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Narratives of constructing as gay and having relationships in contemporary South Africa

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Neil Henderson

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Supervisors: Professor Tamara Shefer

Professor Vivienne Bozalek

DECLARATION

I declare that the content of this thesis is entirely my own work, except where otherwise
stated, and has not been submitted for a degree at any other university.

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Neil Henderson

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Date

ABSTRACT

This study examined how gay men construct a gay identity and have relationships within a heteronormative (Kritzinger, 2005) society in South Africa. The impact of this study is that homophobia continues to persist within different levels of society despite progressive legislation (Republic of South Africa, 1998; Republic of South Africa, 2006; Republic of South Africa, 2007), that gender binarisms persist in gay relationships, that power differences impact and shape gay relationships, and that resistance and transgression to heteronormativity were present in some of the narratives.

The qualitative study employed a semi-structured guide with in-depth interviews. Sampling procedures that were utilised were snowball sampling in a non-probability sample. Data was collected via an MP3 player and each interview was transcribed and analysed using content and narrative analysis. I-poems using the listening guide (Gilligan et al, 2003) were constructed in six of the narratives. The sample distribution included 15 gay men aged between 20 to 46 years. Of these, 12 participants were black (6 coloured, 3 Indians, 3 African) and 3 were white.

The findings indicate that homophobia was experienced at school, in the home and in the community by 'feminine-acting' participants. This continued at the tertiary educational level, where they were 'othered' by their peers for not conforming to gender norms. Gay men who pass as heterosexual adhering to hegemonic forms of masculinity, avoided multiple rejections. Some of the 'masculine-acting' men were 'accepted' because they were successful in different spheres of society. Most of the participants reported being involved in relationships that mimic heteronormative relationships, where sexual practices, decision-making, emotional work and household duties follow the gender stereotype. There was an assumption that performing as 'masculine' brings rewards, such as acceptance of infidelity as a norm and the 'othering' of 'feminine-acting' men. This was influenced by racial and class constructions. Utterances and significations were utilised to maintain these binaries. Some reported abuse in their relationships, where they

were not able to perform their 'normative' role adequately. There was limited support from the regulatory regimes (like the South African Police Services [SAPS]) and this was compounded by internalised homophobia. Embedded in participants' descriptions of how they came to recognise their sexual desires were utterances and significations that spoke of resistance and transgression. This was experienced when 'coming out' to families, switching roles in sexual practices, or through subverting heteronorms in different environments. Others deconstructed the binaries of masculine/feminine through engaging in flexible constructions in their relationships, where high status, class and racial privilege facilitated change to fixed meanings of sexuality and gender.

The implications for policy and practice is that regulatory 'enforcers' of compulsory heterosexuality and hegemonic masculinity have to be challenged at all levels of society through life-skills workshops, parenting skills and inter-disciplinary gender studies. Furthermore, there is a need to address gay relationship practices at different modes of the relationship. Queer relationships that posit flexible, negotiated and reciprocal relationships should be promoted, and non-normative models of relationships must be made available at popular levels. Finally, gay men should be protected by legislation, and should be educated on their rights within the Constitution.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

This study is a feminist social constructionist account, drawing on critical men's studies and queer theory, of how gay men construct and experience their identities and relationships in contemporary South Africa. This study is particularly interested in the extent to which gay relationships are being constructed within heteronormative models of relationships, particularly in the light of the Civil Union Act of 2006 which has 'normalised' gay marriage, or whether they are framed as 'different' due to the kinds of alternative identities and practices that have traditionally framed gay male sexuality within homophobic societies (Plummer, 2005). This necessitated examining how gay men first identify as gay, how they 'conceived' a relationship, the early experiences of gay desire, the 'coming out phase', how power was 'negotiated' particularly as it related to socialized roles and sexual practices and how relationships were constructed within the context of heteronormativity[1] and resistance to those gender norms through alternative or more flexible constructions of relationship.

This chapter introduces the study, outlining the context and generating a rationale for the study before reviewing chapters that follow.

1.1. Background and context of the study

The motivation for doing this study was the belief that gay men's narratives in South Africa need to be affirmed, as their life stories have notably been belittled and undermined. Secondly, I argue that there is a lack of research that documents the subjective experiences of gay men, in particular black[2] gay men in South Africa. From

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[1] Heteronormativity is the "mundane production of heterosexuality as the normal, natural, taken-for-granted sexuality" (Kritzinger, 2005, p. 477).

[2] Black refers to African, coloured, Muslim and Indian. There will be times when I will discuss a particular aspect of a culture and then I will refer to terms that were used in the old Apartheid era.

my observations at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) (over a five year period), it appeared that gay black men were mostly in the 'closet'[3] and had great difficulty in socialising and interacting with their peers openly. The stereotype that African traditional cultural beliefs are said to be against such behavior (note the influence of Robert Mugabe[4], Sam Nujoma[5] and Yoweri Museveni[6]) has impacted on black gay men coming out to their peers and families and has influenced the kinds of relationships that these men have engaged in. South Africa remains a homophobic and heterosexist society, where across cultures, homosexuality is pathologised, and where cultural discourses such as the notion that "homosexuality is not African" continue to play themselves out (Cock, 2003; Gevisser & Cameron, 1994; Hoad, 1998; Phillips, 2000; Roscoe & Murray, 1998).

In the last few decades, there have been many studies concerned with understanding the lives of men and women with same-sex desire that illuminate the discrimination of such individuals. Foucault (1978, 1984) points out that sexual activity between men and boys during the Classical Period had more to do with power status and social position than with sexual identity determined by sexual object choice. He explained that in the pre-modern and early modern periods, sexual behaviour was not a marker of a person's sexual identity. Even though 'sodomy' was regarded as a 'sinful' act, it was not a marker of an individual's personality; rather the individual was the 'author' of a morally objectionable act. Furthermore, as Foucault outlined, the development of nineteenth century Western discursive power, tied intrinsically to regulative techniques, brought into being 'the homosexual' and along with it medicalisation and methods of control.

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[3] The 'closet' as articulated by Brown (2000, p. 141) is a "material strategy and tactic; one that conceals, erases and makes gay people invisible and unknown".

[4] Robert Mugabe, the President of Zimbabwe, announced in 1995 that homosexuals would enjoy no rights in the country because homosexuality "degrades human dignity. It is unnatural and there is no question, ever, of allowing these people to behave worse than dogs and pigs … we have our own culture, and we must re-dedicate ourselves to our traditional values that make us human beings " (Gevisser, 1999, p. 961)

[5] Former Namibian President, Sam Nujoma publicly condemned homosexuality in 2000. His political party, the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO) made an official statement in support of his stance in which Namibians were first called on to "totally uproot homosexuality as a practice" and to "revitalize our inherent culture and its moral values which we have inherited for many centuries from our forefathers. We should not risk our people being identified with foreign immoral values" (Gevisser, 1999, p. 962)

[6] Yoweri Museveni, President of Uganda, said he would order police to "lock up homosexuals" (Reddy, 2001).

Henriksson (1995) explains that Foucault argued against essentialist views of sexuality by positing that sexuality is a historical and social construction. He says that Foucault saw the development of sexual identity as an important part of the socialization process which is governed by certain frameworks; for example, cultural traditions, class, gender roles and family history. The meanings we attach to sexuality are supported by discourses which try to tell us what sexuality is and what it can be. These developments together with the emergence of feminist post-structuralism and queer theory will be elaborated on in Chapter Two.

The term 'gay' evolved out of the concepts of heterosexuality and homosexuality, where the notion of heterosexuality was considered normal and homosexuality abnormal (Nardi, 2000). Sexual identity was further categorised by the medical 'othering' of homosexuals as being 'congenital inverts'. Nardi suggests that the outward manifestation of this inverted identity was assumed to be effeminate behaviour in men and 'mannish' styles in women. Chauncey (1994) argues that prior to World War 2, gender status contributed to the terms used to distinguish various types of homosexual men: 'fairies' were effeminate men, 'queers' were those interested in same-sex sex but not because of their similarity to women, and 'trade' were heterosexual men who accepted sexual relationships with the fairies or queers. The term gay that emerged in the 1930s and 1940s referred to men who identified themselves based on their interest in other men, rather than on effeminacy (Nardi, 2000). Hyper-masculine gay men emerged in the 1960s which led to 'othering'[7] (Tronto, 1993) of effeminate men. These men saw the benefits of being dominant within a subordinated[8] group and "newly hegemonic hard and tough gay masculinity served to marginalize and subordinate effeminate gay men" (Messner, 1997, p. 83).

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[7] Othering refers to an ideology that sanctifies white, Protestant, middle-class, heterosexual male norms while devaluing those individuals that do not fit the definition of the dominant group. 'Othering' feigns inclusion while incarcerating marginalised individuals within their norminal position of power on the social hierarchy (Collins, 1998).

[8] Subordination refers to gay men and women constructions within hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995).

Historically, at least in Western contexts, gay relationships were mostly viewed as constructions that were short-term and sex-fixated due to laws that forbade same-sex relationships. There were some experiences of long-term 'secretive' gay relationships that have been documented in Western countries such as the United States and parts of Europe (Henriksson, 1995). Since the onset of gay liberation in the 1970s in the United States (Edwards, 2005), the experience of gay relationships is that they have become more long-term constructions and include monogamous behaviour (LaSala, 2003; Messner, 1997; Robinson, 2008). The HIV/Aids pandemic has also contributed to the development of committed gay relationships within the broader gay community (Roseneil, 2002). It is important to highlight that many countries still do not legally recognise homosexuality and "at least seventy countries criminalise same-sex relationships…and…punish offenders with flogging and the death penalty" (Dworkin and Yi, 2003, p. 271). Six nations with Muslim majorities (Iran, Mauritania, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen) invoke the death penalty for same-sex intercourse, without recognising relationships (Hendricks, 2008).

Gay relationships in South Africa have been empowered in recent years, particularly through the Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996) and the acceptance of gay marriage which is enshrined in the Civil Unions Act (Republic of South Africa, 2006). There has been much discussion on the validity of such unions, particularly as they relate to heterosexual marriage and being 'blessed' in a church. However, international authors have written on what is needed for gay men to sustain a gay relationship over an extended period. Greenan and Tunnell (2003) suggest they need to accomplish three basic tasks: a) to put boundaries around their relationship that create an identity they and others respect, b) to develop effective ways of regulating interpersonal closeness, and distance within the relationship and c) to accommodate their individual differences. All three of these aspects can lead to challenges if not developed or understood.

They correctly identify that the lives of couples are embedded within the social context of the larger culture. With gay couples, they argue that three contextual variables – in addition to the interpersonal dynamics the couple has co-constructed – exert a centrifugal

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force on the men's attempt to maintain an intimate relationship. These variables are: a) the lack of both civil and legal recognition of same-sex relationships by the culture of the majority (this is not relevant to South Africa but arguably manifests at a social level), b) the lack of role models and support within the gay community for the stabilisation of gay unions, and c) male gender acculturation that works against men forming intimate emotional relationships with other men.

Furthermore, they recognise that homophobia does influence same-sex couple validation. They believe that because of culture's homophobia, a same-sex couple may be reticent to present itself as a 'couple' to the outside world. They suggest that staying in the closet, however, is more difficult for the male couple than for a single (gay) man because of the strain that invisibility places on the relationship. They conclude: "In regular dealings with society, gay couples are challenged whether to reveal their coupled status, e.g. negotiating leases, purchasing a home or major household item or sitting with the partner's family at a wedding or a funeral" (Tunnell & Greenan, 2004, p. 15).

Violence against gay men and women has been documented worldwide. Amnesty International (2001) suggests that violence occurs in the home, school and community. Violence and expression of hatred have also been reported on internet sites. Within the context of this violence against gay men and women, gay men have fought long and hard for their relationships to be recognised and accepted. The fact that only five countries other than South Africa (viz. Netherlands, Belgium, Canada, Denmark and Spain) recognize same-sex marriage is perhaps indicative of the struggles that gay men have to endure across the world (Lind, 2008). There are countries where there is recognition of civil partnership rights and obligations but this is yet to progress to marriage. These countries include the United Kingdom, Sweden, France, Germany, Hungary, Uruguay and five states (Hawaii, Vermont, California, Connecticut and Oregon) in the United States (Lind, 2008). In this respect, there are probably many cultures where more illicit and less open practices of gay relationships are in evidence, e.g., in many societies men may be in heterosexual partnerships but practice sexual relations with men at the same time (Almageur, 1997).

In South Africa, gay men were largely invisible in a heteronormative society prior to 1994, as elaborated by Judge Albie Sachs in a report for Amnesty International (2001, p.8):

> "In the case of gays, history and experience teach us that scarring comes not from poverty or powerlessness, but invisibility…it is the tainting of desire, it is the attribution of perversity and shame to spontaneous bodily affection, it is the prohibition of the expression of love…that impinges on the dignity and self-worth of a group."

In South Africa in the 1950s and 1960s, Gevisser (1995) suggests gay life revolved around 'cruising'. This was where closeted homosexuals, men who have sex with men but do not identify themselves as gay, came into contact with the gay subculture. He states that white men in the Cape Metropole gathered around Sea Point on the Atlantic seaboard, whereas coloured gay men were part of District Six, Athlone, Woodstock and Salt River. Unlike the 'white' middle-class community, the coloured gay men were predominantly working class and the bonding point was 'drag'[9]. Tucker (2009) argues that in recent periods, gang members such as the 28s[10] began to engage in same-sex sexual activity with cross-dressing queer men in those communities. It is not clear when the emergence of a gay movement in black townships occurred. Mclean and Ngcobo (1995) argue that the 1976 uprising against Apartheid education challenged not only conservative politics but also conservative mores. They suggest that this uprising was a watershed in this regard, as gay men and women aligned themselves with the political struggle for freedom. There action is exemplified in the life of Simon Nkoli, a gay activist who was jailed for being involved in a rent boycott in the township of Sebokeng in 1984. Tucker (2009) also believes that the end of the Apartheid era and, particularly, the inauguration of Nelson Mandela as the first president of a democratic South Africa, was a defining moment in Cape Town townships. He says that gay men in the townships

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[9] 'Drag' refers men who cross dress.
[10] The 28s developed from a group of men, known as Ninevites, that was headed by Nongoloza Mathebula both in mining compounds and prisons (Tucker, 2009).

were able to visibly express to the wider community that they were sexually attracted to other men. The enshrining of the protection of individuals based on their sexual orientation into the Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996), allowed them to express a sexualized difference. However, there is still concern that spatial segregation continues to exist in South Africa (Leap, 2005), and that this is likely to impact on constructions of identity and emerging cross-cultural relationships.

It is encouraging that, as in other parts of the world (see, for example, Adam, 2004), South Africa has set up a range of legal and constitutional mechanisms to promote LGBTI[11] rights, from the Constitutional[12] protection against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation to the recent acceptance of gay marriage in 2005 in the Constitutional Court, and the subsequent Civil Unions Act (Republic of South Africa, 2006). Moreover, while there have been some high-profile court cases against inequities with respect to medical aid schemes, pensions, and so on, it is believed that taking action is not widespread due to fear of disclosure, lack of responsiveness, and knowledge that the authorities are often the perpetrators of violence (Dworkin and Yi, 2003).

In other African countries black gay men and lesbian women are beginning to emerge from under the cloak of homophobia. In Kenya, even though it is illegal to be gay (Judge et al, 2008), activists petitioned the Kenyan Human Rights commission about being discriminated against and held a discussion on gay and lesbian issues at the World Social Forum held in Kenya in 2007. An activist lesbian organisation has been formed in Rwanda called Little Sisters of Rwanda, even though the Constitution of Rwanda does not take homosexuality into consideration as a human right (Judge et al, 2008). In Nigeria, the government introduced the Same-Sex Marriage (Prohibition) Bill to ban homosexuality and gay marriage. This was in response to the realisation that gay men do exist in Nigeria, despite religious and political leaders saying that homosexuality is 'unAfrican' (Judge et al, 2008). In Uganda, Bishop Senyongo formed a group for gay and

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[11] LGBTI refers to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex.
[12] Section 8 (3) of the Bill of Rights states that "Neither the state or any person may unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, *sexual orientation,* age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth". Morgan and Reid (2003, p. 376)

lesbian Christians called Integrity, and for this was excommunicated, but the organization is actively trying to help gay people that are marginalised (Judge et al, 2008). However, recent developments in this country where there has been a public 'outing' of gay men reported in the media, have led to fears of severe punishment. Furthermore, in Namibia, the Rainbow Project, which has been in existence in Namibia for ten years and works with issues of sexuality and human rights, started documenting hate crimes, including of gay men who have been killed and lesbians and gay men who are experiencing 'correctional rape'[13] (Judge et al, 2008). These developments in other parts of Africa are likely to impact on the types of relationships that are unfolding between black gay men and their partners.

The recognition that black African men can perform as gay is reflected in the scant literature on South African black gay men. Tshepo, the key character in Duiker's (2004, p. 250) *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* appears to refute the stereotypical view: "I mean, people always say that black culture is rigid and doesn't accept things like homosexuals and lesbians. You know the argument – it's very unAfrican. It's a lot of crap. In my experiences the kind of thinking comes from urbanized blacks who have watered down the real origins of our culture and mixed it with Anglo-Saxon notions of the Bible. It's stupid to even suggest that homosexuality and lesbianism are foreign to black culture. Long ago, long before whites, people were aware of the blurs". Important black gay role-models such as the aforementioned Simon Nkoli and Zackie Achmat support this view.

1.2. Rationale for a subjective account of gay male relationships and experiences of power and abuse

While there have been many social changes and an increasing experience of freedom with respect to practising gay male relationships and generally non-heterosexual relationships, it is obvious that South Africa remains a homophobic and heteronormative society. Violence towards gay men and women continues to be experienced within the

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[13] Correctional rape refers to a person being raped in an effort to force him/her to change his/her sexual orientation.

broader community, impacting on the lived experience of gay men in South Africa across the differences of class and race.

While it is evident that gay men as a group are open to abuse and violence, there has been little focus on their own experiences of being in unequal and abusive relationships. Power dynamics play a major role in gay relationship. There are many definitions of power that impact on all relationships**.** Whitehead and Barrett (2001) suggest three ways that power can be understood; firstly, as brute force related to weapons and the complex knowledge associated with them; and secondly as relational and positional in respect of the fact that most positions of power in most societies have historically been held by particular groups of men. A third concept of power draws attention to the power of discourse through which power is exercised and resisted, and male supremacy and power inequalities become legitimised. Such studies view power as something which circulates as both a positive and negative force implicated in the process of producing privileged and subordinated discourses and knowledge. There has not been much work that acknowledges power inequalities and abuses in gay male relationships (Lewendal & Lundy, 1995). There are assumptions that two men cannot be abusive because of their physical attributes. However, other forms of power are constructed within hegemonic notions of successful masculinity. These include taking power over others, being in control and aggressive behaviour.

Hearn (2004) believes that the 'critical" in critical men's studies concerns questions of gendered power. He argues that power is a very significant pervasive aspect of men's social relations, actions and experiences. Recent engagements with hegemony in critical men's studies need to be located within broad debates on power, gendered power, and men's relations to such power. He states that men's power can be structural and interpersonal, public and/or private, accepted and/or taken-for-granted, recognized and resisted and obvious or subtle.

Hearn further describes different frameworks for analysing power and is particularly interested in a dimension of power that views people's 'real' interests as distorted by

ideological conditioning. In recognising that this dimension of power provides an adequate model of structural analysis, Hearn (2004) states that there are many aspects and approaches to structural analysis. These include: a) recognition of collective actors, b) normality and persistence of social conflict and resistance, c) intersections of material and ideological powers and d) interplay of the technical and social relations of production.

