avoids the issue by saying that ‘[b]oth Mamkwayi and Hamilton are keeping mum on exactly what Beauty’s illness is, never mind details about medication’ (Magona 60). Consequently, while for Doris, Edith and Cordelia, not knowing what Beauty suffers from, Hamilton’s behavior becomes more and more awkward.

However, shortly after Beauty’s death and after Amanda finally informs her friends about what actually had caused her death, they are sure that Hamilton has infected her and that he was getting help and the right medication.

“We all know Hamilton likes yanga-yanga!” “But he looks fine,” Edith said. “Did you see how well he looked at the funeral?” “The brother’s sure as hell getting some help, somewhere,” Cordelia growled. “But let’s see how long that lasts. Unless he stops messing around, he’ll just keep on getting himself re-infected – and all the ARVs in the world won’t help him in the end.” (Magona 76).

The four friends soon start to realize why Hamilton was behaving so secretive about Beauty’s bad condition. Beauty’s mother informs them that when she wasn’t with her daughter “he sat by her bedside, day and night and wouldn’t let anyone near her”, from which she resumes that “[m]aybe he didn’t want us to know which one of them gave this terrible disease to the other.” (Magona 95).

Thus, by desperately trying to keep Beauty’s disease a secret, he tried to maintain control over the situation and over himself. Since, as the four women explain, Beauty had always been faithful and loyal to Hamilton, while he is known as a womanizer and therefore it can only be him who had infected her. Consequently, by not admitting what caused her rapidly degenerating health situation, he remained in a position of power. This allows him to maintain his lifestyle as womanizer, which clearly would not be possible if the community had found out. He is presumably getting the right medication, but had not awarded this right to his wife Beauty. Thus, the disease is clearly associated with shame and the fear of loss of control and therefore silenced by Hamilton.

Similarly afraid of the loss of control was Selby, Doris' fiancé. Although he was the only partner of the four friends who had approved to get tested, he accidentally reveals a secret. After Selby and Doris have taken the test and arrive back at his flat, he calls his mother to tell her that both their test is negative. However, when talking to his mother he tells her "I was so scared, Mama! What if the result had been positive?" (Magona 109). Instantly, Doris, who overhears the conversation, realizes that Selby had slept with someone else.

'Selby hadn't gone to see Doctor Patel as a matter of course. His was a real test! He didn't know his status – and so his fear was genuine, born of excruciating uncertainty. She remembered how certain she'd been of his love. How could she have been so blind?' (Magona 110).

Consequently, in this case, it is not the idea of being accused of being disloyal by the female partner, but the actual fear of being caught betraying the partner and as immediate punishment being told to be infected with a deadly disease. Thus, although the men in the novel are doubtlessly aware of the health risk the whole community is exposed to through their behavior, they seem to ignore it by not getting tested in the first place and by keeping the disease a secret and consciously continue infecting other people.

However, as research findings show, the hegemonic image of a "real man" requires men to be in control, not only of themselves, but also of others, usually women. Therefore, vitality, health and strength are essential components to perform this particular expected role. Concluding, although the discourse of an idealized normative heterosexual masculinity, which is constantly in control, is seen as necessary to perform, it is also perceived as a burden (Lynch et al. 22). Since 'the experience of [severe] illness [...] disrupts normative expectations of men to be invulnerable and self-reliant' (Lynch et al. 23).

10.6 Polygamy – justified by traditional gender roles

Nevertheless, in the context of HIV/AIDS prevention efforts, the notion that men can also be the victims of socio-cultural gender expectations exists, if only since recently. This awareness is more or less the outcome of failed health programs which were seen to be the result of 'men's resistance to behavioural change' (qtd. in Brown et al. 586). The failure to change men's behavior towards more responsibility was followed by an

increased focus on the 'education and empowerment of women' (586) and simultaneously also by a 'closer examination of men's role in the AIDS epidemic' (586).

The attempt to fight the epidemic with increasing education and empowerment for women had only little impact, mainly due to socio-cultural reasons. For instance, in Tanzanian rural areas it is still common that adolescent girls have to leave 'schools after puberty for the sake of getting married and they [have] little power to act against their parents' (qtd. in Njau 159). This is also outlined in Feinstein and D'Errico's collection of stories dealing with disability and illness, told by Tanzanian women. One of the stories is about Paulina, a disabled Maasai girl. She explains that the Maasai are a proud people and a patriarchal society.

Girls are looked at as a commodity to trade in marriage for cattle, and polygamy is the norm. It is not uncommon for a man to know exactly how many cattle he owns – as a pastoralist it is imperative to keep such mental records – while having no idea how many children he has fathered (Feinstein 21).

She further explains that while men have to prove their manhood by leaving the village and hunt a lion, women's sole value is their capability to bear children. Also, she points out that only few Maasai go to school, because there is no purpose. 'Boys tend cattle so that one day they may own cattle. Girls are for marriage, a father can get a lot of cows for a daughter' (Feinstein 23).

Women's disadvantaged position was reflected in early health campaigns. In fact, women were depicted as vulnerable and consequently set up as "targets" for intervention and in the process, often presented [...] only as victims waiting for rescue or "empowerment" (Bujra 07). The socio-culturally produced disadvantage for women is also addressed at several instances in Magona's novel *Beauty's Gift*. One of them is when the four friends talk about disloyal husbands and Amanda is wondering why women whose husbands betray them repeatedly do not leave them. Upon which her friends explain that for women it is not easy to leave them, since

"[m]ore often than not, these men are the women's sole source of food and rent, not to mention clothes and school fees for their children." "And the identity of many a woman is so tied up with her husband's, she wouldn't know who she was without him,"... (Magona 115).

In another incident, when Amanda is yet again confronted with the marital problems of her sister-in-law Sihle, whose husband had again impregnated another woman, she reflects on her mother's attitude towards marriage:

In her mother's eyes, women simply endured the vagaries of married life – and did so with their mouths shut and smiles painted on their faces. Men were men and would do what men had always done, since the beginning of time. Mama was beyond changing. (Magona 124-25).

When Amanda wants to discuss the issue with Sihle and asks her why she again condones his behavior, Sihle directs the enquiry to Amanda. She accidentally reveals that in fact Amanda's husband Zakes had not only betrayed her, but on top of that also fathered two children outside their marriage. Amanda is, of course, completely shocked about the fact that her husband was not different from all the others, as she always had believed. Moreover, she finds out that everyone in her family, including her mother, has known about Zakes infidelity. Nevertheless, her mother does not accuse him and his behavior, but does quite the opposite. She actually defends him: '[s]he turned to her daughter. "Amanda," she began, "your husband is a good man. He has made a mistake and [...] [y]ou're not going to throw everything you have away just because a few common bitches..." her mother began, fuming' (Magona 127). However, Amanda, in contrast to her sister-in-law Sihle, cannot put up with Zakes disloyalty and unfaithfulness. When she is trying to explain to her and Zakes family that from now on they will go separate ways, her three sisters-in-law cannot understand the meaning of it. 'All three looked at her and nodded unison. Marriage is enduring, their eyes said, a woman sticks it out the best she knows how, that is what we do. That is what our mothers, and their mothers before them, did. Stick it out. That is tradition' (Magona 151). At this moment, it becomes clear to Amanda that tradition is the very essence that keeps so many relationships together.