There have been critiques of structural analysis of power within post-structuralism, feminism, post-colonialism and radical multi-culturalism (Hearn, 2004). Kimmel (2004, p.101) argues that power is not the property of individuals but a property of group life and social life. He quotes Arendt who states that "…when we say of somebody that he has power, we actually refer to his being empowered by a certain number of people". Kimmel (2004) believes that men may have power as a group, but most individual men feel constrained by stereotypical conventions which negatively affects the quality of their lives.

The term 'abuse' was coined by feminists who wanted the concept of domestic violence to be seen more broadly as including rape, sexual harassment, intimidation, etc. The South African Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998 defines gender-based violence as encompassing abuse that is physical, sexual, economic, emotional, verbal and psychological. It also includes intimidation, harassment, stalking, damage to property, and any other controlling or abusive behavior towards a woman (Sathiparsad, 2005). The definition by the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of all forms of Violence Against Women describes gender violence as: "Any act of gender-based violence that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life" (Bollen et al, 1999, p. 8.). The definition is broad, encompassing a wide range of acts. It is important to highlight that men can also be abused, particularly gay men – as discussed earlier in this chapter.

It is within this context that this study hopes to make a contribution by highlighting not only the lack of research on the subjective experiences of choosing to be in gay male relationships within a society in transformation, but also the lack of acknowledgement of the complexity of gay relationships and the possibilities of power inequalities and abuse.

The aim of this study was to investigate narratives of how a group of gay men in the Cape Metropole construct their identities and/or practices as gay and report practising relationships. The objectives were the following:

- To analyse how gay men report experiencing 'coming out' and being gay in current South African contexts, considering major transformation in legal and constitutional arenas;
- To explore how gay men report experiencing their relationships with men, particularly with respect to assessing the extent to which they report conforming to or resisting a heteronormative model of relationships; and
- To examine to what extent unequal power relations and forms of abuse are reported in current practices of gay male relationships, and to elaborate on the dynamics of unequal relationships as reported in the experiences of participants.

1.3. Overview of the thesis

Chapter One has provided an introduction to the study and includes its aim, objectives and background to the study. The context of the study is described and motivation for the study and its particular focus are outlined together with the overview of the chapters.

Chapter Two reviews the literature on social constructionism as a theoretical framework. This chapter includes discussion on the development of social constructionism, before interrogating post-structuralist feminist theory and queer theory as critical to understanding the binaries of homosexuality/heterosexuality. This is followed by a section that focuses on the key concepts of hegemonic masculinity which are situated

within social constructionism. The last section looks at social constructionist accounts of homosexuality, gay liberation and African gay masculinities.

Chapter Three reviews the literature on heterosexual and gay relationships with the focus being on sex, love and marriage. The literature on abuse in heterosexual and gay relationships is then explored, focusing on the the extent of abuse, which includes masculinity and abuse as well as other determinants of abuse.

Chapter Four outlines the research methodology. This includes exploring the research design where the interpretive paradigm and qualitative approach are presented. The process of research is then unpacked, highlighting the preparation and planning, the data collection and the data analysis. There is a section on self-reflexivity before concluding with an examination of ethical aspects that impacted on the research.

Chapter Five analyses and discusses narratives of 'coming out' and being gay in current South African contexts. The chapter begins by exploring coming out and practising a gay identity or sexuality. This section highlights experiences at school, experiences in the family and community, and experiences of tertiary educational institutions. Narratives of resistance and transgression are then examined with the focus being on attraction, popularity and erotic adventures, positive stories of coming out and flaunting and of resistance in tertiary institutions.

Chapter Six analyses and discusses narratives of relationship practices of gay men. The focus initially is on modes of meetings with an exploration of beginnings and endings of relationships. This is followed by an examination of modes of relationships, where monogamy versus non-exclusivity is interrogated. The next section highlights constructions of roles in relationships before concluding with a discussion on sexual practices in relationships.

Chapter Seven analyses and discusses narratives of power and abuse in gay relationships. This chapter starts by exploring early abusive experiences of the participants before

exploring abuse in their relationships. The focus is again on modes of meetings where beginnings and endings are separated to highlight how resistance operates in the termination phase of these relationships. After examining constructions of roles in abusive relationships, the focus switches to sexual practices.

Chapter Eight explores the final conclusions and recommendations of the study. In the introduction of this chapter the aims and objectives are repeated together with a summary of the research methodology that was implemented. Findings of each research question are first unpacked, and then the implications for knowledge production and theory building expanded on. Finally, the research is critiqued with the possibilities flagged for future research in this area of study.

CHAPTER TWO
SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONIST THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the review of the literature begins with the development of feminist perspectives in relation to identity and gender. It also looks at how social constructionism evolved out of a rejection of positivism and a need to interrogate power relations and cultural perspectives within gender identities and communities. The focus of post-structural feminist theories will be explored in depth, with an analysis of the notion of performativity in construction of gender and the evolvement of speech act theory that involves discourse of citation and recitation (Butler, 1993). This theory posits that agency and resistance within gender practices are constructed within heterosexual regulatory regimes. The critique of the account of performativity as monolithic and dualistic is examined. This is followed by the contextualisation of masculine identification as depending on the disavowal of femininity and a rejection of homosexuality. Queer theory is then explored in relation to feminism with a particular focus on how the 'closet' as a denial of homosexuality has oppressed queer sexuality. The focus shifts to how queer theory explores the impact of the silence of homosexuality on class and interracial queer relationships. The review goes on to interrogate how the focus of queer theory on the power of heteronormativity needs to analyze how this leads to homophobia. The review then outlines how the hierarchy of hegemonic masculinity is framed within a feminist social constructionist theoretical approach. The next section arguably situates constructions of being gay within hegemonic masculinity, highlighting the historical context and gay liberation as crucial developments in this area. Finally, the gaze is shifted to Africa, where there is contextualization of how constructing as gay in Africa and South Africa is fraught with challenges within a homophobic milieu.

2.2. The development of social constructionism

It is important to reflect on the growth of the feminist movement as the basis for social constructionism. From the 1960s, second-wave feminists such as Gloria Steinem, Germaine Greer and others in the United States and Britain began to talk about gender equality and the need for women to have substantive rights within political and socio-economic spheres. They deplored the continuous violence against women and encouraged Governments to take the lead in setting up systems and policies to eradicate gender-based violence world-wide. Furthermore, there needed to be a campaign against discrimination of women. This led to various conferences to underscore these aims. They include the Beijing Platform for Action (2001), the World Women Conferences (1990s) and the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women in 1981.

From these initiatives, academics and women's organisations in Europe and the United States started to plot the way forward towards gender equality and the eradication of violence against women. One of the concerns raised in the various fora was how to get 'hegemonic' men to change their ways and to be less dominant in society. This led to policies that heralded some changes in women's lives. Women, in mainly Western countries, received more representation in Cabinet and other political bodies. They made some gains in the labour market, and laws were promulgated to protect them from violations of all kinds. On the other hand, men continued to have economic and institutional power. They dominate in the corporate sector and, even though women are more economically active, men still leave the rearing of children to women.

The ideas that led to the study of men or what has been referred to as critical men's studies originated [14] in psychological and anthropological theories (but were also strongly embedded in feminist theories). According to Connell et al (2005), the first steps towards

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[14] Hearn (2004) argues that *critical men's studies* have arisen out of critiques, primarily from feminism, gay and queer studies. He states that the 'critical' in critical men's studies concerns questions of gendered power. Hearn posits that power is a very significant pervasive aspect of men's social relations, actions and experiences and recent engagements with 'hegemony' in critical men's studies need to be located within broad debates on power, gendered power and men's relations to such power.

the modern analysis of men and masculinities are found in the depth psychology pioneered in Austria by Freud (1977) and Adler (1970). They argue that psychoanalysis demonstrated that the adult character was not predetermined by the body but was constructed through emotional attachments to others, in a turbulent process of growth. Anthropologists Mead (1977) and Malinowski (1978) emphasised cultural differences in these processes and the importance of social structures and norms. By the mid-20th century, these ideas had crystallised into the concept of 'sex roles'. Role-theory according to Papalia et al (2001, p. 287) maintains that people behave in socially prescribed ways and, in the process, learn appropriate gender roles. Bandura (1986) argues that people acquire and perform sex roles, like any other kind of behaviour, through a combination of observation, imitation, indoctrination and conscious learning. Pollack (1998) calls this "gender straitjacketing", where men and women are forced to fit into a sex-role stereotype.

The male role was then subjected to sharp criticism by writers on women's liberation and gay liberation, and was seen as oppressive and limiting (Pleck & Sawyer, 1974). In the United States, the idea of 'men's studies' emerged out of debates sparked by this critique (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1979) and this led to the concept of the 'male sex role' becoming obsolete, rejected for its ethnocentrism, lack of power perspective, and incipient positivism (Brittan, 1989; Eichler, 1980; Kimmel, 1987).

The rejection of positivist perspectives on the male sex role led to the emergence of a broader social constructionist perspective that highlights issues of social power (Carrigan et al 1985; Kaufmann, 1987). Male sex role theory failed to grasp issues of power. Connell (1995, p.27) states: "To explain differences in the situation of men and women by appeal to sex role differentiation is to play down violence and suppress the issue of coercion by making a broad assumption of consent". Examples of social constructionist approaches are found in studies that utilise qualitative methods such as life histories and ethnographic research. Connell (2008) argues that these ethnographic studies explore detailed documentation of local social realities. They provide close descriptions of multiple and complex masculinities (Mac & Ghaill, 1994; Messner, 1992; Segal, 1997),

together with the embedding of masculinities in economic and cultural contexts (Connell, 2008). Conceptual work emphasised social structure as the context for the formation of particular masculinities (Connell, 1987; Hearn, 1987; Holter, 1997), whereas recent authors argue that masculinities are constructed within specific discourses (Petersen, 1998).

Some feminists are reluctant to engage with men's ideas and writing on masculinity, claiming that men's studies want to complement women's studies and do not recognise the power issues inherent in this complementary approach (Robinson, 2003). Connell (2000) and Hearn (2004) would refute the argument that critical men are unable to recognise the inherent power issues that are highlighted by feminists. Still some pro-feminist men are perceived by feminists as promoting a modernisation rather than an eradication of patriarchy, such that they gain advantages through such a move but still reap the privileges of the dominant social group (Haywood & Mac an Ghail, 1996). Macleod (2007) reaffirms this view, by suggesting that the historical and contextual contingencies of patriarchal power relations need to be recognised, as well as men's enmeshment in patriarchal patterns. She argues for a theoretical distinction to be made between patriarchy and masculinity. According to Nystrom (2002, p. 41) masculinity is "the public relations campaign of patriarchy" if it is not deconstructing gender power relations. On the other hand, claims that masculinities and men are in crisis are treated with a certain amount of suspicion by feminists and pro-feminists. MacInnes (1998, p. 45) states that the invention of 'masculinity' occurred in a historical frame, coinciding with the "shift from naturalised male dominance to modern understandings of gender equality". MacInnes posits that this invention of masculinity was a holding operation in that it consolidated male power, and that it has been in crisis ever since. According to Walker (2005), the male crisis discourse is a global one, deeply intertwined with the rise of new forms of economy and the shift to patriarchal capitalism. Chadwick and Foster (2007) believe that the crisis that masculinities are experiencing is a positive sign in that traditional forms of patriarchy are under threat.

The following section examines how feminist theories on masculinities have developed in an attempt to arrest this subordination of women, with a particular focus on how they address masculinity.

2.3. Feminist theories and social constructionism

Feminist theories have been instrumental in analysing political and social institutions that have undermined women over the centuries. Hartsock (1983, p. 40) concludes that "feminism as a mode of analysis leads us to respect experience and differences, to respect people enough to believe that they are in the best possible position to make their own revolution". Feminists challenge the invisibility of women within the hierarchies of power. They believe that the 'ruling group' does not understand the realities of women who are oppressed, which is highlighted by the situation in South Africa today.

Gardiner (2005) argues that the most important accomplishment of 20th century feminist theory is the concept of gender as a social construction: that is, the idea that masculinity and femininity are loosely defined, historically variable, and social ascriptions to persons with certain kinds of bodies – not the natural, necessary, or ideal characteristic of people with similar genitals. She adds that this concept has altered long-standing assumptions about the inherent characteristics of men and women and also about the very division of people into categories of 'men' and 'women'. She suggests that by seeking to understand the causes, means and results of gender inequality, feminist theories hope to develop effective ways to improve women's condition by various strategies. As suggested earlier in this chapter, if women are able to challenge and contest men's dominance within hegemonic masculinity, there will be benefits for gay men as well. There have been certain victories for women's organisations, particularly in the arena of legislation with regard to gender-based violence, together with the promotion of gender equality. This section will focus particularly on post-structural feminist theories as they interrogate the binaries of heteronormativity/homosexuality in determining gender identity.

2.3.1. Post-structuralist feminist theories

Feminist post-structuralism and post-colonialism, coupled with queer theory, have emerged as a large body of work within feminist and postmodern theories of gender and sexualities. Key writers in this respect are, amongst others, Eve Kosovsky Sedgwick and Judith Butler. Sedgwick (1985) constructed a new concept of homosociality to describe the range of affective relationships between men that exist on a continuum from the unemotional to the fully homosexual. The main thrust of her analysis is to interrogate the relationship of the homosexual and the masculine, and in particular, to expose the extent to which the two concepts are interdependent. Sedgwick examined texts of a selection of literary works from the mid 18th century through to the mid-19th century and extrapolated a complex map of developments in the gendered nature of male relationships. Criticism of her analysis was that it was an analysis of primarily elite cultural texts.

However, Sedgwick (1990) extended her analysis of the role of the homosexual to deconstruct the category of the homosexual and, more importantly, the entire divisive system of sexual categorization. The initial aim of her analysis was to undermine the persistence of the 'homosexual' as a defining category that simultaneously creates the 'closet' from which the homosexual has to endlessly 'come out'. The suggestion that the homosexual categorisation should be less defining and that gay men should not be defined by their sexual orientation only, would arguably undermine processes of stigmatisation, stereotyping and subordination. Similarly, Altman (1971) had foretold that the end of homosexual oppression would also entail the end of the homosexual identity. On the other hand, the importance of identity politics for homosexual struggles has been well acknowledged in facilitating the gaining of rights and space to practise non-heterosexual sexualities and genders.

Sedgwick (1995) further explored the disjuncture between sex and gender, particularly masculinity and homosexuality, positing that masculinity does not necessarily relate to men or men only. She returns to an understanding of gender as centred on androgyny, whereby some men and women have more, or less, masculinity and femininity. This

foregrounds the conceptual understandings of multiple sexualities and multiple identities (Plummer, 2005) in the post-modern era.

Butler (1990) sought to demonstrate the mutual dependence and the contradictions of the categories of sex and gender as wholly artificial and 'unnatural' constructions that exist primarily at the level of repeated performance. She perceives gender as only truly existing through continuous processes of acting, speaking and doing. Butler states that there is an added dimension, in that gender is performed according to social sanctions and mores that can and do lead to punishments on a number of levels, from social ostracism to legal control. She argues that sex is a political category which works to found society as heterosexual. Her focus is on the materiality of signs and signification, with heterosexuality as a regulatory ideal and conceptual (epistemic and ontological) regime. Butler (1990, p. 137) developed the idea of heterosexuality as involving parody and imitation by drawing an analogy between gender acts and drag acts. She argues that "in imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself". This perspective contradicts the view of some feminist theories that drag acts and some aspects of gay and lesbian relationships, such as butch/femme, imitate stereotypical heterosexual relations, demonstrating rather that the very idea of an original heterosexuality is a myth (Jagger, 2008).

Butler's critique of heterosexuality as fundamentally unstable, allows for the possibility of subversion and resignification. Jagger (2008) says that this claim has attracted much criticism in that her view of gender as an imitation for which there is no original seems to imply that gender is a mere artifice that can be changed at will. Jagger questions how there can be resistance and change to dominant social relations if there is no subject underneath or outside them. However, Jagger argues that what Butler identifies is the multiplicity of mechanisms through which we are created, highlighting the ways these work to conceal the fact. Jagger (2008) states that 'feminists' need to find repetitions that subvert dominant gender norms in the hope of destabilizing and displacing these regimes so that gendered embodiment can be changed. Even though Butler (1993, p. 231) comments that "drag is not unproblematically subversive", she posits that "it serves a

subversive function in that it reflects mundane impersonations by which heterosexually ideal genders are performed and…undermines their power by view of effecting that exposure". Drag in the gay community is often belittled as performed by 'feminine' acting men, but if it serves as enabling social and political resignifications (Jagger, 2008), there may be more respect for these kinds of performances within the hyper-masculine gay community.

Butler (1993) then argues that gender and gender identities are constructed through the relations of power that are inherent in normative restraints, and that this involves the sedimentation of gender norms over time. This process produces embodiment, with the repetition involved providing both the space and possibility for change. Butler's (1997) notion of performativity was taken to another level when she emphasized speech act theory which showed how discourses constitute subjectivity, and involves a continual process of citation and recitation. This process provides the possibility of change without there being an intentional subject who can stand outside of the process. These recitations, according to Butler, provide the conditions of possibility for subversive repetitions and thus agency. This would require opposing and reworking of discursive conventions. Futhermore, Butler's account of performativity is an attempt to theorize subjectivity in a way that locates the formation of the subject in history and culture, rejecting the notion of the universal subject (Jagger, 2008). This leads to the claim that subjects are historically and culturally constituted. However, Jagger states that Butler rejects cultural determinism and wants to retain the view of gender practices as sites of change or 'critical agency'. Butler (1995, p. 136) suggests that "gender performativity involves the difficult labour of deriving agency from the very power regimes which constitute us, and which we oppose". She highlights Derrida's (1982) graphematic structure of *difference*, where he employs the graphic of iterability to develop a citation away from mechanical repetition, which implies 'otherness' and the possibility of alteration within it. This aligns with Butler's need for resistance and change in gendered embodiment.

Jagger (2008) states that there has been criticism that Butler's account of performativity is monolithic and that her dualistic logic of inclusion/exclusion, domination/resistance is

inimical to a move beyond binary thinking. McNay (1999, p. 102) suggests that Butler's account of the body continues dichotomous thinking rather than breaking with it. She argues that this results from the notion of temporality. She posits that "reiteration becomes a static rather than temporal act…[and] this notion of time as a succession of self-identical and discrete acts renders the dominant hermetic and self-sustaining…and means that disruption can only come from outside. This provokes the dualisms of subjection-resistance…that limit Butler's work". Butler (1993) argues that reiteration is a sedimented process and not a mechanical process, and must be considered in the context of Derrida's account of performativity of language and iterability as in his notion of dissemination, as that which cannot be captured by representation. Jagger (2008) says that like Derrida, Butler does not assume a permanent structure of exclusion, but rather aims to accommodate the contingent cultural and historical aspects of sexed and gendered identity. She argues that the normativity of heterosexuality thus depends on the production of these exclusions. Ziarek (1997, p.129) believes that "which is excluded are those significations (for example, homosexuality[15]) that threaten the purity and the permanence of the law instituting sexual difference".

In her interrogation of bodily categories, Butler wants to show that bodily categories such as sex, gender and sexuality are products of discourses and power relations rather than natural effects of the body. She developed a view of the body, according to Jagger (2008) following Nietzsche and Foucault as a construction, a product of the effects of power. Jagger suggests that she was influenced by de Beauvoir, who argued in The Second Sex that 'one is not born a woman but becomes one' (Butler, 1986). She explains that Butler regards the body as performatively produced as such through the sedimentation of 'corporeal styles' in a 'stylized repetition of acts'. There was criticism that this analysis neglected the materiality of the body, but in her response Butler argues that the move from construction to materialization involves the critique of materiality itself. Butler (1993, p. 9-10) reconceives matters "not as a site or surface, but as a process of materialization that stabilizes over time to produce the effect of boundary, fixity and surface we call matter…that matter is always materialized has to be thought in relation to

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[15] My words

the productive and…materializing effects of regulatory power in a Foucauldian sense".
Matter, according to Jagger (2008) becomes an effect of power and signification. Butler
continues to argue that that the social norms that regulate identificatory projections can
be construed as heterosexual imperatives, but shows a concern with the significance of
'queer' for collective contestations, shifting the focus of parody and drag to include a
focus on how 'queerness' might be understood not only as an example of citational
politics, but as a reworking of abjection into political agency. This argument positions
gay men and women as important 'actors' in the ability to change homophobic
assumptions that a heteronormative society may espouse regarding a performance of
queerness.

In an example demonstrating the production of sex as material violence, Butler's (1993)
cites the difficulties of establishing the authenticity of rape in the USA. She questions
how it is that it is women's sex, in its materiality, that somehow causes the rape. Women
are blamed for putting themselves in a position to be raped. She postulates that the
violence involved in rape is not only physical, but also in the production of meaning and
intelligibility, which allows some meanings to prevail and forecloses others. In the
likelihood of feminine-acting gay men being 'raped' in prisons or in other settings, it is
likely that they too would be 'blamed' for the rape, as meaning and regulation around
rape in such settings enforces a gender conformity, where maleness and masculinity is
seen as politically dominant.

In attempting to counter this political dominance, Butler suggests that the duality of
sexual difference as it stands in the hegemonic symbolic order involves denaturalizing
and destabilizing. She categorises the hegemonic symbolic order as heterosexist, in order
to open up the possibilities for alternative imaginaries that are neither masculine of
feminine. She articulates a cross-identification, so as to reveal the instabilities in the
hetero/homo binary in psychoanalytic accounts, for example the 'phallicized dyke[16]' and
the 'feminized fag[17]'. Jagger (2008) raises the concern that the focus on the heterosexual

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[16] 'Dyke' refers to a masculine-acting lesbian
[17] 'Fag' is a shortened version of the word faggot, a derogatory term for gay men that has been queered

imperative and the homosexual body as abject does not address the hierarchical relations involved in gender categories. Furthermore, Ebert (1996) argues that Butler's focus on the symbolic regime of heterosexuality, rather than the formation of patriarchal capitalism neglects material social realities (such as patriarchy, capitalism, women's reproductive role, or a combination of these) in favour of a focus on superstructural play of discursive processes. However, Butler (1993) argues that these material conditions are themselves products of cultural frameworks for signification and produces them as causes. She adds that change and transformation need to be addressed through the significatory processes that produce the understanding of the materiality of the body and sex/gender as the source of those oppressions. For some gay men, the need to understand how their bodies are materialized in servicing heterosexist norms can contribute to understanding how hyper-masculinity constructions continue to 'other' feminized bodies as part of oppression.

In examining the link of her perspective with masculinity and homosexuality, Butler (1995) argues that masculine identification depends on a prior formation of sexual orientation and, in particular, on a rejection of homosexuality. She states that masculinity depends on the disavowal not only of femininity but also of homosexuality, and is predicated upon a lack or absence, rather than a given or presence. In Butler's view, masculinity as a positive identification depends on a double, not single, dissociation. She goes on to suggest that the profoundly psychological difficulty here is that the loss of homosexuality is never avowed and therefore never mourned.

Butler's argument depends on Freud's analysis of polymorphous perversity, where the infant experiences and gains from both homosexual and heterosexual attachment but, in order to successfully form a gender identity must suffer a loss, a loss that cannot be affirmed. She argues that the conjoint problem that then ensues for the male infant is that neither the attachment to another male nor its loss can be recognised, leading to the impossibility of either affirming or mourning homosexuality.

Secondly, she believes that this has wider social implications, reflected in the lack of recognition of gay male relationships, and the intensity of difficulties involved in their loss. For gay men, this denial or 'loss' starts in their early relationships or friendships with other boys. They discover, before understanding what gay means, that they have 'feelings' for other boys. However, the general consensus in the dominant male hierarchy is that boys do not show their feelings – they must 'be tough', they must not act like 'a woman'. This 'othering' of women is understood as the start of their subordination. So these feelings are put aside and are observed from a distance. They normally fade away but for gay boys they persist.

Butler concludes by suggesting that male homosexual attachment is put on to the 'never-never': never having lost and never having loved. Her argument in this respect hinges around the understanding that love can be acknowledged only if it is affirmed by a group or the hegemonic order of the time. With the onset of gay marriage, there is now a legal document that affirms the love of two men. The civil union ceremony also contributes to this affirmation with friends and family embracing the union. However, not all gay men in relationships embrace gay marriage, and the acknowledgement that this gain comes with a certain compromise has also been increasingly evident. This debate is covered in the next chapter.

In conclusion, feminists of all philosophical and political hues have made a major contribution to the development of scholarly works on men and masculinities. In post-1994 South Africa, the main focus of feminist gender research was on girls and women (Shefer et al, 2008) and this led to a 'blaming discourse' where women were blamed for HIV/Aids and, in some cases, gender-based violence. Women were also seen as being responsible for gender equality and for redressing it. Although, as Gardener (2005) suggests, masculinist men's movements sometimes decry feminism, while critical men's studies treat feminism and feminist theory as scholarly 'big sisters' that are perhaps too restrictive, but nevertheless models to be followed and bettered.

2.4. Queer theory and social constructionism

Queer theory emerged out of new strands of thinking about sexuality in the 1990s (Roseneil, 2002). It drew on post-structuralism, particularly the work of Foucault (1978, 1984a, 1984b), Jacques Derrida (1982), and on Laconian psychoanalysis, and emerged out of and in dialogue with feminist theory. The relationship between queer theory and feminism is both close and contested (Jeffreys, 1994; Walters, 1996; Weed & Schor, 1997; Wilkinson & Kritzinger; 1994). Queer theory proposed to delineate the regulatory regimes that sort sexualities and subjectivities into valued and devalued categories. As Tucker (2009) suggests, queer theory argues against the instigation of monolithic identity terms, looking instead at ways that categories of existence can be problematized and the power that is enacted to create them destabilised. Hall (2003) argues that to be queer is to imply the action of disrupting and destabilizing 'facts' held dear by heteronormative societies. He says that this action leads to questioning regulative agendas that normalise society. This in turn offers ruptures in discourse, allowing power to coalesce in new and liberating forms.

One of the aims of queer theory is to critique the heterosexual family and, in particular, the way that heterosexual men deny homoerotic impulses. Theorists examine texts to explore how heterosexual characters dominate, while gay or lesbian characters are silenced or subordinated and their lifestyle normally 'othered' in relation to heterosexual families and their 'superior' lifestyle. Through questioning (multiple) workings of heteronormativities, queer politics therefore makes space for alternative sexualities which are deemed 'other' or marginal (Van Zyl, 2005). Queer theory embraced other 'outlaws' from the patriarchal family by celebrating boundary crossers such as transgender people and bisexuals (Adam, 2002). Furthermore, "differences between the multifarious and multiple, sexual, gender, ethnic, political and stylistic identifications of those within the 'queer community' – lipstick lesbians, butches, femmes, FTMs, s/m-ers, switch-hitters, muscle Marys, opera queens, bisexuals, transsexuals, the transgendered, those who identify as Black, Asian, Irish, Jewish, Latino... – become theoretically important" (Roseneil, 2002, p.29).

Queer theory scholars, including post-structuralists such as Sedgwick (1990), have questioned how 'the closet' was an example of how power/knowledge operates in society to regulate sexuality. Latimer (2004) suggests that the concealment and denial of homosexuality, as illustrated by 'the closet', as a discrete sexual identity works to reinforce the heterosexual/homosexual binary and the dominance of heterosexuality in society. Furthermore, Tucker (2009) believes that 'the closet' has helped frame an understanding of how queer sexuality is oppressed, by examining the way the heterosexual/homosexual binary has been operationalized. He adds that despite queer theory warnings concerning unitary and fixed identity categories, the subject and their identity are often already seen to exist prior to their 'coming out'. This leads to an assumption that "coming out represents the end of inauthenticity and self-alienation for the individual and the wider community" (Tucker, 2009, p. 9). These arguments are meant to persuade gay men that 'coming out' is a liberatory queer performance that all gay men must go through to 'identify' as gay, even though homophobia is rife world-wide. Crucially, according to Tucker (2009), men who engage in sex with other men, yet who view themselves as heterosexual and who do not see their identity as inauthentic, fail to fit within the closet schema. In the interest of this study, Tucker views 'the closet' as being problematic when dealing with communities that do not give prominence to proclaiming an 'authentic' sexual identity located around a particular Western European 'closet' binary (for example, marginalised communities in Cape Town, South Africa).

The importance of culture, race and other difference in queer theory is highlighted by Stein and Plummer (1996). De Lauretis (1991, p. 10)) argues that "one of the constructed silences in the discourse of homosexuality as same-sex desire is around interracial relationships, fraught as they are with erotic, economic, social and emotional stakes". She pointedly asks whether queerness can act as an agency of social change, and the theory construct another discursive horizon, another way of living the racial and the sexual. This poses a question for queer identity in South Africa. How can white gay men interrelate with black gay men differently? Or coloured men respect the differences of African men? Is it always going to be about economic muscle? This highlights again what Tucker

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(2009) is arguably saying about unidirectional cultural and economic flows from the West to the rest of the world, flows which are in danger of reifying a neo-colonial gaze on to communities elsewhere. He states that there is a need to explore how the local specificity on the variant of the heterosexual/homosexual binary, and hence heteronormativity, is located around race and class. This is indeed one of the underlying objectives of this thesis.

There have been critiques of queer theory. Roseneil (2002) argues that the theory tends to direct its gaze backwards in time, failing to remark upon and engage with contemporary social change. As highlighted, there has been a great deal of suspicion of the degree to which queer theory succeeds in being more inclusive of gender (Walters, 1996) and race (Boykin, 2000; Samuels, 1999). Critics of queer theory are also concerned about the politics that flow (or do not flow) from it (Edwards, 1998). Adam (2002) argues that, although deconstruction of heterosexuality is clearly a primary endeavour of queer scholarship, it is gay and lesbian studies that are far more vulnerable to attack. He suggests that queer theory's fascination with the hidden homoeroticism of ostensibly heterosexual writing means that attention is turned away from the culture, experience, and self-expression of (out) lesbians, gay men and queers. Tucker (2009) is concerned that the focus of queer theory on the power of heteronormativity and the specific renderings of the heterosexual/homosexual binary needs to take into account how heteronormativity can lead - and almost certainly does lead - to homophobia. On the other hand, he argues that queer groups have become quite resilient in engaging with heteronormative regulation and in some cases overcoming homophobia. He cites South African racial history and apartheid "as acting as important settings for different communities, allowing different groups different opportunities to become visible" (Tucker, 2009, p.199). He posits that among black African township men, homophobia emerged most strongly as a result of a sudden visibility of queer sexuality, not possible during apartheid. Secondly, he believes that homophobia in South Africa stems from a need to be vigilant to protect against queer contamination of different racially defined communities, in other words homosexuality is 'unAfrican'. This will be covered further in the section on African masculinities.

In a further critique, Roseneil questions whether, when speaking about differences, it is possible to delineate membership of sexual categories, as sexuality is ambiguous, identifications are fluctuating and it is strategically performed. It is the era of the 'post-gay' (Sinfield, 1996) or 'anti-gay' (Simpson, 1996) stories. These queer and post-modern stories "shun unities and uniformities; reject naturalism and determinacies; seek out immanences and ironies; and ultimately find pastiche, complexities and shifting perspectives" (Plummer, 1995, p. 133).

In the next section, I intend to unpack hegemonic masculinity which is arguably situated within social constructionism and post-structural feminism and, as a concept, continues to explore how hegemonic men hold power over women and gay men within the broader society.

2.5. Critical men's studies on masculinities: key concepts

While critical men's studies do not represent a necessarily unitary framework, much of this growing literature is framed within a broadly feminist social constructionist framework in which certain understandings of subjectivity, relationship and power are evident. A number of key concepts in this larger body of work are evident and need to be defined. Key is the notion of hegemonic masculinity. This hinges around a conceptualisation of masculinities as multiple and contextual, with dominant, hegemonic or, as Ratele (2008) puts it, 'ruling masculinities' taking on their status and power in relation to subordinate masculinities and femininity.

Feminist, queer, post-structuralist and post-modernist theorists argue that there is a hierarchy of masculinity that determines how men fare within the gendered order. Within the hierarchy, hegemonic men of the cultural ideal (Connell, 1995) are dominant, whereas women and gay men are subordinated within the hierarchy. Further, those who are marginalised within other indicators of social power in a particular culture – including

for reasons such as race, class, sexual orientation and spatial mobility – are similarly viewed as subordinated men.

The concept of hegemonic masculinity emerged out of a discussion paper on men's bodies by Connell in 1983. Influenced by the analysis of class relations by Gramsci (1916-1935), Connell outlines how the body is socially constructed and posits that sport is the most important social activity for many boys at school. He emphasises the practices and experiences of taking and occupying space, holding the body tense and developing skill, as well as size, power, force, strength, physical development and sexuality. This links to themes of privilege and cultural advantages, but also presages bullying and 'othering' of gay boys that do not fulfil these criteria. Other writers like Robinson (2005) observe that hegemonic masculinity becomes a dynamic, socially and historically sanctioned performance that is generally rewarded with power and popularity for young men in schools and in the broader community. He says that knowledge of what it means to be a boy is based on the multiple discourses of masculinity that are culturally and historically available, and which intersect with other sites of identity such as race, ethnicity, class and sexuality. For many boys in school, the physical performative aspect of masculinity is seen as the most acceptable and desirable way of being male (Morrell, 2001; Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998). Mills (2001) points out that hegemonic masculine behaviour does not always reap benefit for boys. Certain masculine practices such as risk-taking with respect to drugs and alcohol (Scalway, 2001) may impress peers, but at the same time lead to school failure and exposure to physical and emotional danger.

From these definitions it is clear that there is already a binarism of popular versus unpopular boys, those that fit and those that do not fit the cultural ideal. This hierarchical structure of masculinity, where some forms of masculinity are privileged above others reflects the 'covert power' (Butler, 1997) that arises out of culture, race and heterosexist privilege. Connell and Hearn may argue that boys who are underprivileged with respect to race, class and other power dynamics may still embrace the cultural ideal of hegemonic power, but that this will always be mediated by their marginalisation on these other levels.

Key to hegemonic constructions of masculinity is the centrality of physicality and the body in defining successful masculinity. Connell (1983) highlights the differential importance of physicality within three realms: work, sexuality and fatherhood. He stresses that the embedding of masculinity in the body is a social process, full of tensions and contradictions, that even physical is a historical rather than a biological fact. It is constantly in process, constantly being constituted in actions and relations, and constantly implicated in historical change. This physicality that Connell talks about is linked to the 'body' and how the body functions driving hegemonic men in certain cultures to visit gyms to 'build-up' their bodies, take up healthy eating and engage in regular check-ups to see that they are functioning optimally in the different spheres (work, etc.) If their bodies fail them for a while, which is a historical likelihood, there is Viagra or specialists that can get them 'up to speed' again.

Hearn (2004) argues that developments in theorising hegemonic masculinity occurred in the 1980s (in the light of gay activism). He suggests that the connection with gay liberation theory developed when Tim Carrigan and John Lee, both gay activists, came to work with Connell on a social theory project on the theory of gender. This led to the reformulation of the concept of hegemonic masculinity, articulating analyses of oppression produced both by feminism and gay liberation. Carrigan et al's (1985) analysis is encapsulated in the following:

> "What emerges from this line of argument (on the heterosexual-homosexual ranking of masculinity) is the very important concept of hegemonic masculinity, not as the 'male role', but as a particular variety of masculinity to which others are subordinated. It is particular groups of men, not men in general, who are oppressed within patriarchal sexual relations, and whose situations are related in different ways to the overall logic of the subordination of women to men. A consideration of homosexuality thus provides the beginnings of a dynamic conception of masculinity as a structure of social relations."

As highlighted earlier, Carrigan et al (1985) state that hegemony always refers to a historical situation, a set of circumstances where power is won and held. Thus, to understand the different kinds of masculinities demands an examination of practices in which hegemony is constituted and contested – in short, the political techniques of the patriarchal order.

This development in hegemonic masculinity begins to unpack how homosexual men (and women) are placed within the hierarchy. The subordination of women and gay men (with other men) is due to the fact that, at this stage, they are not able to contest power with dominant men because of their status within the patriarchal order. As highlighted by Butler (1995) hegemonic constructions of masculinity are determined by heterosexual male prowess. However, Connell (1995) argues that this can change given the notion of the fluidity of masculinities.

A deeper understanding of hegemonic masculinities emerged in Connell's (1995) book Masculinities. He reaffirmed the link with Gramsci's analysis of class relations through the operation of cultural dynamics, also noting that hegemonic masculinity is open to challenge and possible change. Connell (1995, p. 77) now defined hegemonic masculinity as:

> "...The configuration of gender practice, which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women."

Reflecting on domination of men over women, Swain (2006) argues that hegemonic masculinity serves as a high status, idealised form of masculinity by which boys and men can be measured. Although power over women is perceived to be a 'natural' state of affairs, masculinity is at its peak when it represents male power in the form of domination of other men. A different perspective on domination and power is provided by Connell (1995), who says that the most powerful bearers of the cultural ideal of hegemonic masculinity are not necessarily the most powerful individuals, as the individual holders of

power may be very different from those who represent hegemonic masculinity as a cultural ideal. He believes in the fluidity and changeability of hegemonic masculinities, and that men who are in power today could be marginalised tomorrow, depending on the cultural ideal.

In critiquing the definition of hegemonic masculinities, Hearn (2004) argues that while Connell has emphasised the cultural specificity of masculinities, it has to be pointed out that there has been a widespread application of the term in many and various ways, and that this can be a conceptual and empirical weakness. He adds that Connell has also described hegemonic masculinity as 'a configuration of gender practice', rather than a type of masculinity, yet the use of the term has sometimes been as if it is a type.

In a further critique, Donaldson (1998) points out that the concept of hegemonic masculinity is unclear, may carry contradictions and fails to identify the autonomy of the gender system. Donaldson notes that it is difficult to identify hegemonic masculinity because there is little that is counter-hegemonic. Finally, he expresses concern that economic class is neglected in popular uses of the term.

Hearn (2004) is concerned about why it is necessary to hang on to the concept of masculinity rather than, say, men's practices (Connell, 1987; Hearn, 1996), when the former concept has been subject to much critique (Carrigan et al, 1985). He expands on his argument that the concept of male practices may be more fitting than hegemonic masculinity. In this context, he focuses on the practical ways that men talk about themselves. Wetherall and Edley (1999) identify three specific imaginary positions and psycho-discursive practices in the negotiating of hegemonic masculinity and men's identification with the masculine. Hearn suggests that these positions provide a more nuanced way of talking about men's location with different forms of male practice. These are heroic positions, 'ordinary' positions, and rebellious positions. Heroic positions conform closely to Connell's notion of complicit masculinity, as "it could be read as an attempt to instantiate hegemonic masculinity, since, here, men align themselves strongly with conventional ideals". 'Ordinary' positions attempt a distancing from certain

conventional or ideal notions of the masculine, instead, the 'ordinariness of the self; the self as normal, moderate or average' is emphasized. Rebellious positions are characterized in terms of their unconventionality, with the imaginary position involving the flouting of social expectations. Hearn is interested in the last two positions, particularly the presence of ambiguity and subtlety, even contradiction, in the self-construction of masculinity and the masculine, hegemonic or not, as it opens up the space for understanding the multiplicity of male practices.