Amanda looked away. She was stunned. It was obvious to her that they expected her, like them, to endure, to suffer, to remain married to Zakes. That was the respectable thing to do. She looked again at the three women, and saw pity in their eyes. With a sinking heart, she saw that they were blind to their own suffering, blind to the fact that they were living lives devoid of appreciation and respect (Magona 151).

No one in the family offers support to Amanda, but rather everyone seems to defend Zakes and dismisses his behavior as normal – something not worth arguing about. Also Amanda's uncle explains at a family meeting that tradition says that all she can do is go home and he would take care of the right punishment for Zakes. Amanda, however, is furious and explains that she will not continue traditional behavior by simply condoning what has happened, but that she will rather start a new tradition. Since, according to her, she cannot accept the fact that there are children growing up without both their parents, and, of course, also with the lies and dishonesty she was encountered with by Zakes.

The importance of marriage in a Sub-Saharan context is also outlined in Feinstein and D'Errico's collection of stories. The authors point out that '[m]arriage is more than a societal norm in Tanzania, it is a societal mandate' (103). In the context of HIV/AIDS they found out that 'not only do many women living with HIV/AIDS watch their husbands and co-wives die rapidly – forcing them to face their own mortality – but their disease status often diminishes their future potential for re-marriage' (103). In fact, in most of the collected stories women argue how men, no matter if they are suffering from a disease or not, have no problems to find a partner, while sick women are very unlikely of getting married, since their "value" of having children is diminished. In fact, Feinstein and D'Errico came several times across the double standard for married men and women when it came to having multiple partners. One of the women, Yudith, for instance, explained that her husband found another wife, because, according to him, Yudith was too old. 'For a short while, we all lived together. Then he built a new house and he moved there with his second wife. [...] I couldn't understand why men here could have many wives but that I had to only have one husband' (Feinstein 16). Further, Yudith points out that when her husband left her, she 'was expected to sit at home and think about only him' (16). Nevertheless, she found a boyfriend, who, however, left her after she had found out that she was HIV positive. When she informed her boyfriend about it, he physically abused her and told [her] that 'he couldn't live with [her] if [she] was sick' (Feinstein 17).

However, as the collection of stories suggests, not only marriage is an important necessity to fulfill gender expectations, but for men it is also a polygamous lifestyle. In one of the stories a woman named Modezia explains that her husband had divorced her, because he was having another woman of which she did not know.

One day he came with new wife and took all things from me and moved back to Arusha. Husband had taken care of men and the children. He was a good man, but he was a cheater. He wanted temporary woman. We had five children before he left. (Feinstein 32).

Consequently, as Magona's novel *Beauty's Gift* as well as Feinstein and D'Errico's collection of stories suggest, polygamy is not condemned at all, as it is deeply ingrained in tradition. In fact, rather the opposite is true: women who are complaining about it face problems within the community. This attitude, however, has been criticized by some African feminists, who also argue that 'African societies in general tolerate multiple sexual partners for men, but exert moral and social sanctions on women' (qtd.

in Bujra 10). They also argue that in regard of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, it is exactly this male behavior that was and is to some extent still one of the major factors in the rapid spread of the disease. Martin Foreman claimed in his research, conducted in the 1990s, that “without men there would be no AIDS epidemic” (qtd. in Bujra 06). This is, as he pointed out, due to the fact that they “refuse to protect themselves, often deliberately” (qtd. In Gibson 19).

In Magona’s *Beauty’s Gift*, this attitude is reflected in the scene when Amanda – long before she finds out that her husband is cheating on her – is trying to convince him of taking an AIDS test by crying out:

“You chose to be reckless with your life, but that choice had implications for me as well, something you seem to have forgotten. And I take exception to that, Zakes. I take very strong exception to being exposed to danger when I had no knowledge of it!” (Magona 147).

Zakes, who is still not grasping Amanda’s determinedness, thinks to be able to calm her down by just telling her that they are married to each other and that he loves her. Upon which Amanda gets even more furious and wonders why ‘men seem to think that telling a woman they loved her gave them permission to do whatever they liked, irrespective of the consequences? Did they think that love miraculously protected both of them from infection?’ (147).

Within the context of socio-cultural research, targeting women for AIDS interventions had soon turned out to have only little effect. Consequently, the awareness of gender-based characteristics increased and a reorientation happened not only in the context of HIV/AIDS campaigns in Africa, but also in a ‘global conception[n] of gender’ (Bujra 06). With the perception of masculinity as socially constructed, it was not considered as ‘a unitary “male role”’ anymore, or universally perceived as “the problem” [...], but masculinity was put in the context of a new academic discourse of “multiple masculinities”’ (Bujra 07). In addition, in the context of the epidemic and the awareness of socially-constructed gender roles, men have become increasingly becoming the focus of intervention programs:

In the climate of fear about death and sexuality, there is beginning to be a change of mood in Africa. The concept of ‘masculinity’, as something distinct from biological sex, and fashioned through sociocultural processes, has begun to make an appearance. It goes along with the discovery of men as a new target in AIDS intervention work. Some men are becoming aware of themselves as gendered beings and of their masculinity as a contingent cultural construction, rather than something fixed and natural. They are making connections between constructions of masculinity and men’s behavior towards women (Bujra 11)

However, after realizing the important role of gender construction in the context of HIV/AIDS prevention, several questions arise: 'What practical advantage is there in recognizing and exposing the diversity and contingency of masculinities?' (qtd. in Bujra 08). Moreover, '[i]f hegemonic masculinity dictates multiple sexual partners', and 'monogamy is not seen as an attractive way to demonstrate masculinity' – how can this view be transformed? (qtd. in Bujra 08). The following chapter deals with exactly these specific questions and also emphasizes how hegemonic masculinity is under constant construction. In Elieshi Lema's *Parched Earth*, one of the male characters realizes his own, through the patriarchally organized society, disadvantaged position and explains the problematic consequences of this system to a woman who has also suffered all her life from this very system. In fact, the novel is not only about the recognition of the immense pressure originating from socio-cultural expectations, but also about the possibility of deconstructing these expectations and thus about reconstructing masculine identities.