In summarising, Hearn's argument signals an important shift in the conceptualising of men and masculinities, where an understanding of masculinities as practices rather than identities challenges the notion that men can only perform or construct in a particular way.

Other limitations of the notion of hegemonic masculinity have been raised by Morrell (2001) and Haywood and Mac an Ghaill (1996). These authors argue that the legitimacy of hegemonic masculinity is weakened once the multiplicity of masculinities and identities are stressed, and that it is unable to reveal the complex patterns of compliance and resistance which constitute everyday social action. The impact of multiple identities may be confusing, but it does highlight the many possibilities of masculine identity that can lead to a breaking up of the hegemonic order.

As stated already, women and 'other' men are subordinated within the hierarchy of masculinities. Feminists link this subordination to patriarchy in the case of women but arguably, the marginalisation of certain groups of men is also powerfully interwoven with patriarchy which sets up heterosexual masculinity as central to its reproduction. Skelton (2001) argues that the hegemonic form constructs itself in direct relation to subordinate masculinities and has an essential need to create subordinate forms to maintain itself. Therefore, the feminine, feminised and 'othered' masculinities are constructed so that hegemonic men can be dominant. Other men, like gay men, who do not conform to the constructs of the hegemonic male order are also constructed as subordinate. The pressure

to conform that characterises peer group cultures means that a boy has only to look or (be constructed) slightly different from the norm to be accorded inferior status (Swain, 2006).

Near the pinnacle of the hierarchy but not dominant are men who are complicit with the hegemonic male project. Connell (1995 p.79) says "you have to recognise another relationship between groups of men, the relationship of complicity..." These are men who benefit indirectly and therefore support the hegemonic male order. These could include, for example, men who are 'in the closet' within gay culture and benefit indirectly through their 'invisibility'. Hypermasculine gay men use their impressive physiques to help them to be complicit with hypermasculine heterosexual men against men who are construed as feminine-acting.

At the bottom of the hierarchy, Connell (1995 p. 81) refers to marginalization as "the relation between the masculinities in dominant and subordinated classes or ethnic groups". He states that marginalisation is always relative to the authorisation of the hegemonic masculinity of the dominant group in a particular context. In the gay community in South Africa, for example, while most gay men are 'othered' in the hierarchy of ideal masculinity, African black men are often marginalised within gay locations and by the gay white community. This is illustrated by Leap's (2005) study. This marginalisation clearly emerges out of historical apartheid systems of difference and power and the privileging of white men that is still evident in South Africa, as it is internationally. In the next section, there will be a review of literature on constructions of gay identities and masculinities.

2.6. Constructions of gay identities and masculinities

The relationship between 'gay' and 'masculinity' is set up as one of binary opposites in patriarchal cultures, where ideal masculinity has been shown to be constructed in opposition to non-masculine, gay masculinities. Gay has been stereotyped as 'feminine' or feminine-acting, whereas masculinity speaks for itself. However, as queer theorists would argue, deconstructing the binaries of masculine and feminine are likely to bring

these gender constructions closer together. In the following examination of the literature around gay masculinities, it is prurient to acknowledge that the body of work is growing from a small empirical base.

2.6.1. Historical context and social constructionist accounts of homosexuality

Like its very concept, the history of 'homosexuality' is likely to be contested as homosexuals have not been encouraged to share their history by a moralistic, heterosexist and homophobic world. However, within academic circles, while gay and lesbian practices are acknowledged as historically and universally present across cultures, the notion of homosexuality as a sexual orientation/identity is regarded as a culturally specific, modern, and Western phenomenon (Caplan, 1987; Greenberg, 1988; Katz, 1976; Plummer, 1981; Weeks, 1977). Edwards (2005) argues that the homosexual as a type of person is a century or so old and is only present fully within parts of the United States, Australasia and Northern Europe, with variant constructions elsewhere within the developed world and very little that is truly comparable anywhere else. In the last twelve years South African homosexuals have been empowered by very important pieces of legislation – this is highlighted in other parts of this thesis – to be more open and proud of their sexual orientation (Civil Unions Act, 2006: Constitution, 1996). There are many debates in homosexual circles about what qualifies an individual to be a homosexual or a gay man. Particular contestation of this comes from essentialist beliefs (Le Vay, 1993) that gay men are born gay and from a social constructionist belief that 'doing' gay is a performance (Butler, 1990). Edwards (2005, p.52) states that "social constructionism theory seeks to demonstrate that sexuality, far from being biological, constant or inevitable, is socially variable, contingent and ambiguous".

Social constructionism has already been introduced earlier given its dominance in current theorising of masculinities; however, how such a framework speaks to understandings of homosexuality in particular needs to be further analysed. The leading exponent of early social constructionism is Margaret Mead, an anthropologist, who in Samoa discovered sexual practices and gendered identities that were often in significant variance from those

in the West and focused on the social aspects rather than the biological component (Cooley, 1902; Durkheim, 1951; Mead, 1977). The most significant development in reframing thinking on sexuality emerges from the work of Michel Foucault who, in his History of Sexuality (1978), saw the homosexual as a specific type of person, 'invented', as it were through the work of a series of sexologists, in the late 19th century. These sexologists include, amongst others, the Swiss doctor Karoly Benkert, who coined the term homosexual, Krafft-Ebing, and Magnus Hischfeld (Foucault, 1978; 1984a, 1984b). Foucault and others argued that homosexuality is a culturally specific phenomenon that varies in perception, practice and outcome from time to time and place to place. This undermined the notion that the homosexual identity is simply the result of some kind of behavioural, biological or psychological essence. The medical and psychiatric fraternity had pathologised gay men as 'sick' and 'perverted' (homosexuality was regarded as a mental disorder before its removal in 1974 by the American Psychological Association) as part of essentialist beliefs. Le Vay (1993), for example, claimed that homosexuality is the result of some abnormality in hormones, the brain, or parental upbringing. Such biological deterministic positions are still evident in contemporary work and popular understandings of homosexuality.

Rosenfeld (2009) identifies three key shifts in the construction of homosexuality that occurred over the twentieth century. The first was the development of heteronormative binaries. She argues that by the early 1940s, the defining characteristic of homosexuality had shifted from gender inversion, expressed in sex-opposite appearances and behaviours, to sexual object choice; those engaging in same-sex sexual encounters were defined as homosexual regardless of their gendered practices, identities and appearances. This established two clear heteronormative binaries – heterosexuality/homosexuality, and gender/sexuality. The heterosexual/homosexual binary, according to Valocchi (2005, pp. 753-754), "served as the trope of difference structuring social knowledge throughout the twentieth and into the twenty-first centuries … normal and abnormal, secrecy and disclosure, public and private – these became the derivative tropes of the homosexual/heterosexual binary".

The second shift in the twentieth century construction of homosexuality, suggested by Rosenfeld (2009), provided a post-war homonormativity centred on the construction of an acceptable homosexuality based on its adherence to heteronormativity. This was specifically gender conformity and a public privileging of heterosexuality that demands that homosexuals pass as heterosexuals. Stryker (2008, pp. 146-147) states that these strategies included adopting gender-conforming behaviours and appearances, and were "aimed at securing privilege for gender-normative gays and lesbians based on adherence to dominant cultural constructions of gender". The third shift was gay liberation, which is covered in the next section.

There have been critiques about the gendering of homosexuality. It is argued that homosexuals were stigmatised for not being masculine enough or being too feminine (Edwards, 2005). This must be seen within the broader context of stigmatisation of gay men and gay sexuality within a heteronormative society where men have to embrace hegemonic 'masculinity' to be regarded as real men (Butler, 1995) and feminine-acting men are 'othered' (even by hyper-masculine gay men) because of their non-conformity to hegemonic masculine ideals of privilege and status. Edwards concludes by suggesting that the history of homosexuality has failed to address the issues of sexism, racism and ageism within the homosexual 'community'.

2.6.2. Constructions that led to Gay Liberation

Queer scholars have viewed 'the closet' as the defining structure of gay oppression in the twentieth century (Sedgwick, 1990). The Stonewall rebellion of 1969 in New York in the United States, and the third shift in the construction of homosexuality that occurred in the twentieth century (Rosenfeld, 2009), came out of the development of a gay right's based movement in the West and led to an era of gay identity politics (Altman, 1972; D'Emilio, 1983; Warner, 1993, 2000). For the first time, 'white' gay men (particularly drag queens) stood up to police brutality in a gay bar and refused to be cowed. This was a defining moment for a group that had been rejected and oppressed by a heterosexist society. Gay liberation redefined 'coming out' from the development of a homosexual identity to its

declaration by others, particularly heterosexuals. Rosenfeld (2009) argues that activists claimed that the voluntary, public disclosure of homosexual desire would undermine heterosexual society's grip on homosexuals, which centred on the fear of discovery. Gay men were expected to disclose their sexual orientation as a political 'act', and this led to "the (pervasive) framing of gay life in terms of the closet and coming out" (Seidman, Meeks and Traschen, 1999, pp. 12-13). The sense of liberation that this act brought to the gay world was immediately felt in Western countries, where gay men were tolerated. Hocquenghem (1972) and Mieli (1980) attributed a liberating force to gay desire in celebrating promiscuity, pushing the boundaries of normative constructions of decency and, more generally, going against the mores of mainstream heterosexual society. On the other hand, Altman (1971) and Weeks (1977) saw gay liberation in the context of gay politics leading to reform and slowly shifting morals and values. Queer activists modelled their pattern of social and civil unrest on that which had proved successful for African-American and feminist activists (Hall, 2003). However, it is clear from these accounts that a small group of white men, predominantly middle-class and having access to financial and political resources, were predominating (Valocchi, 1999).

In South Africa gay organisations such as the Organisation of Gay and Lesbian Activists (OLGA) that were politically leftist came together to align themselves with the United Democratic Front (UDF) against apartheid (Fine & Nicol, 1994). The formation of the National Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality (NCGLE) in the early 1990s led to formations with the political elite (the African National Congress [ANC]) that culminated in the enshrinement of the right to sexual orientation in the Constitution in 1996 (Leatt & Hendricks, 2005), as well as a range of laws to support and further such rights and freedoms. Black gay and lesbian leadership started to emerge at this time, which challenged the conservative white gay community to become more politicised. This arguably facilitated the development of a stronger gay culture that was not only more inclusive but also where black role models, such as Simon Nkoli (1995) and Zakkie Achmat (1995), were visible.

The new-found freedom in some Western countries internationally, arguably led to the creation of the gay clone that mimicked heterosexual body-builders and macho men (Edwards, 2005). This was popularised in the music of the Village People. These hypermasculine men were stereotyped as overtly sexual, wearing particularly tight pants and wanting as many partners as they could muster. It was the age before HIV/Aids when promiscuity was regarded as a 'badge of honour' in the gay community. Feminists and gay academics such as Blachford (1981) were divided on whether the gay clone resisted or reproduced male domination by virtue of its containment within a sub-culture. Gough (1989), although acknowledging sexist implications, saw macho gay men as merely aping 'real masculinity'. The fear was that the gay clone wanted to be what Connell (1992) refers to as the 'very straight gay'. Harris (1997, p. 99) argues that gay liberation created a whole set of problems in gay men's self-images, resulting in a divide between the effeminate and the masculine:

> "In the act of remaking themselves in the images of such mythical icons of American masculinity as gunslinging cowpokes and close-cropped leathernecks, homosexuals failed spectacularly to alleviate their nagging sense of inadequacy to straight men, whose unaffected sexual self-confidence continues to serve as the subcultural touchstone of manly authenticity ... When we attempted to heal the pathology of the gay body by embarking on the costume dramas of the new machismo, we did not succeed in freeing ourselves from our belief's in the heterosexual male's evolutionary superiority ... In fact, we... became our own worst enemies, harsh, homophobic critics of the campy demeanour of the typical queen."

Similarly, critics were not amused and saw the gay clone as 'becoming a figure of fun' that heterosexuals could laugh at. Gay writers who had observed gay men 'secretly' build relationships through the dark times of arrests and imprisonments were divided. Some, like Shiers (1980) believed that the focus on promiscuity undermined their long-term relationships. Others, like Lee (1978), argued that gay men had a right to be promiscuous

and were better at 'getting sex'. Writers such as Rechy (1977) and White (1986) appeared to support this latter view in their autobiographies.

Research in this period focused on gay sex in public places as the moral heteronormative majority was beginning to regulate in this area (Butler, 1990). The infamous study in 1975 on "impersonal sex in public places" by Laud Humphreys (cited in Nardi, 1995) brought indignation and howls of protest about its validity. Humphreys, who was heterosexual, used participant observation to 'spy' on gay men in toilets (or 'tea-rooms' in gay slang). He then recorded their licence plate numbers, searched for their addresses and names through public records and interviewed fifty of them a year later while posing as a survey researcher for a study on mental health. Ethical concerns were raised, particularly on the right to privacy but sociologists such as Horowitz and Rainwater were rather admiring of Humphreys' research techniques and moral courage. They believed "in its principled humaneness, in its courage to learn the truth and in the constructive contribution that it makes toward our understanding of all the issues, including the moral, raised by deviant behaviour in our society" (Humphreys, 1975, p. 185). This quote suggests that even though 'gay liberation' meant a fight for political rights for some gay men, the dominant hegemonic order continued to be watch-dogs over 'promiscuous' gay morals and values. Some of his findings, however, are pertinent to this study. Humphreys reports that 54% of the men engaging in sex in the 'tea-room' were married, 42% were Roman Catholic, and that the men took on a defensive shield by advocating moral crusades, endorsing under-cover activities, and creating a presentation of self-respectability. This shows how masculinities can inter-relate, where men in heteronormative relationships may have homosexual desires, and where gay men may pass as heterosexuals (Goffman, 1959) to cover up their 'indiscretions'.

In another study, Delph (1978) explored men's sexual behaviour with other men in public and semi-public places, and made important findings on how gay men engage or do not engage in sex. Delph argued that the gay clone reinforced the stereotype that men (as a whole) are more promiscuous than women, and that these gay men practiced a stereotypically masculine sexuality that was divorced from emotional commitment and

intimacy. Others such as Adam (1987) and Dowsett (1987) posited that the gay commercial world provided little emotional sustenance, which was further endorsed in Larry Kramer's plays on HIV/Aids in the mid-eighties. Kramer highlighted the lack of support for HIV positive men by their 'partners' and the gay community. The lack of group rights as postulated by Tucker (2009) may have led these men to be unsupportive. It also may also have led to further rejection of sexual minorities such as bisexuals.

With the onset of gay liberation, it became clear that lesbian women were not part of the celebration. This links to an earlier argument by Edwards (2005) that being feminine is stigmatised within hegemonic masculinity. In Western countries, gay men's economic power led to an expansion of the gay commercial scene of shops, bars, clubs, saunas, restaurants and other services, from which lesbians were largely excluded, a factor that rapidly turned into accusations of sexism and misogyny (Edwards, 2005). As stated before, many feminists believed that gay liberation was about gay men being liberated, not about women. In the Western Cape in South Africa, lesbian feminists like Sheila Lapinsky (1995) appeared to be disenchanted with gay male activists and joined women's-only organisations like the Black Sash and the United Women's Organisation (UWO). Stanley (1982) argues that gay liberation was about gender oppression and gay men were deeply bound up with the degradation of women and the feminine. Unfortunately, the gay clone sided or was complicit (Connell, 1995) with hegemonic masculinity in the undermining of the female and, more widely, feminine sexuality. The development of post-structural feminism that aimed to undermine the binaries of gender and sexuality emerged as a challenge to this. (This was outlined in the previous section.)

2.6.3. Constructions of African gay masculinities

As highlighted in the first chapter, other than South Africa, no African countries recognise gay relationships and in some countries there are punitive laws that are quite barbaric, particularly in Muslim countries, where gay men may be flogged or killed (Dworkin & Yi, 2003). In Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe has publicly rejected gay men and has called for the purging of gay men from Zimbabwean society. He regards

homosexuality as 'unAfrican' believing that its "alleged spread to Zimbabwe was explicitly attributed to white people, whose purported decadence was corrupting wholesale indigenous African culture" (Epprecht, 1997, p.1). Mugabe saw homosexuality as impinging on black heterosexual men's virility. Black gay men are seen as traitors. Hoad (1998, p. 33) argues that "some strands of African nationalism explicitly rejected gay and lesbian rights. This rejection is frequently legitimised as a defence of national, but more particularly racial, authenticity". Researchers have questioned the assertions of Mugabe and Sam Nujoma (former President of Namibia) that being gay is 'unAfrican'. According to Sanders (cited in Epprecht, 1997), culturally being gay might be 'unAfrican' but situational same-sex is not. This compares favourably with the studies on the mines in South Africa by Mclean and Ngcobo (1994), who found that black men living in the hostels frequently had sex with other men and even set up 'marriage-like' relationships in these contexts. Similar relationships have been well documented in prison contexts across all groups of men (Gear & Ngobeni, 2002). Such findings also speak to the multiplicity of gay sexualities, foregrounding how not all gay sexual practices hinge around the identity of being gay.

Also highlighting this fluidity and multiplicity are the various contemporary films that have depicted socially sanctioned forms of homosexuality in Africa. The film Dakan directed by Mohamed Camara, explores a gay relationship between two young men in Guinea. Ellerson (2005, p. 63) interviewed the director to find out about gay relationships in Guinea. In the interview, Camara explains why homosexuality is accepted in the community:

> "The reason is simple: in people's view a male homosexual is someone who is very feminine and who imitates women; they are the friends of women or they are close with women. So when there is a party or a social gathering it is the homosexuals who come out to make the party alive. Because they know how to do the traditional dances, they dance well and make the people laugh. So in that sense homosexuals are very accepted and integrated into society. But the minute that you say that a homosexual is a man who makes loves with another man or a

woman makes love to another woman that is when the problem starts. Because they don't even understand how that is possible..."

This is similar to the 'moffie' status that is attributed to gay coloured men in the Western Cape in South Africa, who construct themselves as 'feminine' and regard themselves as women (Rabie, 2007). They are constructed as 'passive' receptors of male sexual attention and do not construct themselves as masculine, but rather actively embrace traditional feminine identities and practices. They are accepted into the community in this particular enactment of their gender and sexuality. However, in Guinea, gay men are 'othered' and subordinated in the context of gay masculinities, as they are supposed to entertain and make people laugh. Similarly, Henderson and Shefer (2008) document a narrative of a local isiXhosa-speaking gay man who is accepted for *ulwaluko* (traditional circumcision rites), but is not allowed to attend certain meetings during the ritual. In addition, his fellow initiates 'cover' up their nakedness when he is around. The inference in all three examples is that where 'real' masculinity is expected, it must not involve the 'feminine' and gay man (Connell, 1995). In other words, gay practices are tolerated in certain contexts as long as they do not subvert the gender order in any way – that is, they somehow need to be assumed to be feminine in order to be acceptable in many cultural contexts.

There have been few studies of constructions of masculinity among black men in South Africa, other than the ones mentioned already in this thesis (Henderson & Shefer, 2008; Mclean & Ncgobo, 1994; Rabie, 2007; Rankotha, 2005; Reid & Walker, 2004, Tucker, 2009). There have been even fewer looking specifically at lesbian constructions (Van Zyl & Steyn, 2005; Morgan & Reid, 2003). In the early studies, white gay men tended to 'other' black men as befitting the political leanings of the time. Many white gay men belonged to the National Party and were not politicised. Elder (1995, p. 56) states that "discourses of sexuality in South Africa were central to the support, creation and final collapse of the apartheid state. A well established masculine order in South Africa underpinned the smooth operation of the regime". There were different responses to white and black gay men by the police force, who controlled hegemonic power. In the

early 1960s and 1970s, white gay men were regularly arrested in toilets, in their cars at erotic oases (Henriksson, 1995) for 'indecency' and either fined or jailed. There was a particular focus on 'immoral sex' as it belied the religious beliefs of the times. This was further extended to the military service, where white gay men were exposed to 're-socialisation' through punitive behavioural methods. However on the mines, sex between black men went on as usual. There were no arrests. Elder argues that by tolerating and even at times encouraging homosexual encounters between men within mine compounds and the hostel system more generally, a public discourse emerged that served to contain the threat that a perceived black sexuality and virulence posed. This meant that sex between black men was acceptable because it conformed to the stereotype of black men being over-sexed and immoral. White men were punished more harshly because 'they should know better' because of their 'superior' education and values.

In the newly democratic South Africa, black gay men are still marginalised due to, amongst other things, their geographical location. Elder (2005) and Leap (2005), in two separate studies, have examined how black gay men in Cape Town in the Western Cape have experienced 'othering' in the gay commercial sector. Elder argues that the gay commercial sector is placed in a particular area mainly frequented by white, middle class gay men. The tourist industry has bought into the racist and classist marginalisation of black men by not investing in other areas. Leap's (2005) study concurs that the gay commercial sector 'others' black men. He adds that some black gay men experience 'humiliation and discrimination' when visiting gay bars and clubs. On the other hand, some prefer to be in the bars in Cape Town where they feel they are better treated than in the bars on the Cape Flats, a historically 'coloured' working class area where the high level of violence has been well documented. They say that they have experienced verbal abuse and physical violence in those communities. In Guguletu and elsewhere, black lesbians have been beaten and killed because of their sexual orientation (Tucker, 2009). It is clear that apartheid-driven social locations continue to play a role in the subordinating of gay men and lesbian women within parts of South Africa. These studies are similar to studies of black men in the United States. Messner (1997) explored how African American gay men constructed masculinities and how it influenced sexual behaviours.

One of the findings was that residential immobility and unemployment led to marginalization within their community and impacted on sexual possibilities. White men were also criticised for developing norms of social behaviour that did not 'mesh' well with black gay men.

2.7. Conclusions

In conclusion, this chapter has traced the development of social constructionism in analysing gender identity formation through feminist theories, with a particular focus on post-structural feminism which highlights notions of performativity and discourses, using speech act theory in constructing a gender identity. The body is interrogated as a social construction that leads to materialization. The exploration of queer theory is utilized to reinforce this argument, particularly in relation to identifying regulatory regimes that delineate valued and devalued categories of sexuality, highlighting how 'the closet' reinforces the heterosexual/homosexual binary with a location around class and race. This theory argues that a hierarchy of masculinity determines how men construct within the gendered order. The development of the concept of hegemonic masculinity as put forward by Connell was then interrogated particularly as it related to the 'othering' of gay men as subordinated and marginalized within patriarchal relations. A number of critiques of the concept by Hearn were examined, with particular focus on how it would be appropriate to view male practices as a better understanding of masculinities as this allows a multiplicity of performance. The review than focuses on the emergence of homosexuality through the binary of essentialism and social constructionism, then goes on to show how this led to constructions of a 'liberated' gay identity within Western and South African contexts. The emergence of the gay clone illustrated how heteronormativity could be 'aped' leading to a division between masculine and effeminate gay constructions. Research studies during gay liberation highlighted how heteronormative regulations were utilized to 'spy' on gay men so as to expose their 'deviance', but surprisingly discovered 'passing' heterosexuals engaging in sexual practices with other men. This arguably suggests that gay constructions of masculinity are multi-layered, in that the binary of heterosexual/homosexual is sometimes resisted.

This is illustrated by Butler (1993). Finally, the examples of gay constructions in Africa and South Africa reflect heteronormativity, where masculine men are likely to dominate over feminine-acting men. This also highlights how gay sexual practices do not always hinge around a gay identity, particularly in prisons.

CHAPTER THREE
GAY RELATIONSHIPS: RESISTANT OR HETERONORMATIVE?

3.1. Introduction

Heterosexual relationships are the norm in society and are regarded as playing a central role in "maintaining the gender hierarchy that subordinates women to men" (Cameron and Kullick, 2003, p. 45), whereas gay relationships resist the norm and are regarded as potential challengers to the "sex/gender/sexuality system" (Seidman, 1995). However, how 'resistant' are gay relationships or do they follow similar constructions to the heteronorm? Post-modern literature on heterosexual relationships argues for a discursive examination of these relationships from a queer theory perspective (Stein and Plummer, 1996). The aim is to call norms into question by taking up a subject position that interrogates and challenges them (Tracey, 2007). In her study of heterosexual relationships, Tracey argues that the constructs of sex, love and marriage are central to heteronomativity and could be where 'resistance' is practiced. I would argue that sex, love and 'marriage' are central to gay relationships, which suggests that the binaries of heterosexuality and homosexuality are not as rigid as some essentialist writers (Le Vay, 1993) espouse. Gay marriage has only recently been accepted in South Africa (Civil Unions Act, 2006) so it is only now beginning to become central in gay men's lives. However, there are narratives describing how gay men 'married' before the legislation was promulgated (Reddy, 2009), which suggests that matrimony was sought after by gay men for many years in South Africa (Judge et al, 2008).

The literature on gay relationships will explore how gay men engage in sex that is similar to heteronormative constructions, in that the masculine-acting man is likely to penetrate the more feminine partner with the resultant power dynamics. However, it will be argued that in gay relationships, the 'masculine' partner in some countries and communities are not identified as constructing as gay. Examples of 'resistance' to these constructions will be unpacked, particularly in South Africa. In the section on gay 'love', the question of monogamy and non-monogamy as it relates to intimacy and love in gay relationships will

be analysed in studies primarily from the United States. There is recognition in Australian and South African studies that gay men are less likely to speak about love and this highlights what Butler (1995) suggests is synonymous with gay relationships, namely that they are not affirmed or recognised by regulatory regimes. The final section will explore gay marriage; however, the main critique will focus on relationships prior to gay marriage. This is followed by an examination of the latest literature on the response to civil unions in South Africa and other parts of the world. Further, although 'abuse' and power dynamics are prevalent in both heterosexual (Jewkes et al, 2002) and gay relationships (Cruz & Firestone, 2000), intersecting with sex, love and marriage, there has been little acknowledgment or documentation of this in gay male relationships. Therefore, this chapter will also assess issues of power and violence in gay male relationships through an analysis of the similarities or differences in the literature on heterosexual gender-based violence and gay abuse. The purpose of identifying key components of heterosexual relationships, as constructed in popular discourse, hinges around the research objective which is to probe whether gay relationships are heternormative or whether they resist the heteronorm.

3.2. Sex, love and marriage in heterosexual relationships

A number of feminist studies on heterosexuality highlight the importance of the eroticisation of male/female gender as domination/submission "which serves to legitimate gender power inequality by naturalising and making attractive such roles and subjectivities" (Shefer, 1998, p. 60). Furthermore, there is concern that heterosexuality leads to a reproduction of sexed, gendered and sexualised subjectivities and gender power inequality. Shefer argues that much of the work on heterosexuality constructs power as the inherent preserve of men, and sets up women as inevitably disempowered and as victims of male power. She suggests that if all power is seen as male, it goes against the understanding of the multiple, contextual and fluid nature of power. On the other hand, hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995) attributes most power to men and the 'fluidity' only occurs once the cultural ideal is challenged.

3.2.1. Sex

The literature posits that penetrative sex that includes orgasm (Potts, 2001) is constructed as the prime sexual experience in heterosexual relationships. Potts, who held focus group discussions with male and female New Zealanders concerning heterosexual health, reports that orgasm is viewed as the 'be-all and end-all' of the sexual response cycle. Participants understood sexual excitement and arousal arising principally from penetration of a vagina by a penis, culminating in a mystical merging that takes place primarily between the minds and not the bodies of sexual partners. She adds that the emotional and spiritual aspects of orgasm, rather than the physical sensation were emphasized by the respondents. This was reinforced by the achieving of the 'joining of the souls' that requires literal genital bonding and penetration of heterosex. Potts (2001) concludes that the privileging of penetrative sex tends to exclude other forms of sexual intercourse as a valid constituent of that category. There is little contextualisation within this argument, and it appears to be essentialising heterosex and 'putting it in a neat box'. On the other hand, Tracey (2007) reports that in Mauritius, sexual intercourse is defined in terms of pain. She says that the women in Mauritius allow penetration as long as it does not cause pain. Jackson (1996, p. 35) returns to the concept of male power, critiquing the feminist construction of penile-vaginal penetration as an inevitable enactment of male power over women. She argues that while penetration within a patriarchal society is imbued with symbols of male domination, and is often coercive, to suggest that it carries such a singular meaning is "to treat the physical act as meaningful in itself, as magically embodying male power without any intervening processes". She believes that penetration becomes frozen in time and space, and is an enactment of a fixed unidimensional moment that universally signifies an act of domination. Shefer (1998) is concerned that heterosexuality is regarded as a unitary concept and continues to subscribe to the analysis of male domination and power over women.

According to Lindegger and Durheim (2000), constructions of penetration are central to South African heterosexual masculinity. Drawing on the work of Hollway (1984; 1989), they argue that there are five discourses that construct the male subject position. I will

focus on three of these discourses. The first discourse is the male sex drive discourse which is described as conquest, penetration, domination and the idealised body (Hollway, 1984). This discourse regards sex as natural and unstoppable, executed by an idealised, 'masculine' body that invests men with the power to physically dominate. Penetration of the opposite sex body is essential and associated with control or domination of the natural elements and the female body. This essentialising of sex arguably positions women as having no agency in the sexual act. This inequality is reinforced by the silences of heterosexual experiences (Hollway, 1995, p. 89) that "make it very difficult to theorise or to speak of any desire, let alone a heterosexual desire, based on equality". Tracey (2007) believes that male sex drive discourse emphasizes the significance of 'masculinity' to sexual interactions. In her argument, she continues to suggest that male sexuality is unstoppable and a biological imperative (Lindegger & Durrheim, 2000). Women, on the other hand, are obliged to accomplish an emotional bond and then to take responsibility for maintaining that relationship (Wilbraham, 1996). This refers to the emotional 'work' that women put into relationships and is likely to be mirrored in gay relationships by the feminine-acting man (Cruz & Firestone, 1998).

This last discourse is termed the 'have-hold' discourse. In this discourse, Tracey (2007) says women must labour to ensure her male partner's fidelity and continued commitment, and it is therefore her responsibility to provide her partner with sex. In gay relationships, the 'feminine'[18] or passive-acting man is expected to acquiesce to his partner's demands for sex (Rabie, 2007). In this way, suggests Tracey, women assume the position of object in relation to the male subject position, and are thus expected to subjugate their relationship needs.

Potts (2001) argues that women in Britain and New Zealand seem to be concerned that their partners derive pleasure from the sexual act and that this focus on his pleasure may prevent her from deriving any herself. In the same way, Hollway (1996) is critical of feminism for not developing a language to talk about heterosexual desire, which could

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[18] Throughout this thesis, the terms 'feminine' and 'masculine' are written as such in order to indicate that the concepts are social constructs. Similarly, the terms masculine-acting and feminine-acting should be understood in terms of a social construction representing stereotypical identities taken on by participants.

lead to 'mutual recognition' in heterosexual relationships. This inability to express their sexual wants and needs causes women to suppress their own desires. Potts (2001) adds that the emphasis on orgasm may lead women to fake orgasm, in order to reassure their partners of their masculinity and worth. This 'silence' or denial of own sexual needs links to the continued submissiveness of women in the sexual act.

The permissive discourse outlined by Hollway (1984, 1989) and argued to be evident in South Africa too (Lindegger & Durrheim, 2000), posits that sexual pleasure is the need of both genders and implies that both men and women should pursue sexual gratification as a natural right. Tracey (2007) argues that it is superficially a site of equality between gender positions and questions whether this discourse only serves to make access to sex easier for masculine actors, who require sexual interactions to construct a masculine identity. In gay relationships, equality could also mean two men coming from a masculine 'position'. Tracey questions whether hegemonic men would be looking for emotional closeness and connectedness, suggesting that a relationship with a woman is not integral to a man's gender identity in the same way as it is for a woman (Jackson, 1995). Gay men, who are oppressed, may be drawn together emotionally to counteract the oppression and subordination (Connell, 1995) that they experience within a homophobic society. Permissiveness, on the other hand, may lead to men to seek sex outside their heterosexual relationships (Hollway, 1984). This is a consequence of hegemonic masculinity and the globalized sexual market (Plummer, 2005) that feeds into every fantasy of the male psyche.

Hollway (1984), using a Marxist notion of change, believes that every relation and practice articulates contradiction and is therefore a site for potential change. In a similar vain, Jackson (1996, p. 35) suggests that a feminist critical perspective on heterosexual pleasure is "more subtle and less condemnatory". She articulates that women derive power from male desire, but that these fantasies may be an illusion, which should be viewed in the context of the material male sexual power which men have.

3.2.2. Love

Tracey (2007) states that love is understood as a possession of each partner (Evans, 2003) and that this confers a certain stability to the emotion (Jackson, 2003). She believes that it is not an emotion often questioned and could be viewed in this sense as defined by openness, variety and dispersal. Furthermore, it is accepted without thought and this prevents men and women from critically interrogating their relationships and/or sometimes their partner (Firestone, 1998). Tracey argues that authors have suggested that gender difference is central to constructions of love and that love assumes heteronormative characteristics (Jackson, 2006). This would imply that homosexual couples are less likely to love one another. She believes that this view is due to the constructions of American gay men as promiscuous at the beginning of the HIV/Aids era (Rofes, 1998), also that relationships between lesbian women are understood as primarily a deep friendship or sisterhood, instead of romance (Rothblum, 1994). It is not clear why promiscuity would prevent gay men from loving each other or why lesbian friendships would not include loving relationships. This has been 'endorsed' by the acceptance of more committed gay and lesbian relationships in gay marriage in South Africa (Civil Unions Act, 2006).

In a critique of love, Firestone (1998) argues that it obscures the ways, inherent in relationships, that men dominate women. Furthermore Holland (et al, 1998) report that British youth felt that they could not transgress language appropriate to their gender and that women could not speak of their sexual desires and men could not speak of love. This 'silent' discourse has been highlighted by Willemse (2007) in her research with women in Darfur in the Sudan. She reported that women could not speak about their relationships because of cultural norms. Men not being able to speak about love are central to the discourse that 'cowboys don't cry' and men do not speak about their feelings. As Shefer (1998) argues when discussing men's domination, this discourse is often taken-for-granted.

Research has explored how men and women describe love. Moore (1998) compares descriptions of love as experienced by Chinese students to that of American students. The results suggest that cross-cultural differences in the experience of love between Chinese and American students are attributed to differences in micro-level schemas. Loving one another is attributed to macro-level schemas when a child is successfully attached to the mother, and the gendered aspects of love remain unspoken of because of a consequence of interaction with gender-schemas and/or biological dispositions. In the post-modern era, Internet dating has led to different kinds of love relationships that are fraught with challenges. In many instances, love has been 'announced' without the two people actually meeting each other in the flesh. Cyber-sex and cyber-love is often seen as a 'cover-up' for men who want to engage in dominant heteropatriarchal relationships (Connell, 2005).

3.2.3. Marriage

Jackson (1995) describes marriage as reproducing heteronormative standards in a formal legislated manner and could be perceived as the principle form of heterosexuality. In line with Roman Dutch law, Borneman (1999) says that matrimony is the union between a man and a woman such that the husband has exclusive sexual rights to his wife, thereby ensuring the paternity of his children. Tracey (2007) argues that marriage represents a point at which meanings regarding heterosexual relationships have become fixed.

The literature highlights how marriage can lead to socio-economic advantages for a couple. Insurance policies, medical aids, bank accounts and citizenship are more easily shared by a married couple than for a cohabiting partnership that has no legal contract (Hirschl et al, 2003; Shuit, 2004; Wilkinson & Kritzinger, 2004). Other authors suggest that marriage is associated with better health (Pienta et al, 2000; Wright, 2005), longer life (Pienta et al, 2000), more sexual satisfaction (Rutter & Schwartz, 1998) and more financial wealth and higher earnings than non-contractual partners (Hirschl et al, 2003; Pela, 2007). These findings are arguably from a Western context and do not necessarily reflect marriage in Africa. The heteronormative stereotype, in mainly Western countries,

assigns that men work and women care for the house and children (Noonan et al, 2007). In the United States, men are more likely to be economically active and earning more, because their masculinity is more invested in their employment than in their relationships with their wives (Allan & Crow, 2001). This last argument appears to reside in a feminist perspective on middle-class men in the United States, and it is not clear how working class men are analysed. Tracey (2007) reports that, in South Africa, white men are more likely to be employed than any other men and women, while black men and women are marginalised.

Lower socio-economic position (accorded to women) is likely, according to Tracey (2007), to lead to economic disadvantage in marriage. Studies in the Netherlands (Kalmijn et al, 2007) and United States (Noonan et al, 2007) argue that women experience disadvantage in bargaining for resources within their marriage. These studies state that many wives stay at home to care for children, because their husbands have a greater earning potential (Kalmijn et al, 2007; Noonan et al, 2007). These heteropatriarchal relationships (Hearn, 2004) are likely to lead to men making more decisions and having more influence in the relationship. Tracey believes that women in these social contexts become more economically dependent on marriage and their partners compared to men (Rutter & Schwartz, 1998). In other studies, Dryden (1999) explored division of labour in British heterosexual couples and found that husbands have a body of behaviours and conversational techniques that ensure that their wives remain under their power. A similar study by Kollock and Blumstein (1997) (cited in Rutter and Schwartz, 1998) found that men employ silence, emotional distance and refusal to perform particular domestic work to demonstrate power in their marriage. Heteronormative constructions where the husbands are active, protecting and the breadwinner and the wives are passive and nurturing (Dryden, 1999) are likely to lead to the possibility of abuse in heterosexual relationships (De Sousa, 1992). This stereotyping of relationships is critiqued by Umberson et al (2003) as being dissatisfying for both men and women. Furthermore, such a relationship can lead to domestic violence.

In conclusion, the discourses of sex, love and marriage are central to heterosexual relationships. In their heteronormative constructions, they are likely to lead to 'othering' and disempowering and potential abuse of women where stereotypes are practised.

3.3. Sex, love and marriage in gay relationships

As gay relationships have become more 'visible' in mainly Western countries, the focus of the literature has been primarily on sexual practices in gay relationships. There has been very little written about love and marriage as these were seen as heteronormative 'ideals' (Tracey, 2007). More recently, however, the gaze has turned towards these institutions. The next section focuses on sexual practices in gay relationships.

3.3.1. Sex

The themes of anonymous sex, relationships and emotional tensions regarding sex were explored by Mutchler (2000) in the United States. Using social constructionism and queer theory (Weeks, 1986), he analysed how gay sexuality is socially and culturally produced. Mutchler conducted 30 interviews (15 white and 15 Latino) with gay youth through snowball sampling techniques. The Latino youth included immigrants from Mexico, first and second-generation Mexican Americans, Chicanos, Puerto Rican Americans and Cuban Americans. Mutchler (2000) reports that the white youth explore open relationships in which they engaged in sex with their boyfriends as well as with casual partners. On the other hand, some of the Latino youth stated that they went to public sex environments to hide their sexuality from their families. This is in contrast to other Latino studies (Cantu, 2000), where homophobia within their communities lead to Latino gay men experiencing isolation, presumably because they do not explore beyond their communities.