11. *PARCHED EARTH* – RECONSTRUCTING IDEALIZED IMAGES OF MASCULINITY

Lema's novel *Parched Earth* tells the story of Doreen, a woman born into a women headed household in a rural Tanzanian area. Raised by her mother Foibe and her aunt Mai, her life turns out to become a passage. Opposed to her brother Godbless and the general social norm, she becomes a successful and independent woman by working as a teacher. Marriage and motherhood, however, soon turn out to become challenging obstacles to her happiness. But not the additional tasks that come along with being a mother and having a household are complicating her life; it is the net of social expectations that puts pressure on her life and on the relationship with her husband Martin. In the course of the novel Doreen, however, learns that in fact everyone she knows is experiencing and suffering from these social expectations. In fact, her mother Foibe, her aunt, her brother Godbless, her colleagues at work, her husband and even her daughter Milika are trapped in the net of social expectations. While Doreen does not know how else to make sense of the process that is affecting everyone around her, including herself, she compares the net of social expectations with a spider's web, in which not only flies can get caught, but the spider itself.

The image of the spider comes to mind, the way it spins its web from the very inside of its stomach, for itself, and for trapping others into its power and into death, which is life for itself. Death for one, life for another. The spider spins its power web from the secretions of its stomach in order to survive, doesn't it? Does it know that it is not

just the fly that can die inside that web, but also one of its own kind or even itself?
(Lema 04)

In the course of the novel, Doreen, however, learns that the concept which she can only imagine as a spider's web is called patriarchy. Only with the help of a man called Joseph, whom she meets by chance, she slowly learns to understand the system in which she and everyone else are trapped. Simultaneously, she finds out that this system does not only disadvantage women, as she initially has assumed, but also men.

In *Parched Earth* Lema manages in a very subtle way to draw a clear picture of the far-reaching effects of a patriarchally organized society and how as a consequence people in all different stages of their lives experience the pressure of this social system. The following chapter outlines the onset of social conditioning, namely through the different ways in which girls and boys are raised.

11.1 Conditioned by the reality of childhood

Right from the beginning of the novel, the reader is confronted with the reality of Doreen's childhood and the way in which it differs from the childhood reality of her brother Godbless. While he has a clear vision of himself becoming a successful man, who can provide for his family and support his mother with enough money, Doreen has never learned to make her own dreams for the future. In fact, from early childhood onwards Godbless is convinced about the positive developments in his future:

He knew just what he wanted to be. He often talked of giving mother a lot of money, money that he obviously would have, so mother would not have to work so hard and could laugh more. Even when he was in standard four, he already talked of having several degrees (Lema 07).

While Godbless is ambitious and convinced of how degrees would take him far, Doreen can only hope that his future would also become true for her. She 'agreed with him. [She] always did, because his dream was part of an alternate world he created and which both of [them] believed in' (Lema 07). Godbless is reassuring over and over again that one day he would be a 'big person', while Doreen does not even know how to make a dream for herself.

I could not fashion one from my mind and build it up and act it out like Godbless did. My mind had not started telling itself stories yet, had not started weaving dreams like one knits a nicely patterned sweater from wool. All I could imagine was cooking, washing and taking care of my brothers (Lema 08).

With his naturally given self-confidence and authority, Godbless was able to exercise power over Doreen, who has from early childhood onwards been imitating her hardworking mother, since she had explained to her daughter that 'women are most home with the soil [...] because working the land complemented the woman's role of nurturing. Women nurture the earth like they do children and husbands' (Lema 12).

However, contrary to the children's different personality traits, their lives develop in unexpected ways. While Doreen performs very well at school and manages to become a teacher, Godbless fails his exams and is thus forced to stay with his mother in the village and work the land. Not being able to 'forgive[e] fate for that raw deal', his disappointment is reinforced after he is told by an uncle, whom he had asked for support, that "'we walk the road we were born to walk, truly'" (Lema 06). In fact, according to Brown et al., present markers of masculinity are education and a job, since they are 'seen as indicators of a strong man, in part because they allow access to material goods' (592). Also, it is pointed out in their research that education is 'associated with the "urban lifestyle"' (592). Thus, by failing his exams and thus blowing his chance of a well-paid job in town, Godbless has also failed to achieve expected markers of masculinity.

An additional factor which complicates Godbless' life is the fact that he and his siblings are fatherless. While Doreen is able to more or less cope with the situation, her brother increasingly suffers from the absence of a father figure, which he later repeatedly blames for being the reason why he cannot be the 'big man' he had dreamed of. Later, when Doreen is already married and mother of a daughter, her brother Godbless reveals again his desperate need for his father. "'You know, father could have helped. Set me up with some business. Wipe mother's tears by that act.'" Godbless would not give up on his father. He wanted so much, so very much to be fathered' (Lema 129).

In addition to the failed exams, the unfulfilled longing for his father, social norms, which expect him to find a woman and to get married, soon put more pressure on him.

At twenty-six, Godbless considered himself a grown a man, who sometimes confided in me, "Sister, I am aging and I don't have a girl. Save your brother from perpetual bachelorhood and bring one of your learned friends for me to marry." [...] At his age, he was supposed to at least have a fiancée, a girl people would attach to him and therefore consider him 'normal'. Then when people met him they could say to each other, 'oh, he is engaged to so-and so's daughter.' Society could then have patience with him for not marrying, finding excuses for him for being alone at a time considered to be beyond the marrying age (Lema 97).

But it is not only the community which puts pressure on him; also his mother contributes to his precarious situation by making allusions to his manhood. Doreen explains that 'he already felt lacking in terms of social expectations', by telling his mother angrily "[y]es, that is what you always tell me. I am not a man! I am not a man! That is all you can tell your son. I am tired. Honestly, I will run away from this place for good" (Lema 97).

Later, in the course of the novel, Doreen suddenly learns about her brother's firm decision to marry, although he does not even have a partner yet. Nevertheless, their mother is happy about his intention. 'She laughed mirthfully and said, "Oh, yes. A man does not live alone forever. God did not create him so."' (Lema 124). When Doreen asks her mother about the sense of his decision when there is not even a woman at his side, she explains "it is enough that he has decided to marry. It is quite enough. A girl will be found" (Lema 136).

This scene clearly outlines the huge social pressure that rests on Godbless' shoulders, because in order to be acknowledged as a "real man" by society, he has to marry. His mother Foibe, who herself has never been married, knows about the social importance of marriage, especially for children who grow up without the support of their married parents and thus without the respect of society. Godbless and Doreen know that their biological father Sebastian could not raise them, because he was married to another woman who had been chosen for him by his parents when he was still very young.