Cantu (2000) examined how issues of masculinity, sexuality, HIV and culture impact on gay Latino men in Santa Ana, California. His study explored these issues within the dimensions of homophobia, racism and poverty, revealing how these constraints are

resisted by Latino gay men within their social locations. Cantu is critical of how Latino men are 'othered' in publications promoting safe sex, in that they are said to be at risk of contracting HIV. The structural issues that impact on their daily lives in the United States are not taken into consideration. He argues that these men face many challenges in which they try to find a balance between the demands placed on them as men and the factors that constrain their development. He says the challenges that many of these men face are exacerbated by a sense of isolation. Finally, he maintains the social isolation disconnectedness that they experience is influenced by multiple and intersecting dimensions, such as racism from mainstream and gay communities, homophobia outside and within the larger Latino community, limited accessibility (due to physical and social distance as well as financial constraints) to gay community resources, and different legal migration statuses. The findings are similar to Leap's (2005) study in South Africa, which looked at the location of the gay community within the city centre of Cape Town and how this location marginalised working class African and coloured gay men. Their social isolation was increased by racist attitudes of mainly white gay men in bars and clubs. This is likely to impact on the development of cross-cultural gay relationships that are 'equal' in the United States and South Africa.

With respect to black gay men, there are relatively few studies looking at black gay relationships as much of the work has historically been conducted on white gay men and in Northern Hemisphere contexts. Researching in the United States context, Messner (1997) argues that socio-cultural factors influence the development and specific structure of sexual behaviour within black (African-American), homosexual relationships. These factors include social and financial resources, residential immobility and lack of employment opportunities. He suggests that, due to the lack of economic resources, a greater reliance on the black social network and the maintaining of emotional and economic close family ties is predominant. The white gay community (in the United States), while diverse, has developed norms concerning language, social behavior and other demarcations that may not mesh well with certain sub-groups of black gays.

Explorations of sexual roles and sexual practices in the Mexican gay community by Almageur (1997) draw comparison with South African patriarchal culture. Almageur explored black homosexual identity and behavior in the Chicano community. Crucially, he examined how Chicano homosexuals structure their sexual conduct, especially the sexual roles and relationships into which they enter. His aim was to find out whether their relationships were structured along the lines of power and dominance that are firmly rooted in a patriarchal Mexican culture, privileging men over women.

Almageur (1997, p. 477) discovered that, in Mexican culture, same-sex behaviour unfolds in the context of an age-stratified hierarchy that grants privileges to older, more masculine men. In these exchanges, one of the men – typically he who is defined as being more masculine or powerful assumes the active, inserter role while the other man is pressed into the passive, anal-receptor role. None of the active inserter participants in homosexual encounters ever considers himself as "homosexual" or to be "gay". There have been similar findings in other studies in Latin America, South East Asia and the Middle East (Herdt, 1999; Jackson and Sullivan, 1999; Parker, 1999; Prieur, 1998).

In comparing the international studies, this study has arguably begun to examine how binaries of male/female in most gay relationships are similar to those in heterosexual relationships. As already highlighted, research in South Africa similarly illustrates the reproduction of normative heterosexual gender roles in gay relationships, for example, the documentation of same-sex relationships in prison (Niehaus, 2002; Gear and Ngubeni, 2002). In other settings, research among black gay men in KwaZulu-Natal has also focused on how they construct masculinities within a predominantly heteronormative model. Rankotha (2005) interviewed thirty black gay Zulu men, and explored role-playing in bed, qualities they find attractive in other men, behaviour considered acceptable and unacceptable by the community at large and the language or vocabulary used to refer to gay men both within and outside the gay community. Concerning role-playing in bed, more than half (17) of the respondents claimed that they had practised inflexible role-playing, where one partner was the inserter and the other the receptor. Rankotha says that they believed what they did reflected the social practice at large, in

which both a man and a woman played their respective roles, with the man playing the dominant role, while the woman had her 'place' under the man. This suggests that these men adopted stereotypical heteropatriarchal role-playing.

One of the most pertinent findings was that out of thirty gay men interviewed, thirteen of the Zulu men preferred 'flexible' role-playing in bed, where both partners are penetrated. Rankotha (2005 p. 169) says that " they appealed to biological similarities that, as men, they both had to be equally satisfied in bed, and equal satisfaction meant 'fucking and being fucked' ". Furthermore, some partners had girlfriends as well, which is synonymous with men who have sex with men but do not see themselves as gay, highlighting the similarity with other studies (Almageur, 1997; Mclean & Ncgobo, 1994; Tucker, 2009). Against the backdrop of hegemonic masculinity and Zulu traditional beliefs, it is interesting that, even while a minority within sexual practices, there are some men resisting the binarism of the heterosexual model, at least with respect to sexual practices.

With regard to qualities they found attractive in men, Rankotha found that 20 of the men interviewed admired the physical appearances of men with the following qualities: being handsome, well-built, tall and straight-acting, preferably with a big penis, buttocks and lips. This mainly focuses on a 'masculine' gay body and could be linked to the Zulu cultural imperative that men must act like men. The development of hyper-masculine gay men is often connected to 'fighting off' HIV/Aids in Western countries. Signorile (1997 p. 67) argues that "being healthy and disease-free also began to mean having muscles and a strong, sturdy, body". Other qualities considered attractive included intelligence, sociability, understanding, sense of humour and honesty. These qualities reflect a more traditional feminine position in a heteronormative model on relationships that is less focused on the body.

Power dynamics that evolve out of gender stereotyping were also examined by Mclean and Ngcobo (1994) in a study completed in Gauteng, with twelve isiXhosa-speaking gay men on the gold-mines. One factor that emerged that is relevant to this study is that

'passive' gay men (*skesanas*) also have power in their sexual practices with 'active' gay men (*injongas*). Thus, a simple assumption that forms of passivity and activity in the sexual act necessarily reflect clear power difference at other levels of the relationship is challenged. A more recent study by Reid (2005) in the township of Ermelo, in Mpumalanga also identified the power that 'passive' young men had over their active partners. This was due to the fact that they had employment in the hairdressing industry, whereas their sexual partners were unemployed. This finding contradicts the results of most Western studies, which argue that gay men who are more masculine are likely to dominate their partners. On the other hand, studies identified how men with financial means have a higher status and, therefore, control in the relationship than men who are less financially stable. What is evident is that forms of power are far more complex and more fluid than the stereotypic picture of relationships, where assumptions of passivity/activity are translated directly into notions of powerlessness/dominance. The literature not only foregrounds forms of power in passivity but also how sexual practices that reflect traditional male-female performance may not necessarily translate into power differences in other spheres of the relationship.

Another study by Rabie (2007), on how coloured gay men construct their sexuality in a semi-rural community in the Western Cape, suggests limited agency of 'feminine-acting' men. Rabie used mainly snowball sampling to collect data via in-depth unstructured interviews. The findings indicate a highly complex interplay between understandings of gender identity and sexuality. Contrary to the studies above which highlight the importance of hyper-masculinity in the construction of some gay masculinities, in this study the respondents associated the idea of being gay with being feminine and acting 'like a woman'. The more active, traditionally 'male' partner is not viewed as 'gay' and is frequently described as also having heterosexual partnerships. Gay is defined in the coloured community on the Cape Flats as being 'feminine' (Rabie, 2007) and these 'men' are used for sex only and then discarded. In research undertaken by Tucker (2009) on coloured gay men on the Cape Flats, he reports that gang members, particularly the 28s, have sex with men in prisons, identifying them as wives (Steinberg, 2004). They continue to have sex with men when they come out of prison. Similar to the Rabie study, they

don't construct as gay, as they consider themselves as having a heterosexual identity. As part of the same study, Tucker (2009, p. 126) found that isiXhosa-speaking gay men in the Cape townships also seek out sexual relationships with heterosexually-identified men. On the other hand, some Xhosa gay men argued that they did not want to have sex with 'straight' men. They linked this decision to their 'othering' within relationships:

> "…It means that we are tools to be used for someone's sexual satisfaction, and then to be left just like that…Ja, it basically means we are incapable of relationships."

Most of the participants in Rabie's (2007) study were expected to give 'oral sex', even though for all the participants 'anal sex' was a preference. The acknowledgement of the importance of anal sex links to the study by Mclean and Ngcobo (1994), who also found that anal sex was regarded as crucial to a gay relationship on the mines, and that non-anal sex was dismissed as 'not having sex'. Arguably, such a model also draws on the heteronormative model of penetrative sex as constituting 'real sex', which has been illustrated in the literature on heterosexuality.

The difference with the coloured men in Rabie's (2007) study is that the *skesanas* on the mines in Gauteng were paid for sex and were given more 'respect' by the *injongas* because of their 'youth' and 'good looks'. Furthermore, argue Mclean and Ngcobo (1994, p.166), some *skesanas* became *injongas* as they got older. Linda, one of the gay men interviewed, says "Most gay boys are *skesanas* when they are young. Then when they get older…you might change because you are without a relationship and you get no proposals. Then you turn to become an *injonga*. So people change roles when they get older". This serves to flag alternative constructions where 'age' leads to a change of role and to a switch in power dynamics in gay relationships.

3.3.2. Love

This section focuses on 'love' in gay relationships. As already mentioned, there is a paucity of literature on this topic. However, the focus of recent studies on monogamy and non-monogamy have found that in some of the studies, love has been a determinant factor in leading to either construction of monogamous or non-monogamous relationships. These studies highlight that non-monogamous relationships are also likely to be 'love' relationships but that gay men, like heterosexual men, explore sexual practices outside of their relationships. This is not surprising as gay marriage is not available to the majority of gay men. Gay marriage is regarded as a heteronorative construction that has been imposed on gay relationships. The subject will be discussed in the section on gay marriage.

LaSala (2004) suggests that early studies on gay relationships by Blasband and Peplau (1985) and McWhirter and Mattison (1984) that compared monogamous and non-monogamous gay relationships found that some gay men separate sex from love whereas non-monogamous men pursued variety in their sex lives, without interfering with their emotional commitment to their partners. In a recent study, LaSala's (2004) surveyed 121 gay male couples on their relationship within the context of being sexually monogamous and non-monogamous across various states in the United States. One of the main findings is that monogamous agreement couples in which one or both partners engaged in outside sex in the past year were overrepresented among low scores on subscales measuring satisfaction with sex, affection, relationship tension and commitment. He suggests that these men may be struggling with an inability to adequately resolve couple conflicts and maintain intimacy. These findings cannot be generalized as the sample was largely affluent, urban and white couples. In a previous study by Wagner, Remien and Carballo-Dieguez (2000), it was reported that Latino gay men might be more likely to be in monogamous relationships than their African-American and white counterparts. These findings are replicated in the study by Mutchler (2000) later in this section.

In their study of 325 gay African-Americans in a monogamous relationship in the United States, Peplau, Cochran and Mays (1997) focused on correlates of relationship satisfaction. Earlier studies by Peplau and Cochran (1981), amongst others, reported generally high levels of love and satisfaction. In this study, subjective evaluations of being in love and feeling emotionally close were significant correlates and led to greater sexual frequency, higher sexual satisfaction and monogamy. Peplau et al (1997) highlight that interracial relationships were identified and fostered where there was a move into urban gay communities that hold more tolerant attitudes. This is an important finding in relation to this thesis, as interracial relationships are beginning to materialise within South Africa.

Non-monogamy was also highlighted by LaSala (2001) as potentially loving. He analysed three cases studies exploring counselling options for gay male couples, and discovered that infidelity does not necessarily mean the dissolution of the relationship. In one instance, outside sex had added excitement to the relationship, while another signalled a need for more honest communication which led to an agreement to be sexually non-exclusive. He says that findings from a study by Hickson, Davies, Hunt, Weatherburn, McManus and Coxon (1992) suggests that gay men in open partnerships establish rules to prevent extra-dyadic sexual behaviour from interfering with their primary relationship. The option of non-monogamy has been associated with promiscuity within a pathology paradigm of gay relationships, but there is a need to queer (Adam, 2002) gay relationships so that gay intimacy and love may prosper within a homophobic environment.

In his study on sexual desires and behaviours, Mutchler (2000) found that the most dominant sexual script in the young gay men's stories centred on romantic love. He identifies four common variations on the theme of romantic love: 'Waiting for Mr Right', 'Finding Mr Wrong', 'I'm ready for my close-up now' and 'Fringe benefits'. These variations appear to connect with romantic love as a 'feminine' script with use of 'Mr Right' and 'Mr Wrong'. On the other hand, Mario in 'Waiting for Mr Right' wants to be a husband and sees himself as a 'man'. His love 'ideal' is a man with bulging biceps.

These constructions are similar to the findings of Rankotha (2005) in KwaZulu-Natal where Zulu men fantasise about men who are well-built with a big penis, buttocks and lips. This fixation on size arose from the development of the hyper-masculine gay man in the United States (Edwards, 2005). Rafael, in 'Finding Mr Wrong' fell in love with his first boyfriend who then became abusive. This boyfriend had a girlfriend while they were together. This is similar to 'abusive' love in heterosexual relationships (Bewley et al, 1999). The most common version of romantic love is found in 'I'm ready for a close-up now'. It applies to gay men who, after sowing their wild oats, settle down into a loving relationship. Again there are similarities to the heteronormative ideal (Tracey, 2007). One of the participants in this study, Steven, is an example of someone who realises that relationships are about love (Mutchler, 2000, p. 22). For example:

> "It (sex) should be done because two people love each other; it should be done because the emotions come into it. It shouldn't be done because I met you at a bar and you bought me a drink."

Mutchler (2000, p. 34), like Wagner et al (2000), concludes by suggesting that "Latino gay men are more committed to notions of romantic love and to monogamous relationships than the young white gay men in the study". He posits that their Catholic religion and Latin culture would lead them to adhere to these kinds of relationships.

In an Australian narrative study of 80 gay men whose ages range from 22 to 79 years, Robinson (2008, p. 119) reports that only one interviewee said that his relationship was meaningful to him when he expressed love. Jason, aged 35, said:

> "I love the feeling of love. I like being in love even with all the rubbish that comes with it. I am a bit of a love junkie I suppose."

Robinson (2008) identifies four reasons why gay men do not express their love to their partners. Firstly, they take the love that they have for their partner for granted; secondly, men are too bashful to speak openly about love; thirdly, gay men are more comfortable

speaking of companionship and intimacy; and fourthly, companionship and intimacy are what love means to them. The cohort is divided into three age groups, so it is no surprise that Robinson identifies the older cohort as being committed to companionship and intimacy, while the younger group is more likely to be focused on sexual relations. The men who are older than forty expressed their value for the intimacy that exists on a daily basis in their relationships. In particular, they highlighted the importance of laughter and nurturing that comes from that intimacy. The fact that men do not speak openly about love is similarly identified by Holland et al (1998) when discussing heterosexual couples are discussed. However, Holland et al and Robinson differ in that Robinson identifies that gay men may be too *bashful* to speak about love. This is in contrast to the heteronormative argument that men do not want to speak about love because it is not a 'masculine' thing to do (Tracey, 2007).

In studies on Asian American gay men, Han (2000) investigated how Asian gay men claim and define manhood. He discovered that, for many, romantic love was at risk. Han found that the Asian American gay men are disadvantaged because they are not accepted by both the Asian community and the mainstream gay community, who perceive Asian men as effeminate. He suggests that, for Asian American men, developing and shaping masculine identity may be conflicting, confusing and difficult to understand. He argues that Western society sees American Asian gay men as powerless, passive and submissive. This view is linked to their being considered as 'bottoms' (Eng, 1998). Han states they are stereotyped and discriminated against, which means that there is a) limited opportunity for Asian American gay men to meet other gay men, and b) limited and difficult experience with dating and finding romantic partners due to the perception that Asian American gay men are unattractive.

In a study that did not specifically focus on love but on emotional connections of gay men, it is clear that 'love' is considered as part of the equation. Connell (1992) investigated the life histories of eight men recruited from an urban gay community in Sydney, Australia. He found that the narratives revealed multilateral negotiations of emotional relations in the home and, in the sexual market, negotiations of authority

relations and friendships. Relationships in this milieu are usually peer relationships marked by a higher level of reciprocity than those characterising heterosexual relations. The condition for reciprocity includes similar ages of partners, shared class position and shared position in the overall structure of gender. Connell (1992) found that these men firstly wanted to be seen as 'masculine', and then as gay.

There is limited literature on constructions of gay love within South African studies. Lewis and Loots (1995) interviewed two gay men, one coloured and one white, on their long-term relationship and identified negotiations of friendship. However, like Robinson's (2008) study, love is 'silent' and it is as if men do not engage in that emotion. As Butler (1995) argues, gay male attachment is put on to the 'never-never'- never having lost and never having loved. As Hennie[19] explains, their relationship was defined more in terms of overcoming prejudice:

> "He was the first person with whom I could be open and say what I had on my mind without their being an aura of prejudice in the air."

This silence about 'love' in gay relationships in South Africa (different from the silence of men in heteronormative relationships [Holland et al, 1998]) is reflected in Vermeulen's (2008, p. 215) analysis with regard to acceptance within religious denominations. He states that "many same-sex partners are constrained to silence within the church community, despite admirable levels of faithfulness and trust that lie at the heart of their 'different' love". The narrative of love in gay relationships, as primarily told by gay icons like Simon Nkoli (GALA, 2007) and Zackie Achmat (1995), is indicative of the fear that is engendered by homophobia in South African society.

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[19] Hennie is a white Afrikaner born in 1956. He attended school in the then Transkei (Lewis and Loots, 1995).

3.3.3. Marriage

Studies on gay marriage are only beginning to emerge only now, particularly after the Civil Unions Act was promulgated and adopted in 2006 in South Africa. At that time, according to Lind (2008), South Africa was only the fifth country in the world (after Canada, Netherlands, Belgium and Spain) and the first on the African continent to legalize marriage between people of the same sex. Tracey (2007) argues that gay men and lesbian women are not procuring the same social, political and economic benefits as heterosexual couples, even though gay 'marriage' is legally permitted. This is likely due to the resistance to gay marriage in South Africa by religious groups, political parties and other organs of civil society (Reid, 2008). However, Wilkinson and Kritzinger (2004) state that only through legalising marriage is there a possibility of gay couples obtaining equality in benefits. There is clearly a divide between what the legislation implies and its actual implementation. However, this may be rectified as gay couples become more pro-active in recognising their rights and enforcing them in their relationships. The tension between 'recognition' and 'acceptance' of gay rights is another debate.

The argument in the literature on same-sex marriage relates to whether gay marriage is a heteronormative strategy to 'control' gay relationships, or whether it could be an alternative construction of matrimony. Tracey (2007) outlined the disadvantages of marriage within heterosexual relationships, particularly for women. She posits that even though same-sex marriage could alter the institution, it is possible that heteronorms would continue to shape gay marriage as well. Lind (2008) takes the argument further, suggesting that same-sex marriage could alter the way family relationships is regarded and that this, in turn would lead to many diverse kinds of 'relationships'. He believes that 'queer marriage' may be recognised within these different relationships, and that they must be seen to be functioning in different ways from heteronormative marriage. Lind suggests that a key component of these 'queer relationships' is having children. He believes that the focus on the rearing of misplaced children in many countries, which has already led to lesbian women and gay men 'adopting children' in some Western

countries, has contributed to the formalising of same-sex relationships. He suggests this may lead to the 'queering of family law'.