Although Sebastian loves Foibe and their children Godbless and Doreen more than anything else, he does not have the courage to act against social norms and openly confess their secret relationship. Not even after Foibe faces severe physical and social punishment by her family and the community for expecting a baby without being married. 'All he felt, as he embraced her tenderly, was helplessness and desperation' (Lema 115). When the still young and naïve Foibe suggests that Sebastian could just come and visit her at home as soon as their baby was born, he tells her that this was impossible, since her "uncle will certainly kill [him] or call the elders on [him]" (Lema 117). Upon which Foibe is silent, wondering 'what defeats love so easily? Why doesn't he fight to the end?' (117). Simultaneously, she realizes that her first born child would grow up without Sebastian as father, because he 'was not willing to be one; he was already trapped and tamed' (117).

Therefore, while Godbless suffers from the pressure of not being able to find the right partner to marry, his mother is suffering more or less from the opposite. Social norms forbid her to marry the man she loves and to provide her children with a father. Although Godbless has grown up with the severe consequences of socially constructed gender expectations, he later gets trapped in the same system; not only by not fulfilling the expectations of being successful in school, earning money and providing for his mother, but also by developing the strong desire to be married at a certain age. Moreover, he begins to repeat social norms by telling his sister Doreen that "[his] wife must respect [him] [...] it is important that a man has a house, a good one, before he marries" (Lema 136), at which point she realizes that he has already become a man.

It occurred to [her] then that his desire to be a separate entity, to identify with the father, to belong to the world of men, distinctly apart from the mother, was a thing beyond the decision of the conscious mind. It was the logical route of the thread in the matrix of maleness. (Lema 136).

Another male protagonist in Lema's *Parched Earth*, who follows this logical route of the thread in the matrix of maleness, is Zima, the discipline master of the local school and a close friend of Doreen. He is desperately trying to gain Doreen's heart, but she just does not have the same feelings for him as he has for her, mainly because of his attitude which confirms a stereotypical gender role and thus the social norm. As Doreen reveals, for instance, that "[i]t was no accident Zima was the discipline master. He was hard, opinionated and a keen observer of rules. The headmaster relied on him to maintain law and order in the school, so differing openly with him was not the thing to do" (Lema 17).

11.2 Zima – fulfilling the stereotypical heteronormative masculine image

Regarding masculinity 'as a set of role behaviours that most men are encouraged to perform', Zima perfectly impersonates this certain set (Brown et al. 586). According to Brown et al. this set of role behaviors 'almost universally includes toughness, aggressiveness, stoicism and sexuality' (586). The last attribute is, for instance, represented early in the book, when Zima tries to explain to Doreen the legacy of polygamy and thereby gets caught in society's double standards. He self-confidently informs her that "[o]ne can have sex with someone one does not like [if] the person one loves is a mess sexually" (Lema 38). At which point Doreen protests and asks if he does not see the selfishness in this act.

Later in the book, however, when Doreen presents her boyfriend Martin, whom she is completely in love with, at the school where she works, Zima and her colleagues are taken aback by her public display of affection. Zima even calls her a prostitute and wants to know what “‘has happened to [her] good sense?’” (Lema 44). Doreen realizes that ‘[he] was angry. He was bruised. His pain was too tender to be touched an impossible to be healed by the power of any word. [...] He became rude to [her]’ (44). But not only Zima acts surprisingly harsh about the fact that Doreen is in love with someone else, also her female colleagues are outraged and tell themselves that ‘Doreen never behaved so immorally, just like a whore!’ (Lema 59).

Similar to Godbless, who finally finds himself a fiancé and tells Doreen how one can only be a man with money, Zima also gets under pressure because – since Doreen rejects his feelings for her – he has not found a woman to marry yet. When one day Doreen learns about Zima’s strong desire to marry, she is surprised about the reason for it. Zima informs her that ‘he was marrying because it was getting late for him’, and that he needed a wife and children (Lema 153). Thus, both Zima and Godbless are victims of the same social expectations, namely to be married and have a home and children at a certain age in order to be regarded as a “real man”.

However, as Lema outlines, these characteristics are not enough, because social expectations do not stop there. In fact, the pressure continues with such strength that even the relationship of happily married couples can break under its weight. This is clearly depicted by Doreen’s relationship with Martin, which begins to be significantly challenged when others begin to shape it into “normalcy”.

11.3 The pressure of being “normal”

Although Doreen had every reason to be pleased with her life and the relationship she has with her husband Martin, their happiness soon becomes overshadowed with the reality of life. After friends, family members, customs and traditions start to slowly interfere with their relationship, Martin and Doreen realize how they begin to drift apart from each other.

It came when desires for each other started crusting like the skin of a bad ulcer, when our life became predictable, and the demands of the social system that defines who a male person is, those social expectations piled upon the man became the cutting knife of his identity as a *real* man, when the home became a forest in which we were both lost, calling to each other, but failing to reach out and hold hands. No amount of it could soothe his inability to meet the test (Lema 57).

In the beginning, the newly-wed couple is in absolute bliss, they forget about everything and everyone around them, they 'lived naked for whole days, not knowing whose body was whose because [they] had become one' (Lema 69). Issues and problems of their everyday lives have become irrelevant. 'Money codes, balance sheets, cash flows and budgets and deadlines had fled from [them], fled from the enveloping peace that left no room for anything else' (Lema 70).

While initially their relationship seems to be absolute perfect, their freedom soon becomes limited by Martin's sister and mother who move in with them in order to turn Martin into a good husband and Doreen into a good wife. They urge Doreen to fulfill her role as a housewife, who spends most of her time in the kitchen to cook for her husband and all the visitors, while the husband's role is to 'run from the home to bars and those other places where real men go to talk about running and managing affairs of substance' (Lema 72). Both of them are more and more pushed into a corner of social obligations, or as Doreen puts it into 'social norms which defined [their] place in the web and in which [they] put more trust than in [their] hearts' (Lema 72). Doreen also becomes aware that Martin is changing under the weight of social expectations. His softness which made him the charming and carrying man Doreen fell in love with, gets soon rejected as being 'not man enough' (Lema 92). Not only does he have to adapt his attitude towards the social norm, but society also expects them to have a male child. Although they have become parents of a healthy girl named Milika, whom both parents love dearly, social expectations require them to also have a male offspring.

Thus, although Doreen and Martin do not have to deal with the problem of finding a partner in time as Godbless and Zima have and theoretically also not with the issue of having children, they are confronted with a new challenge which is having a male child. Soon the pressure to have a boy child manifests itself in their minds and begins to affect their close relationship. At some point Doreen starts to wonder when her and Martin's life is overcome by a certain feeling of emptiness.