Examples of same-sex marriages in South Africa as outlined in Judge et al (2008) and Reddy (2009), suggest that a queering of the institution of marriage is already occurring. There are instances of 'intersex marriage', 'lesbian marriage', 'Muslim lesbian marriage', 'Jewish lesbian marriage' and 'Buddhist gay marriage'. One gay couple from KwaThema in KwaZulu-Natal was married in an unofficial ceremony in 2002 in a gay-friendly church in Johannesburg, Gauteng. There are examples of other unofficial weddings in studies on the gold mines (Mclean & Ncgobo, 1994). Charles, one of the partners, describes why he got married for the second time. In his explanation, he stresses the importance of gaining acceptance from his family:

> "Why we got married the second time was to make it legal, so we can plan our financial matters, and in case something happens to either one of us....They (his family) have come to terms with it and have accepted it. They do see our relationship as a marriage."

In conclusion, heteronormative constructions are arguably the norm in gay relationships (in both international and South African studies). However, there is resistance to the normative (Hearn, 2004) and a flagging of alternative constructions where 'passive' men have power outside of their sexual practice construction. Some men, in South African mines move between active and passive as they get older. The literature points to more fluid and complex power 'negotiations' in gay relationships. With regard to love and marriage, there are examples of studies where gay men who are monogamous and loving are more likely to be committed in their relationships, whereas non-monogamy does not necessarily lead to an end to emotional connections. Marriage in gay relationships is seen either as a heteronormative construction or, for some gay men, as recognition of their commitment. The consequences of power not being 'shared' or abused in heterosexual and gay relationships is discussed in the next section.

3.4. Abuse in heterosexual and gay relationships

The definitions of abuse are consistently similar in both heterosexual and gay relationships. In a definition of gay abuse, it is argued that there is a "pattern of violence or behaviours where one (partner) seeks to control the thoughts, beliefs, or conduct of their intimate partner or to punish their partner for resisting their control". Abuse can either be physical, emotional, sexual, verbal or economic Lambda Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project, 2003). In a definition on gender-based violence, Motha (2006) maintains that it is any act that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women.

Men are likely to be the perpetrators of violence in both instances. This is linked to heteropatriachal values and beliefs that still dominate in the broader society (Hearn, 2004) where even men who are gay can dominate within their own social order. There 'dominance', must be seen within the context of being marginalised and oppressed in that society (Connell, 1995) There has been an increasing body of work on abuse of women mainly by feminist and critical men studies (Connell, 2005). Gay abuse is a more recent phenomenon that has emerged in the last twenty years with Western countries acknowledging of gay relationships (Cruz & Firestone, 1998). The highlighting of abuse, is not to suggest that gay abuse is equal to heterosexual relationships, but rather to explore whether gay men are 'performing' heteronormatively when undermining their partners, or whether homophobia and other factors within society contributes to 'othering' (Collins, 1998) of their intimate partnerships.

3.4.1. The extent of abuse

Most international studies of abuse worldwide have focused predominantly on the physical and sexual assault of women. Bewley et al (1999, p.3) state that in the United States "an estimated two million women are beaten by their male partners each year". Furthermore, in the United States, Goetting (1999) states that 50 000 women seek protection orders through the courts to stop their male partner from beating them. A more

recent sample of 6 548 adolescents in the United States (aged 12 to 21 years), reveals that 37% of the respondents in sexual relationships experienced some form of verbal or physical violence (Kaestle & Halpern, 2005). Abuse is prevalent in other parts of the world. In a global study, theWorld Health Organisation (2002) reported staggering statistics of women who had been physically abused and who did not report the abuse: in Bangladesh, 68% of a sample of 10 638; in Egypt, 47% of a sample of 7 121; in the United Kingdom, 38% of a sample of 430; and in Nicaragua, 37% of a sample of 8 507 women. In a survey of Japanese women, 77% reported some form of abuse and 11 000 file for divorce each year because of domestic violence. A study of Zambian women cited in a United Nations report showed that 17% believe that violence in the marriage is normal. A random sample in Guatemala found that 50% were physically, emotionally and sexually abused by their partners. Native women from Nepalese villages are sold by their husbands into being trafficked to India for prostitution. In India many women are forcibly sterilized by their men (Bewley et al, 1999).

Similarly, most of the early studies in South Africa have focused on physical and sexual abuse of women, but in the last ten years (with the advent of the South African Domestic Violent Act 116 of 1998), other abuses have been researched (Abrahams et al, 1999; Jewkes et al, 1999; Vetten et al, 2006). These include harassment, intimidation and stalking. Gay and lesbian couples have been added to the definition of intimate relationships, as well as heterosexual single men and women who are dating. Abuse of men by women is also possible, but will not be discussed in this thesis as the focus is on gay relationships.

There is a growing number of studies of abuse among homosexual couples in the United States. In one study, Waldner-Haugrud, Gratch and Magruder (1997, pp. 173-184) explored gender differences in victimisation and perpetration of violence in lesbian and gay relationships. Surveys were completed by 283 participants, including 118 lesbians and 165 gay men. Waldner-Haugrud et al (1997), operating the Conflict Tactics Scale, found that 47% of lesbians and 30% of gay men reported being the target of at least one conflict tactic in a same-sex relationship. Studies of abuse also tend to compare gay and

heterosexual relationships. Burke and Follingstad (1999) studied prevalence or correlates of same-sex domestic violence, comparing these findings of abuse with heterosexual relationships. They discovered that 28% of heterosexual couples, 48% of lesbians and 38% of gay male couples reported physical abuse. Other research has looked at the life situations experienced by gay men who are abused by their partners. In the United States, Merrill (1998, p. 131-132) states that of the 52 gay male participants that were sampled, "62% had been threatened or assaulted with weapons, 85% had suffered significant property or financial loss, and 39% had sometimes or frequently been physically forced to have sex against their will".

3.4.2. Social constructions of masculinity and abuse

More recent critical men's studies have begun to look at how hegemonic masculinity (Hearn, 2004) contributes to abusive intimate relationships. Men's violence to women is viewed as a structure, a process and an outcome of men's societal domination embedded in a structure of patriarchal relations (Hearn, 1998). Bassadien and Hochfield (2005) suggest patriarchal relations, accompanied by patriarchal discourses, are harmful to women because they prevent them from seeking help. Hearn (1998) studied 60 British men who were perpetrators of violence against women and concluded that violence was used to achieve certain ends, to enforce controls, and sometimes to end the relationship. This pattern was also observed by Abrahams et al (1999) in their study of South African men in the Western Cape. Mills (2001) and De Almeida (1996) report similar findings, stating that the important issue is the social construction of men's relations and their reference to violence as an element in their construction of masculinities.

In a study in Sweden that focused on masculinities, Henderson (2003) found that some Middle Eastern immigrant men are subordinated and marginalised (Connell, 1995) when they come to Sweden, and that this leads to more gender-based violence. These men lose their (patriarchal) status in the family as their wives are empowered to find employment and their children discover rights within the Swedish legal system. Furthermore, they lose their status within the broader community, as they are unable to find jobs due to the

hegemonic power of Swedish men and the complicity (Connell, 1995) of Finns, Chileans and other 'more acceptable' immigrants. They are also marginalised because of their Muslim background, their inability to speak the Swedish language, their lack of spatial mobility and because they are segregated from Swedes. On the other hand, not all are abusers. This is because they are younger, more modern, have lived in Sweden for a longer period and are more tolerant of women's rights and egalitarian relationships. This study compares favorably with Darvishpour (2002), who found that some Iranian immigrant men lost status and power when they came to Sweden, and that their wives are empowered to take on more responsibility within the home and want to leave their husbands if they are abused. This is also due to gender equality laws in Sweden. In a counter argument, Kermode and Keil (2003) maintain that all men suffer at the hands of misplaced stereotypes and unrealistic expectations that cast a negative perception on masculinity.

Research on gay abuse has begun to make connections between abuse and social constructions of masculinity. In a study in California in the United States, Cruz (2000) interviewed twenty-five gay men from ages 25 to 43 years. All had been involved in an abusive relationship. The results are similar to those of his previous study (Cruz & Firestone, 1998) in that he found that communication was 'abusive', internalised homophobia was an underlying theme and hyper-masculinity and 'othering' of the 'feminine' gay man was normative.

Cruz (2000) highlights the importance of being a 'man' in gay relationships and how this 'stereotyping' can lead to abuse. He quotes Carl as an example:

> "When people talk in general about men, their ideal is that men run a home. Well, in my relationships, we've both always wanted to run the home you know…and I always have had the financial means to do it, and so I felt like I should run the home."

The author is arguing that, in combination with hyper-masculinity, stereotyping can lead to abuse. It is suggested that men should be able to deal with more varied possibilities of masculinity, and with more fluid constructions of gender. Cruz (2000) is exploring the binaries of masculine and feminine, where they are regarded as being increments along a one-dimensional plane (Sedgwick, 1995). Furthermore, it is suggested that the socialisation of gay men is based on gender and not on sexual orientation. This means that the feminine aspect of gender is disregarded. This links to what Edwards (2005) is arguing when he says that gay liberation meant the 'othering' of the feminine.

In a recent study, Henderson and Shefer (2008) analysed power and abuse in gay relationships through a case study provided by an isiXhosa-speaking gay man in the Western Cape in South Africa. They report two contrasting constructions of masculinity within gay relationships, primarily heteropatriarchal constructions hinging around the traditional active-passive binary, as well as 'silent', alternative constructions that foreground a more flexible approach to gay relationships. This construction may be viewed as resisting the heteronormative and gender binarism that is played out in the first.

In respect of the stereotypical heteropatriarchal constructions of masculinity in gay relationships, the case studies narrative highlights how roles were clearly defined within the binarism of gender – on 'masculine' and 'feminine' lines, and power was concentrated within masculine constructions that revered penetration in sexual practice, and sought to undermine 'feminine men' by assigning them traditional female roles of nurturing and household duties. Violence and abusive tendencies appear to be commensurate with men who construct gay relationships based on stereotypical heteropatriarchy. Influence of class, age and finances intersect powerfully in the construction of power dynamics in these relationships (Hearn, 2004).

In the second construction of masculinities in gay relationships, flexibility in sexual practices and equitable, more fluid relations are foregrounded and sought after, but due to disempowerment and marginalisation, appear to remain dormant in the gay man's

experience. Alternative or flexible constructions in sexual practices were reported by Rankotha (2005) where both Zulu gay partners are prepared to be 'penetrated'. In Sathiparsad's (2006) study, she identified alternative masculinity constructions in young heterosexual Zulu boys in rural schools in KwaZulu-Natal. She argues that these constructions should be used as a strategy to prevent gender-based violence in heterosexual relationships. These alternative constructions challenge traditional norms, increasing the possibility of fluidity and multiplicity in the nature of masculinity (Sathiparsad, 2006) and are likely to be similar in gay relationships.

3.4.3. Other determinants of abuse

In exploring other determinants of abuse, there is a similarity in both heterosexual and gay relationships. The determinants that are discussed here are substance abuse, inter-generational violence, media, structural factors and poor communication. Internalized homophobia is posited as a determinant of gay abusive relationships.

Excessive drinking and drug-taking is used as an explanation for heterosexual abuse, however, Smith (1989) cited in Bewley et al (1999, p. 21) says that "while it is observed that individuals who use drugs or drink excessively come to the attention of medical and legal services, there is no evidence that the drinking or drug use per se causes the violence." Dawes et al (2004) and Gelles (1997), in support of Smith, suggest that use of alcohol and substance abuse is normally not a direct cause of violence, but an amplifier of already conflictual situations. On the other hand, in a study on risk facts for domestic violence in South Africa, Jewkes et al (2002) report that there is a positive correlation between domestic violence and alcohol consumption on the part of the man and/or the woman. In another study, Jewkes and Abrahams (2002) argue that alcohol consumption may increase the risk of women being raped. Drugs and alcohol abuse are mentioned as contributory factors in understanding abuse and power in gay relationships (Cruz & Firestone, 1998; Levine & Rosich, 1996).

Inter-generational violence is another factor suggested as causing domestic violence.

Sathiparsad (2006) argues that the continued exposure to violent role models in families is likely to lead to imitation and acceptance of violent conduct. Research indicates that children in families where violence occurs are placed at risk in future relationships (Pretorius, 2004; Gelles, 1997). The increased family violence, rape, child abuse and other crime in South Africa over the last decade may validate the findings of recent studies on violence. Inter-generational transmission of violence as learned behaviour (Gelles & Cornell, 1990) has been identified as contributing to 'abuse' in gay relationships. Gay relationships may subscribe to heteronormativity which could lead them to model violent parents.

Media influence as a determinant of domestic violence is a contested terrain. The proliferation of violence in films and on television is likely to lead to acceptance of violence as a norm in society. This could have a knock-on effect to relationships. Kimmel (2004), citing the National Television Violence Study, notes that 61% of all shows contained some violence which was perpetuated by a white male who showed no remorse and went unpunished. While the violence was justified, the serious and long-lasting consequences of violence were frequently ignored. Pretorius (2004) reports youth narratives from Port Elizabeth which supports the notion that the media perpetuates the use of violence as a means of resolving relationship conflicts. On the other hand, television programmes in South Africa, called Soul City and Yizo Yizo, have exposed both men and women to alternative 'models' of behaviour. Over the years, the arrival of popular television series (like *Will and Grace*, *Absolutely Fabulous*, *Little Britain*, *Are You Being Served* and many others) have heralded a fascination with gay characters and gay stereotypes. If one analyses this carefully, there is still an absence of what queer theory (Adam, 2003) would call 'real' gay characters that tell the full story. It is a sanitized heterosexist portrayal of gay men and lesbian women. Despite the allowance of these gay characters and gay role models (like Zackie Achmat[20] and Edwin Cameron[21]) into the popular media in South Africa, there is still homophobia within a

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[20] Zackie Achmat was the leader of the Treatment Action Campaign, who campaigned for anti-retrovirals to be made freely available to HIV positive persons in South Africa.
[21] Edwin Cameron was courageous in publicly revealing his HIV status and was recently appointed Judge to the Constitutional Court in South Africa.

heteropatriachal society. Stories of lesbian women murdered in the townships, pictures of gay men 'hanged' in the United States, and other atrocities in countries where gay men and women are not recognized, are 'headlines' across the global world. These images could have a negative impact on gay men as they interact with their intimate partners.

Anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory writers (Dominelli, 1999; Pease, 2003) argue that structural aspects, such as politics and socio-economics in South Africa, are the root causes of gender-based violence in this country. The apartheid policies of the former regime led to extreme poverty and marginalisation of blacks (Ramphele, 2002) with poverty, lack of education and skills, and unemployment hindering many (black) men in poor areas in fulfilling their family responsibilities (Dawes & Donald, 2000). The spread of HIV/Aids has complicated matters further, in that families are fractured and mainly black women are vulnerable as single-mothers, with lack of understanding of their rights. The fact that many black South Africans live below the breadline is exacerbated by economic decline prompted by the Government's neo-liberalist economic policy (Bozalek et al, 2007). Dawes et al (2004) report that the poor are at greater risk for partner violence than other groups. Furthermore, higher numbers of African/black and coloured women report assaults by partners, and more men in the same communities assault their partners than in others (Abrahams et al, 1999; Jewkes et al, 1999, 2002). Financial hardship is one of the areas identified as a possible determinant of gay abuse (Cruz & Firestone, 1998), particularly if there is inequality in terms of finances in the relationship.

Another determinant of gay abuse that is also valid for heterosexual relationships is poor communication in gay partnerships. In some instances, there is no communication as neither partner is able to express his/her feelings. Kaminsky (2007) identifies seven topics that gay men are reluctant to discuss. These include: a) emotional discomfort, b) the sexual relationship, c) having an open relationship, d) insecurity about being loved, e) addiction, f) ambivalence about being in a relationship and g) money. Even though these are crucial areas of 'communicating', they appear to be essentialising (Strong et al, 1999) communication without contextualising the source of the breakdown in communication.

One of the determinants prevalent only in gay relationships is internalised homophobia. Internalized homophobia refers "to the direction of societal negative attitudes towards the self" (Meyer, 1995, p. 40). This homophobia is destructive for gay men, as they start to internalise the negative 'messages' that heterosexual and other gay men are saying about them. Writers argue that some gay men are unaware of these issues, or are unaware of how profoundly they are affected by them (McWirter & Mattison, 1982). The origins of internalised homophobia start at a young age, when gay boys experience bullying at school. The 'innocent' message that is heard is that, within a hegemonic masculine environment, to be different is not acceptable. Many gay boys 'battle' with these messages which are reinforced by family and a heteropatriachal community. The rejection of self has been argued to having damaging consequences, including depression, despair and other self-destructive behaviours (Meyer, 1995). Silverstein and Picano (1992) suggest that internalised homophobia may be reflected in hostility towards a partner in a gay relationship. The low self-esteem and self-image that has been created by internalised homophobia arguably facilitates a need for control, ascription to traditional sex-roles, extreme rigidity and over-socialisation, as well as maintaining a dogma of strength and dominance that is central to gay men's self-concepts as men (Prince & Arias, 1994).

In conclusion, abuse in gay relationships is similar to heterosexual abuse in terms of the kinds of abuses that occur and are experienced. The determinants of gay abuse mirror heteronormative relationships as well, but there are some differences with respect to determination and context that are specific to gay men, such as homophobia (external and internal). The more recent critical men's studies argue that gay men who construct themselves as hypermasculine are likely to 'other' the feminine-acting partner as a consequence of hegemonic masculinity and heteropatriarchal power relations. However they tend to foreground more flexible or alternative constructions that interrogate the binaries of masculinity and femininity.

3.5. Conclusions

In the literature study of heterosexual and gay relationships, sex, love and marriage were identified as key themes within these relationships. Sex in heterosexual relationships is dominated by male power, where penetration leading to orgasm is the norm. Discourses that construct the male subject, the male sex drive discourse and the have-hold discourse are 'othering' of women. In the male sex drive discourse, sex is regarded as natural and unstoppable and executed by an idealised 'masculine' body where women have no agency (Hollway, 1995). This is replicated in the sexual practices of gay men where it is reported that masculine-acting men are dominant over feminine-acting men. Another similarity is that the 'feminine' are discarded after sex in both normative heterosexual and gay relationships. The masculine partner in these gay relationships is not regarded as gay. The have-hold discourse positions women as doing the 'emotional work' in the relationship and as having to ensure their partners' fidelity (Tracey, 2007). On the other hand, the permissive discourse argues for equal rights of men and women with regard to sexual gratification; however, this is arguably an easier way for men to gain access to women. A pertinent theme in the section on love in heterosexual relationships is that men do not speak about love (Holland et al, 1998). This is echoed in the gay study by Robinson (2008) who argues that these men who are too bashful to speak about love prefer to speak about companionship and intimacy. The literature on heterosexual marriage argues that men gain exclusive sexual rights to their partners (Borneman, 1999) and highlight the many benefits that accrue from marriage. However, there is limited analysis of marriage in Africa and, further, on the impact of social class and other social divisions on marriage in poorer countries.

Another theme that emerged in the literature on sex within gay relationships is the negative impact of class, race and homophobia on sexual practices in gay communities outside of the white hegemonic community, in both international and local studies. An important development within the literature on active/passive constructions is that men who are passive in their gay relationships in Mpumalanga, South Africa (Reid, 2005), gained agency in that they are working compared to their masculine-acting partners. A

change of role was also flagged in the study by Mclean and Ncgobo in Gauteng in South Africa, where *skesanas* (passive) become *injongas* (active) as they grow older. These two studies highlight the fluidity of alternative constructions as posited by Plummer (2005).