It could have started slowly, with the sister-in-law's expert teachings for her brother and me. But it slipped into our life, casually, like a vagabond who comes to shelter and stays, blending into the family, [...] the emptiness in our life was brought in by our own urge for a male child. Coming to us in bed, almost taking part of foreplay. Martin pleading: "*Mpenzi*, lets make a boy child, *please*," [...] (Lema 146).

However, somehow it becomes impossible for Doreen to get pregnant a second time. While trying hard to become parents of the so much desired male child, both of them slowly turn their attention away from each other towards their daughter Milika.

Although Martin adores his daughter, he is not satisfied with the situation he lives in. In fact, '[t]he discussion about being pregnant was no longer a topic in [their] bedroom, but its presence, mute and ominous, followed [them] even as [they] breathed silently in [their] sleep' (Lema 148).

The more time passes, the more both of them adapt to the way society works. Like their friends and relatives they start talking 'that a boy child would really bless [their] marriage' (148). Convinced of the hope that a boy would fulfill Martin's life and also be good for their daughter Milika, the 'subtle pressure kneaded [the young couple] to softness of mind, in which both 'entered into the core of that want willingly, humbly, carrying [their] need like a prayer' (148).

After innumerable attempts to conceive a male offspring, the couple seeks advice from a doctor who, however, informs them that from a medical perspective there is nothing which would interfere with their wish. Being relieved and full of hope about this news, Doreen is convinced that the 'child would choose its time' (148). Soon, however, Martin gets impatient again and wonders what is wrong with his wife. Doreen, in turn, cannot understand why she has to take the complete blame herself, she 'refused to be a scapegoat' (Lema 149). After long discussions, Doreen gives Martin the promise that a son, whom they would name Freedom as symbol for 'break[ing] free from the social traps [they] lay for [themselves], will be born to him (Lema 145).

However, as it turns out that day, Martin's main issue is not the fact that he has not become father of a boy yet, but the fear of actually turning into the man his own father was and the way he treated his family.

11.4 Martin's father& Doreen's mother – passing on self-destructive structures

Martin's childhood was overshadowed by '[r]esentment, jealousy and distrust', caused by his father who got trapped in the net of social expectations himself (Lema 93). Although Martin was 'born into a world that welcomed him with praise songs because he was the desired one', he grew up in a society 'design[ed] to reject him' (93). Opposed to Doreen, Martin's mother clearly had a male offspring, which should – as one would assume – satisfy the demands of society and save her from the pressure Doreen is experiencing. However, besides Martin, his mother also has four daughters, which is, according to social norms, out of balance and thus Martin's parents needs to have more male children. Since his mother is not able to have another boy child, his father saw himself holding a *carte blanche* to find a woman who could bear him a boy child which

is, interestingly, socially accepted. Consequently his father brings a child bride – a woman younger than his own daughters – into his home, who soon bears him two sons.

Although focus groups, consisting of men and women, in Brown's research, conducted in Namibia and South Africa, agreed on past values of masculinity which said that 'having more than one wife as a right and a necessity' (589), Lema draws a slightly different picture in her novel. The result of bringing home the child bride means unending fights between Martin's mother and the young woman. Thereby 'Martin's mother automatically becomes the witch trying to kill the young bride's prized sons' (Lema 93). For Martin and his sisters this constellation means to grow up in an environment fraught with tension, or as Doreen puts it 'there was no real family to bring him and his sisters up, to nest them with love into rounded beings' (93). Thus, as she describes it, '[t]he web had become the trap for the spider's own eggs, laid and nested in the matrix!' (93), or in other words, the children have become trapped in a system of social norms and expectations constructed and passed on by their parents.

When Doreen tries to console Martin by telling him that he does not have to worry about becoming like his father, he rejects her sympathy and tells her that he hates to be pitied and consequently leaves the house.

Where there were initially mutual feelings of absolute trust, respect and love, there are now rejection and withdrawal. Doreen feels helpless, she is 'unable to mend something that [she] did not determine alone' (Lema 150). As a consequence of their mutual withdrawal, the mood in the house also begins to change. 'It became downcast and depressing' (150). Also, Doreen ceases to fight; she lets herself be shaped by what society wants her to be. 'The silent struggles slowly mutated me into a woman known as Mrs. Patrick, a product that resembled Doreen Seko, while Doreen Seko herself went under ground' (Lema 154). Soon, with the help of 'neighbor women, friendly married women, working as housewives', she learns to fulfill socially expected roles by becoming a good teacher and simultaneously a good housewife (Lema 156). Her husband Martin, however, spends only little time at home anymore; mainly because of a girlfriend he is dating regularly and which is also no secret to Doreen.

Blending perfectly into the net of social norms and expectations, Doreen begins to slowly understand the structures that are at work and 'why mothers repeat those same things to their girl children' (Lema 156). She, in fact realizes that there are 'structures [which] were designed to ensure systematic re-creation of the whole personality of the girl, like creating masks for a life masquerade' (Lema 157). The simple reason for

passing on these structures instead of fighting them is 'to minimize the harm!' (157). She understands that this masquerade is only the result of the conscious process of shaping a woman 'to fit the conditions of the web' (157).

Consequently, although Martin's father and Doreen's mother had themselves experienced the destructive structures of social norms, they passed them on to their children, raising them in such a way that they can fit into the roles which are designed for them. Nevertheless, Doreen is aware of the system in which she is caught and unable to escape from. Although she still calls it a spider's web, she can see its dangerous effects on society and especially the consequences it holds for women.

In this web, [the woman] must learn to hide exuberance from her inner feelings because the expression of it may be unacceptable; she must be able to have children; she must have a male child; must be a proper Mrs someone; she should *never* have a child before marriage; she must bear the right number of sons, and on and on... (Lema 158).

Doreen has learnt from her aunt that "[a] woman is a social orphan indeed, just by being", however, she does not realize yet that men can also be victims of the very same destructive social structures (Lema 158). The issue of having a male offspring is still standing between her and her husband. However, 'the situation [has] settl[ed] into a permanence that is normal, predictable and good. That is the state every man wants in marriage' (Lema 159). Doreen sees that the life she is leading is 'called *normal life*. [She] was to live it, accept it and wear it like [her] own skin!' (Lema 160). Thus, while Martin, who is withdrawing more and more from her, continues to live with the unfulfilled desire of having a boy child, Doreen gets seriously depressed and unhappy with herself. She not only begins to neglect herself but also her daughter Milika. However, when her life seems like if there would be no way out of its destructive normalcy anymore, she meets Joseph who not only understands the situation she is caught in, but also the functioning of the destructive system as a whole and even how it is called.

11.5 Patriarchy – a system determining every member of society

With getting to know Joseph, Doreen's life changes dramatically. Joseph, who has retired from a successful career as diplomat, has now completely turned to arts and is devoting all his time to painting. After running into Doreen by chance, he invites her to his house to show her his art collection. Only very reluctantly Doreen agrees, but then feels comfortable and spends the evening with him drinking beer and talking about her life. It is the beginning of an eye-opening friendship for Doreen. After slowly revealing

her family situation to him and telling him how she feels caught in a web without being able to escape, he informs her that the web she is referring to is called patriarchy.

It is a social system which has defined how men and women will relate in all spheres of life, including private life, right down to the way we love and have sex. It has determined how a father, brother, husband, uncle will treat the woman – the wife, sister, mother, and daughter related to them. It is an ideology that has given the man the authority to decide, to act, to give or withhold, to access or retain anything, really, almost everything. It is complex. It is a web in which ultimately, even those privileged can become victims...like myself. (Lema 182)

Doreen, not yet fully grasping the sense of what Joseph has revealed to her, comes to the conclusion that life seems to have always been ‘planned for men’ (Lema 181). As she assumes that men grow up with the knowledge of what has to be done in every stage of their lives: ‘This is what is done before there is a wife; this is what is done when there is a wife; this is what is done when there are children; this is done when there is love in marriage; this is what is done when there is no love’ (181). She argues that the system Joseph has explained to her must be designed by men, because it is treating women so badly. To her surprise, he points out that it is not only women who are caught within this system, but also men, basically everyone, including himself. He tells her how he himself has “lost” his wife to someone else due to his behavior which was, on the one hand, corresponding with social expectations, but absolutely destructive to his marriage and family life, on the other hand. Only much later in his life he has realized how little he knew about the feelings of his wife and his own children.

At one point Joseph tells Doreen how men are assuming that the provision of ‘material things, comfort – a car, a house, money’ is enough appreciation they can offer to women (Lema 197). Simultaneously, he claims that ‘the shame of it’ is that this ‘is how we are raised, men and women. That’s the tragedy really.’ (197). That it is in fact ‘[t]he laws, the conditions traditions and customs, the systems’ – simply patriarchy – which are the reason for the situation they are now in and the cause of the struggle they are fighting (197).

He also makes Doreen understand that men are raised to ‘think about what is best for women, they generate ideas which women internalize’ (Lema 188). In fact, he points out how men ‘create a life for women to live in and enjoy themselves and this makes women get attached to them’, which consequently, as he assumes, ‘is how a woman’s voice is killed, gently, so that there is no resistance or even complaint when they find themselves voiceless before men’ (188). This lack of resistance and complaint explains Doreen’s silent “acceptance” of her and Martin’s situation and the fact that he is having a

girlfriend. It also explains the way Martin's mother "accepted" the child bride in her home or the way Doreen's own mother "accepted" the withdrawal of her lover – Doreen's biological father – and the way she was chased away from her parent's house.

Nevertheless, Joseph also tells her that women are by no means passive creatures, but that they, in fact, 'can determine the direction of their lives' (Lema 199). However, the great challenge they have to face is their capability of bearing children which automatically puts them into the role as caretakers. It is a dichotomy, in which '[w]omen have no choice [...] because the offspring *must* survive' (199). Therefore, women 'cannot abandon the responsibility of nurturing the offspring without getting blamed' by society (199), while no one would 'ask for the father, [or would] want to know his role in all this' (Lema 200).

However, while all these realizations do not seem to have any impact on Doreen's immediate social environment, her relationship with Martin and also with her daughter starts to change after her conversations with Joseph. Doreen begins to understand that it is not Martin's fault, but 'the fault of the system that taught him how to be a man, that gave conditions for being a man, giving him criteria which did not apply' (Lema 186).

It was his relatives, the keepers of tradition who played with his mind, toyed with his heart until Martin thought the desire to have a male child was *his*, that his wonderful girl child who he loved was inadequate qualification for acceptance into the cult of manhood' (186).

With this realization in mind, Doreen is convinced to 'bring Martin [back] from his wanderings to the warm hearth of home' (Lema 185) and, in fact, the situation between them is improving. Doreen's life with her husband 'became more amicable' (Lema 208).

I made him my friend, defining how much to demand, learning not to expect much, and most importantly, slowly refusing to be hurt by him. [...] I told him that I had accepted that what he offered me emotionally was all that he could offer. I no longer strived to demand love that was not forthcoming from him. (Lema 208)

By having revealed the mechanisms of patriarchy and thus the functioning of the whole structure and its destructive consequences for women as well as men, Doreen is able to make sense of the behavior of the people around her. With this knowledge, she cannot only find a way to co-exist with Martin, but also to improve the relationship with her daughter Milika, her colleague Zima, her friend Joseph, and most of all with herself. She is able to fight her depression and to become more engaged in her work as a teacher again.

In addition to the enlightening conversations about the mechanisms of patriarchy, Joseph also shows Doreen that the division of work based on sex is not written in stone, but that he himself actually ‘cooked, swept, and washed dishes and clothes, easily, as though it was the most natural thing’ (Lema 214). Moreover, he provides her with an alternative option to the socially constructed ‘woman-man norm’, namely the possibility of ‘allowing and *accepting* that, [...] a man can *need* another man and a woman can *need* another woman as intimate partners’ (Lema 184). He explains to her that a society can ‘throw patriarchy off board totally’, and that these alternative ways of leading a relationship can be ‘the beginning of real change in the organization of human society’ (184).

With these two thoughts – men doing housework and alternatives to the woman-man norm – Lema hints at the need for ‘alternative avenues for attaining culturally recognized markers of masculinity’ (Brown et al. 585), which has been at the center of numerous studies dealing with the linkage between masculinity and HIV/Aids in an African context.

Concluding, Lema’s novel *Parched Earth* is a subtle way of pointing out the numerous flaws of a patriarchal system which is maintained and perpetuated through the repetition of social norms, traditions and expectations. But, as repeatedly presented in the book through the characters Doreen, her mother Foibe, Martin, his family and basically every other character, these norms and traditions put enormous pressure on their shoulders. While each protagonist is at some stage in his or her life confronted with a lack of recognition, appreciation and empathy, they suffer in silence and consequently withdraw from the community. However, only Doreen and Joseph seem to understand the complex structures that are at work. Thus, they can begin to slowly disrupt the cycle and develop a better understanding for their environment and the behavior of the people around them. Importantly, Lema not only provides examples of the many difficulties that are caused by a patriarchally organized society but also how men are equally affected by it. In addition, however, she also offers alternative options and a possible solution, which are presented through the male protagonist Joseph who symbolizes alternative markers of masculinity.

12. CONCLUSION

By looking closely at five different novels set in post-colonial South Africa and Tanzania, I have tried to point out how gender roles, in particular the image of a “real man”, are socially constructed and how they are maintained and perpetuated through a patriarchally organized social system in the context of Anglo-African literature. In addition, by providing examples from different research results, conducted in Sub-Saharan Africa, I have indicated that the social realities and the pressure they cause for the members of a society can actually also be found in contemporary societies. Therefore, I indicated the importance of literature as inspiration for further research questions, as emphasized by Nancy Rose Hunt and Tanzanian authors who emphasize their engagement with current issues and consequently their responsibility as providers of guidance for their readers.

In addition, I have depicted the constructedness of gender roles; in particular, the plurality of masculine images, which runs counter to the widespread essentialist notion of one specific image that is naturally given and inherent. But instead, as pointed out in this thesis, there is a wide range of masculinities which actually do not fit into these socially constructed roles. In fact, the selected novels not only present a wide range of dominant and subordinate masculinities, but also a range of ‘alternative or oppositional ways of being a man’ (JournAids 2014), which are, however, often unacknowledged and unaccepted.

Thus, as pointed out, regarding men as a ‘homogenous, monolithic whole’ which ‘overlooks the differences between men’ not only puts tremendous pressure on themselves but actually leads to harmful consequences for the society as a whole (JournAids 2014). For instance, in the form of generational struggles in *A Man Who Is Not A Man*, or of sexual exploitation as depicted in *The Silent Empowerment of the Compatriots*, or in the form of shame, silence and stigmatization in the case of Peet’s and Michiel’s homosexuality in *Kings of the Water*, but also in the form of anger, rejection and aggression by the male partners of the four friends in *Beauty’s Gift*, as well as through depression and withdrawal from society, as represented by Doreen in *Parched Earth*.

However, as for example, in the context of HIV/Aids prevention campaigns, the recognition of the existence of different forms of masculinity is of great importance. As experience has shown that numerous prevention campaigns, which only address women, have mostly failed. Although the selected novels provide different social settings

and cultural believes, the main protagonists share the same pressure, which originates from their inability to correspond with a specific socially expected image that is maintained and perpetuated through patriarchal systems.

Beginning with Thando Mqolozana's *A Man Who Is Not A Man*, masculinity and especially the image of a "real man" are associated with very basic concepts. One is the concept of the male circumcision which clearly centers on the existence of the penis as signifier for masculinity and second, the physical and emotional isolation from the mother. The novel indicates the weight of traditions which have to be passed on, almost irrespective of the outcome, as exemplified by the initiate Chris who is almost denied to seek help at a hospital by his grandfather. But not only hospitals interfere with the local customs, also the correspondence with one's own mother is frowned upon during the circumcision rites. The separation from the mother is particularly important as the whole tradition of the male circumcision is a symbol for the death of the boy who is reborn a man. Moreover, the fact of being circumcised or not, presents significant importance for the development of a masculine identity and also puts huge pressure on young uncircumcised boys, as they enjoy less rights within the community and are, on top of that, even treated like dogs.

Nevertheless, as ideally outlined in Ruhumbika's *The Silent Empowerment of the Compatriots*, gender images are subject to constantly changing processes due to a changing society. Within Nyerere's national cultural project, specific gender images were set to represent the new independent Tanzania. Simultaneously, however, different gender identities such as young modern female office assistants, sugar daddies and young male rural migrants emerged. Torn apart between gender and generational struggles, people in urban centers had to "fight" for their place and rights within a new social setting. Especially young men from the rural areas perceived themselves as losing the battle in this competition.

On top of that, the novel exemplifies the gender- and generational struggles which deeply affected the new urban population. Ruhumbika shows the image of a normative masculinity not only under tension, but also in change. While the protagonist Saidi sticks to traditional values, he has to struggle all his lifetime to survive and to provide for his large family. In opposition to him as "image of the old Tanzania", stands Nzoka who quickly makes his way up to the new political elite. He represents the image of a modern businessman who travels the world and has seemingly unlimited material wealth. While Saidi has a very close relationship with his wife who appears to be an equal partner,

Nzoka's encounter with women are exclusively based on a sexual motivation. In fact, he "uses" women like commodity goods.

Although Ruhumbika hardly uses direct critique on Nzoka's lifestyle, the comparison of his and Saidi's life is a subtle way of showing how different gender identities suffer from normative gender expectations. Therefore, he manages to perfectly outline the highly damaging effects on society through the perpetuation of the "real man" image.

Also dealing with patriarchal structures and gender constructions within the context of transition is Mark Behr's *Kings of the Water*. The novel deals with homosexuality in an almost impossible context, namely a farm owned by Afrikaners during apartheid in South Africa – a time and place which were absolutely dominated by heteronormative patriarchal structures. Indeed, the novel makes aware of the 'relationship between space and identity' and the significant role space has in 'the construction and expression of sexuality' (Visser: 1344). Behr shows how Michiel and Peet's homosexuality questions the "eternalized" and "normalized" values of patriarchy and further also the male identity in general. In a Foucaultian sense, Peet and Michiel turn the farm into a "heterotopia" by contesting the ideal "utopian" values of the farm with their own incompatible personalities and characteristics (Foucault: Heterotopias). Moreover, the novel presents the inevitable struggles Michiel and Peet have to face by living in a community that is strongly influenced by church which considers homosexuality to be a sin. A further remarkable way of showing the controversy of homosexuality and patriarchal heteronormativity, is that Michiel's coming out happens during his military service – a context which is perceived to be absolutely heterosexual.

In addition, Behr also brings in the power dynamics associated with skin color, since Michiel has his same-sex encounter not only during the military service but also with a colored man on a whites-only beach. In fact, race and skin color are constant companions in the patriarchal power structures described in *Kings of the Water*.

Concluding, similar to the challenges young male Tanzanians had to face in the context of Nyerere's cultural project in Ruhumbika's novel, *Kings of the Water*, shows the complex difficulties the new post-apartheid South African identity has to face. Not only is there the burden of colonialism, repeating the issues of race and skin color, but also the denying attitude towards new emerging sexual identities. In addition, there is the denial of the HIV/AIDS epidemic as attempt to disprove Western stereotypes.

HIV/AIDS in the context of stereotypical black male sexuality to which women are helplessly exposed is the theme of Sindiwe Magona's *Beauty's Gift*. The novel depicts the socially constructed need for men to stay in control, not only of their female partners, but also of their own health. Thus, facing the possibility of an infection with the deadly virus is rejected outright by them. In addition, the male protagonists in the novel confirm the stereotypical norm of the polygamous husband. However, as argued in the thesis, research findings show that men, equally to women, are worried by being infected with the virus by their own partner. Although marriage as being not enough protection is outlined in the novel, it is only the female characters that experience this anxiety, which is contrary to research findings where men also share this fear. Research also shows that protection through condoms is in some societies still representing a threat to the idealized masculine image.

Another aspect, as also discussed, being infected with the virus severely interferes with the performance of a hegemonic masculinity. Due to the fact that the infection influences the maintenance of control of the own body and thus requires help which consequently opposes the idealized image of men being in control of their social environment. Also the virus interferes with family planning, raising children and securing the household. Therefore, opposed to *Beauty's Gift* which repeats a very one-dimensional and stereotypical male image, research findings present a rather complex of background when facing masculine images in the context of the epidemic. They range from men as "uncontrollable" beings over condoms as threatening objects which "emasculate" and "queer" men, to men's depiction as the actual victims within the AIDS discourse. Nevertheless, the novel outlines the pressure of social norms and traditions through the rebellion of the female characters who strongly oppose the deeply engrained patriarchal power structures of their community.

Less rebelling as more reflecting on the social pressure of patriarchal power structures is the main characters in Elieshi Lema's *Parched Earth*. The novel shows in a remarkable way how men and women are victims of the same system and in how many different facets all of the characters suffer from it. The novel points out the far-reaching effects of patriarchal power structures and the endless seeming social expectations which seem to be impossible to fulfill satisfyingly. Nevertheless, the novel not only provides alternatives for the rigid and deeply engrained gender roles, but argues for the strong need of alternative markers for masculinity.

Concluding, as Morrell puts it '[t]o capture masculinity as part of this bigger picture, requires locating masculinity within gender regimes' (614). Thus, by providing different examples from literature and research findings, I outlined the constructedness of a hegemonic masculinity, in particular, the image of a "real man" as well as the way in which it is maintained and perpetuated within patriarchally organized social structures. By closely looking at these constructions, a range of common characteristics, such as homophobia, domination or aggressiveness, which seem to be inextricably linked with heteronormative masculinity become obvious. Since these characteristics are, as widely assumed, not inherent or natural, but constructed and in addition harmful for women as well as men themselves, the need for alternative markers of masculinity is necessary.

The second and last point, I made in this thesis was in order to avoid the failure of future medical prevention campaigns, which only target women as the sole actors, the recognition of these typical characteristics might not be enough. But, researchers should not shun away from using fictional literature as source of new perspectives and inspiration for their own research questions. Since, as I am convinced and as also presented through examples of Tanzanian authors, local authors are strongly influenced by their environment and thus let their experiences and cultural understanding known in the texts they produce, which, however, might be completely different to the experience and cultural understanding of the researcher. Therefore, fictional literature can be a crucial source for the identification of gender identities, gender expectations and the consequent problems that may originate from these expectations, not only for men, but for society as a whole.

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CURRICULUM VITAE

TANJA GRUBER

Place of birth Amstetten, Lower Austria
 Nationality Austrian
 Email gruber_tanja@gmx.net

ACADEMIC PROFILE

March-June 2013 Final semester at the University of Vienna:
 English/American and African Studies

Aug 2012-Feb 2013 Exchange semester at the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Sept 2010-July 2011 Exchange year at the University of Toronto, Canada;
 focus on Women and Gender Studies, Postcolonial literature,
 U.S. Foreign Policy and linguistics

Since Oct 2011 African Studies at the University of Vienna; focus on African history and
 Swahili. BA program to be completed 2014

Since Oct 2007 English and American Studies at the University of Vienna;
 focus on North American civilization, culture and literature.
 MA program to be completed 2014

SECONDARY EDUCATION

Sept 2000-Jun 2005 Higher-level secondary school for tourism and management (HLW)
 in Amstetten; focus on languages (English & French),
 cultural studies, computer skills and accounting.

INTERNSHIPS & WORK EXPERIENCE

Aug 2013-Jan 2014 Internship at the Political Section of the Embassy of Canada in Austria

Aug 2011-Jul 2012 Part-time assistant at Johnson & Johnson GesmbH in Vienna

LANGUAGE SKILLS German (native speaker), English (fluent), French (intermediate),
 Swahili (intermediate)

01.02.2014

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

In meiner Arbeit habe ich mich mit der Dekonstruktion von Männlichkeitsbildern – allen voran dem Klischeebild des “wahren Mannes” – in anglo-afrikanischer Literatur auseinandergesetzt. Mit fünf Romanen aus dem post-kolonialen Südafrika und Tansania sowie Sekundärliteratur, die sich mit Studien aus Namibia, Simbabwe etc. befassen, konzentriert sich die Arbeit speziell auf den afrikanischen Kontinent südlich der Sahara.

Neben der sozialen Konstruktion von Geschlechterbildern im Allgemeinen, habe ich in meiner Arbeit dargestellt wie diese Bilder von einer patriarchalisch organisierten Gesellschaftsstruktur in Form von Traditionen und festgelegten Normen aufrechterhalten und wiederholt werden. Weiteres wird durch Beispiele aus Primärliteratur und Forschungsberichten gezeigt, wie eine Gesellschaft und darunter besonders Männer, unter dem Druck diese idealisierten Geschlechterrollen zu erfüllen leiden, und wie wichtig eine Dekonstruktion dieser festgefahrenen Bilder ist.

Obwohl die Romane ganz unterschiedliche soziale Gegebenheiten behandeln, teilen die darin vorkommenden Charaktere den Erwartungsdruck der von der vorherrschenden patriarchalisch organisierten Gesellschaft auf ihnen lastet. Beginnend mit missglückten Beschneidungsritualen, über den Einfluss von Urbanisierung und westlichen Werten zu Homosexualität und HIV/Aids, reichen die Faktoren die das klassische Männerbild in Frage stellen. Die diskutierten Romane zeigen auf besonders gut ersichtliche Weise, wie verschiedene Gesellschaften in ihrem eigenen System gefangen sind und das Zusammenleben und Funktionieren dieser Gesellschaften dadurch erschwert wird. Attribute wie Aggression, Homophobie, Schweigen, Angst oder Zurückgezogenheit sind ständige Begleiter der männlichen Charaktere, die beim Versuch dem Idealbild des „wahren Mannes“ zu entsprechen scheitern.

Das Bewusstsein, dass diese stereotypischen Bilder dekonstruiert und durch Alternativen ersetzt werden müssen, zeigt sich besonders im letzten Roman, der auf die unterschiedlichen männlichen Identitäten in einer Gesellschaft hinweist und darüberhinaus neue Beziehungsformen vorschlägt. In anderen Worten heißt das, dass auch in einem subsaharischen Kontext Alternativen zum klassischen Mutter-Vater-Kind-Modell möglich sind und somit, wie in meiner Arbeit mehrmals aufgezeigt, der Erwartungsdruck einem idealen Männerbild zu entsprechen, sinken könnte.