Monogamous love relationships are more likely to lead to commitment in gay relationships, but non-monogamy does not necessarily mean that there is an argument for dissolution of that relationship. Studies show that gay men who are prepared to have open relationships, where rules and agreements are negotiated, can lead to a queering of heteronormative gay relationships. Gay marriage is arguably a heteronormative construction, but there are examples of different religious gay couples getting married in South Africa. These instances highlight some of the benefits of gay marriage.

There is a significant amount of literature on heterosexual abuse compared to the amount on gay abuse. The focus of the literature is on the extent of heterosexual abuse (mainly physical and sexual), with numerous studies (internationally and locally) showing the severity of gender-based violence. Gay abuse must be understood within the context of homophobia and subordination within hegemonic masculinity.

In the literature on social construction of masculinities and abuse, the theme that emerges is the use of violence by dominant men in their construction of masculinity. In other studies, loss of patriarchal status led to heteronormative men abusing their partners in Sweden. The studies of gay abuse and masculinity identified that hyper-masculine men abuse feminine-acting men who are similar to heteronormative constructions. Alternative constructions are foregrounded in some studies, but are stalled by the inability of passive gay men to locate 'agency' so as to be the active partner. Other determinants such as drug-abuse, inter-generational violence, media, structural aspects (politics and socio-economics) and poor communication contribute to abuse in both heterosexual and gay relationships, whereas internalised homophobia is specific to gay relationships and leads to the loss of self-esteem which can be utilised as a tool of abuse.

The next chapter will focus on the methodology used for the research, exploring the research design, the research process including data collection, data analysis, self-reflexivity and acknowledgement of ethical considerations.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1. Introduction

The primary goal of this chapter is to elaborate on the research methodology of the thesis. The chapter starts by restating the aim and objectives of the research. There is then a description of the design of the research thesis, which includes an exploration of the interpretive paradigm as well as the benefits of using a particular research approach. The focus then moves to the research process and includes the preparation and planning for the research (namely, finding the study area, implementing a pilot study and sampling the population). This is followed by a discussion of the tools used for collecting the data (in-depth interviews).

The chapter then explores the literature and features of in-depth interviewing, after which the participants are introduced, how the interviews were recorded is described and the importance of identifying key informants is examined. This is followed by a discussion of how the data was analysed and includes a focus on the kind of analysis undertaken, before the steps in data analysis are outlined. Reflexivity of the research process and analysis is then elaborated on. The chapter concludes with a presentation of the ethical principles underpinning this study and how these were implemented.

4.2. Research Design

The research design determines how the research questions will be answered and provides the framework for implementing the study. The focus of this research was on narratives of being gay and constructions of gay relationships. The objectives, as outlined in Chapter One, were to analyse how participants experience coming out and being gay in current South African contexts, exploring how they attempt to conform to or resist heteronormative relationships, as well as to examine the extent to which unequal power relations and forms of abuse are present in current practices of gay male relationships. At the beginning of this research, it was imperative to choose the appropriate paradigm for

the research topic. The methodological approach of the study, which drew on feminist and qualitative methodologies, will be discussed in the next section. As my intention was to be inductive, I chose a qualitative approach which uses "various forms of interpretive analysis of meaning-making to arrive at non-generalisable conclusions" (Trafford & Leshem, 2008, p. 98).

4.2.1. Interpretive paradigm

The research process consists of three stages: the researcher approaches the world with a set of ideas or framework (theory, ontology); this framework leads to a specific set of questions (epistemology); the researcher examines these questions in specific ways (methodology, analysis) (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

The processes that I have highlighted above are contained in an interpretive paradigm which is a "basic set of beliefs that guides action" (Guba, 1990, p. 17). The principle is that research is interpretive guided by a set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) highlight four major interpretive paradigms that structure qualitative research. They are a) positivist and post-positivist, b) constructivist-interpretive, c) critical (Marxist, emancipatory), and d) feminist post-structuralism. The interpretive paradigm of this study was the feminist post-structural paradigm outlined in Chapter Two, which emphasises problems with social texts (Butler, 1990; Sedgwick, 1995), their logic and their inability to fully represent the world of lived experience. This lends itself to exploration of how the participants of this study construct their relationships through texts or discourses, and how researchers need to interpret how these constructions are framed within broader frameworks of social meaning and difference - including age, language, race, class and other social divisions and practices. In line with this statement, Schwandt (2000, p. 197) suggests that "we do not construct our interpretations in isolation but against a backdrop of shared understandings, practices, language and so forth".

Feminist post-structuralists, as mentioned earlier regard gender as a social construction (Gardiner, 2000). The critical understanding of social constructionism is called perspectivism in contemporary epistemology (Fay, 1996) and critiques empiricist epistemology that holds that there is some kind of unmediated grasp of the empirical world and, further, that knowledge simply reflects or mirrors what is 'out there' (Schwandt, 2000). Similarly, other authors like Potter (1996, p. 98) critique representational theory of language and knowledges stating that "the world…is constituted on one way or another as people talk it, write it and argue it". He believes that social constructionism is not an ontological doctrine and takes no position on what sorts of things exist and what their status is. This is the 'changeability' that Plummer (2005) alludes to when referring to the construction of multiple gay and lesbian identities. Potter (1996, p. 5) believes that truth is " like money on the international markets that can be treated as a commodity which is worked up, can fluctuate, and can be strengthened and weakened by various procedures of representation". Furthermore, he adds that social construction as a methodology of research is interested in how utterances 'work', and that how they work is a matter of not only of understanding social practices, but also of analysing the rhetorical strategies in play in particular kinds of discourses. In analysing the 'utterances' of gay men in the study, I explored how participants used particular reiterations and sedimentations (Butler, 1993) located within their cultural and social background to engage or to not engage in gay relationships. Power relations are understood as being endemic to these discourses and are also deconstructed within the analysis. Other authors like Denzin (1997) and Gergen (1994) argue that, in social constructionism research, meaning is not fixed on an object but comes about through expression and self-interpretation of language.

What is the value of sharing gay stories that have been socially constructed, particularly if language is embedded in social practices or forms of life (Schwandt, 2000) that are negative or 'othering' of gay men? Radical social constructionists, such as Gergen (1994), argue that social constructionist philosophy leads to an improvement of the human condition. Gergen maintains in particular that 'moral' and allegorical tales are not mere records of human experience that are simply intending to celebrate cultural

differences, but may be methods of empowerment for readers to discover moral truths about themselves.

Howe (1998) suggests that some critical theorists and feminists are committed to the task of interpretation, for purposes of criticising and dismantling unjust and undemocratic educational and social practices and transforming them. Other authors believe that critical emancipation, released from reproductive, hegemonic, authoritarian structures, never quite occurs. Gallagher (1992, p. 272) suggests that "emancipation is an ongoing process within educational experience, rather than the end result of critical reflection".

In contrast, Schwandt (2000) states that postmodernists are deeply suspicious of both the emancipatory and the conversational framing of the interpretive project. He says that postmodernists prefer a kind of spontaneous play or an incessant deciphering that unravels notions of self, identity, objectivity, presence, truth and being. This is aligned with Jagger's (2008, p. 157) argument with regard to Butler's theories on resistance to the heteronormative, where she states that "the possibility of moving beyond binary thinking on sexual difference seems wildly unthinkable, however it is clear that Butler's account of performativity presents a challenge to the duality of sexual difference and the binary system of sex and gender that it sustains".

It is evident, then, that there is significant contestation with regard to the interpretive project and how gay or gender studies fit in, or lead to further unraveling or framing. Importantly, the methodology aims not to only engage critically with the data for the purposes of social transformation, but also to facilitate a respectful appreciation of the agency of participants. It is hoped that the experience of narrating their subjective experiences will be experienced as empowering for the participants.

4.2.2. Qualitative Research

Qualitative methods have been identified by the literature as offering benefits for research in this particular area. The first benefit, according to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), stresses

the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied and the situational constraints that shape enquiry. Patton (2002) and Ulin, Robinson, Tolley and McNeill (2002) highlight how reflexivity is part of the iterative process of interpretation and revision that moves the data collection towards its goal. They suggest that although qualitative researchers may offer different descriptions, the common thread is that interpretation is influenced by the perspectives of experience and personal knowledge. As a gay man, it is important that I acknowledge my experience and knowledge of the gay community, and how this has contributed to my interpretation of the data. I have lived in the Cape Metropole for most of my adult life and have socialized in the gay village. Tucker (2009), in his study on queer visibilities in Cape Town, argues the importance of concentrated periods living amongst and getting to know different groups of queer men. I also became known and this contributed to my understanding of how the community views itself and others. It also helped to deepen my analysis of the data. I also acknowledge, however, that I needed to be particularly reflective as a white gay man interviewing predominantly black participants given South Africa's racialised political history.

Another benefit engaging in qualitative research with gay men is that this kind of research allows for a focus on thick descriptions (Plummer, 2001) from small samples of participants, rather than on data from large samples as is typical of quantitative research. Participants were able to describe, in great detail, their experiences of gay desire and practices and engaging in relationships. Furthermore, although as a qualitative study I was not aiming to be representative, I did, however attempt to include a diversity of social identities in the sample, as demanded by the research questions and rationale for the study. The purpose was to explore patterns of shared understanding among the participants (Ulin et al, 2002) that 'cut across' race, class and other cultural practices.

Henning, Rensburg and Smit (2004) highlight a third benefit of doing qualitative research. They state that qualitative research data is usually in the form of words, images and descriptions, and that language – verbal and non-verbal – has symbolic meaning. As the paradigm for this research was feminist post-structuralism, it allowed for an

interrogation of the iterations and reiterations in discourse and speech acts (Butler, 1993). There are multiple languages in South Africa and, and in this regard, 'gale' is symbolic of gay men's experiences. Examples appear in the data (Olivier, 1994). The 'gale' discourse that was sometimes used by participants is reportedly indigenous to the coloured community (as highlighted in the second chapter), and it was evident in the narratives of those participants (Olivier, 1994).

Finally, qualitative research can also be seen as facilitating empowerment of gay men. Hash and Cramer (2003, p. 57) posit that "seeking out and shedding light on the experiences of those who have gone unnoticed in the traditional literature can promote social justice for oppressed populations". The participants were able to see that the researcher valued their experiences. Through the interviews, one participant was able to identify a past relationship as abusive and this allowed for some resolution for him.

4.3. Research Process

The research process consisted of different phases. These included: identifying the target group; recruiting participants; conducting interviews and analysing the data.

4.3.1. Study area

At the outset I decided to target gay men within the broader Cape Metropole, because I was aware that this geographical area includes a high percentage of openly gay men. On the other hand, I was encouraged to target UWC as a particular site within this broader geographical space, given its history as an HBU[22] . This allowed for recruitment of a larger group of gay black men that research has shown are still feeling marginal in inner city gay spaces (Elder, 2005; Leap, 2005). A challenge was to resist trying to define a gay relationship, as the research aims at finding out how gay men construct their relationships and identities. I did not want to impose a particular understanding of this on participants, since I am also aware, as mentioned earlier, that in many contexts men resist identifying

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[22] Historically black university

themselves as gay while practising same-sex relationships and sexuality. This is a difficult and contested area, because gay men may be struggling to come out and gay relationships are difficult to define, especially in highly homophobic spaces (Ellis, 2009). As highlighted by Tucker (2009), 'the closet' in much contemporary literature has come to represent a barrier that needs to be broken through. On the other hand, there are questions such as should the 'relationship' include sex or should it be a platonic relationship that could lead to sex at some stage? In some instances, gay men may have been 'straight-acting' and could have had sex with women. I attempted not to impose a particular definition on participants, but rather recruited participants through a process of snowball sampling stipulating that participants should have had at least one same-sex relationship. However, what a relationship means and how gay is defined was left to self-identification.

I also decided that it would be useful to identify key informants to be interviewed. These were 'lecturers' in the case of UWC or older gay men that had established themselves at UWC, or are known in the Cape Metropole as being openly gay. As I am also gay, it was important to be careful about choosing men that I did not know too 'intimately', for ethical and validity purposes. The interviews examined how they constructed and experienced their gay relationships, as well as how they had experienced 'life' on the campus and in their home, work and community environment.

4.3.2. Pilot Study

I decided to conduct a pilot study in the Cape Metropole in order to test the interview guide with a small group of participants, before identifying and interviewing the remaining participants. In the early stages of sampling and as part of the pilot study, I interviewed three participants at UWC (Jacques, Suleiman and Grant[23]), and one (Dirk) in the broader Cape Metropole. I particularly chose Jacques as my first participant as he was identified as a key informant that could assist me in finding other participants. Suleiman and Grant were recruited on the advice of Jacques. I recruited Dirk, who lives

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[23] Pseudonyms are used for all participants in order to ensure confidentiality and anonymity

in central Cape Town, through an informal conversation in a gay bar. The pilot study "helps you to decide if the type of interview you are using and the kinds of questions that you are asking provide you with the quality and quantity of information you need to answer your research question" (Tutty, Rothery & Grinnell,1996, p. 62). Despite my apprehension in those first interviews, I was able to get a sense of whether my questions were suitable or not. In the first pilot interview, as explained, I spoke to a key informant and, even though the interview was relatively short (forty-five minutes), it gave me an indication that the questions were pertinent to and valid for this study. The participant responded positively to most of the questions, but at times was reluctant to speak about more challenging aspects, like an experience of abuse in his relationship. In the rest of the interviews for the main study, I then adapted the questions to cover this area. Tutty et al (1996) indicate that pilot interviews give one insight into one's own reactions to the information, in addition to giving one a brief chance to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the recording method. It was clear from these early interviews that the subject matter is sensitive and requires 'preparing of the interviewees', particularly when it came to revealing material on sexual and abusive practices. I realised that 'appropriate' self-disclosure on my part was necessary to reassure these potential participants. As a gay man, it was important to model the kind of disclosure required for my research without this disclosure resulting in unethical practice or bias. Furthermore, in the first interview I lost some data due to my 'clumsiness' with the recording equipment. This episode encouraged me to become better acquainted with the audio-recording, so that further data was not lost.

At this beginning stage of the research, I followed the semi-structured interview schedule quite systematically, as I did not want to omit any question. However, it became apparent that in following this process, my style was too rigid for facilitating more in-depth responses. On the other hand, the second participant was quite 'lucid', allowing me to become less structured with the schedule. I realized that the interview schedule should be used more as a guide, and that questions should 'flow' from the conversation rather than be rigidly 'enforced'. The fact that I was able to reflect on the pilot study in a paper presented at a conference on masculinities at an early stage of my data collection helped

me to consolidate the design of the questions. At the conference, I received critical feedback from eminent academics such as Jeff Hearn and Robert Morrell.

4.3.3. Recruiting interview participants

Once I had completed the pilot study I had to consider how many men across the historical divides of African, coloured, Muslim and white I should interview. Wheeler (2003) rightly questions the use of racial labels when sampling a particular population. In the United States he argues that the use of the terms 'black' or 'African American' could represent a particular identity and possible marginalisation. On the other hand, in those communities, it may signify a sense of pride. He suggests that "allowing the participants to 'self-identify'" can reduce unnecessary conflicts. In South Africa during the apartheid era, these labels were oppressive and marginalising, but since the demise of apartheid others have seen them as empowering on some levels. These labels certainly continue to hold salience in South Africa, especially for understanding particular cultural challenges and for purposes of redress. As I had defined the population as the gay men that were within the Cape Metropole (including UWC), I had to identify a cross-section of race and class so as to get a more diverse sample and so that the research questions could be answered. One of the initial questions was to examine the ways in which differences across class, race, culture, religion, and other forms of social identity and power difference intersect with and impact on constructions of gay male relationships. However, the focus automatically heralded the impact of these social divisions, and there was no need to isolate these aspects in the findings and discussion chapters.

In the proposal, after discussion with my supervisors, I had chosen to do life histories but these eventually materialised as fifteen in-depth interviews. I realized early on that some interviews would not be in-depth 'life histories', as some of the respondents are very young and have limited experience of relationships.

Sampling is cumulative, according to Strauss and Corbin (1998), in that the researcher builds on initial sampling (where many categories are possible) to developing and

saturating particular categories that are relevant to the research question. According to Sullivan and Losberg (2003), sampling is fraught with dilemmas, particularly with populations that are difficult to define or resistant to identification because of potential discrimination, social isolation or other reasons that are relevant to gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) populations. After the pilot study (Tutty et al, 1996), I began to identify the kinds of categories that would be appropriate for this research project. I chose a non-probability sample as some members of the wider population are excluded and others included, according to Babbie and Mouton (2001). Snowball or chain sampling, was utilised to "…add critical individuals to the sample" (Patton, 1990, p.176). Snowball sampling is a slow process as one has to 'wait' for respondents to emerge after making enquiries or speaking to friends or work colleagues about 'possibilities'. In some instances I met participants in bars or clubs and had to be extra cautious about ethics (Martin & Meezan, 2003). There were times when I interviewed three or four participants in a week and then had a gap of six months before interviewing again. This was due to work constraints, as well as the need to transcribe the interviews as soon as possible after they had been conducted. There were natural 'gaps' though where nobody appeared, or where I was set on interviewing a particular person who was not immediately available.

In sum, I achieved a relatively diverse sample of gay men that included six coloured, three Muslim, three African and three white gay men. As the 'coloured' population predominates in the Cape Metropole and UWC, it was expected and acceptable that I would recruit more coloured gay men for the study. Two interviews were with students and one was with a lecturer at UWC; three participants were non-university based although one had previously also studied at UWC. I knew that I would have difficulty finding Muslim gay men as my enquiries in the early stages were unsuccessful. Furthermore, when reading up on the literature (Hendricks, 2008), it was suggested that Muslim gay men are less 'out' to their families and friends and therefore are less likely to want to speak about their relationships. As a white gay man, I thought there would also be trust issues, particularly with this 'group'. Therefore, I spent a considerable amount of time exploring how to get access to some Muslim participants. I made contact with *The Inner Circle*, a gay Muslim organisation in Cape Town and spoke to the staff; but

however, they were unable to assist me with finding interviewees. I was finally able to recruit three Muslim participants through the contacts at bars and gyms. One of the participants regards himself as a Muslim, but is non-practising.

I was able to interview three African men. I was fortunate to have the confidence of an African female student in the Social Work department at UWC who knew two African gay men studying in other departments. An African gay man, who was previously a student studying social work and who 'came out' after he had left the department, also agreed to be interviewed. I wanted to interview some white men as some have had many relationships even though the focus of this research is to 'promote' in particular the stories of marginalised gay men. I interviewed one lecturer and two gay men off campus. One of the men was born in India and has mixed parentage.

The early planning stage at UWC was quite complex. I had to think whether I wanted to advertise on Thetha, the electronic 'notice-board' for students, as well as at other sites. I was concerned that I might get some 'crack-pots' responding or some homophobic reactions from students. I also did not know whether I wanted to 'expose' myself in the Social Work department as a 'gay man'. As there is a need to set boundaries with students, I decided to be 'cagey' rather than upfront. I advertised on Thetha, but received very little response. In the gay village[24] in the Cape Metropole I am quite well known within certain social circles, and that helped to obtain respondents. At the beginning stage I would go up to people in bars, but I realized that this was not a good way of introducing the topic and, further, that it was questionable with respect to the ethics of research. I would observe men that I thought would be appropriate, and then would informally start talking to them with the intention of asking them to be part of the research. Some agreed and I had formal in-depth interviews with them. At other times I asked gay friends to recommend participants. Another site for recruiting respondents is the gym, where I was able to recruit a participant through a staff member. While the process was lengthy and at times frustrating, it also gave me insight into the challenges of finding a diverse sample

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[24] The gay village is regarded as shops, bars, clubs, restaurants and saunas that occupy a geographical space off Somerset Road in Green Point in the Cape Metropole.

of a population who are still marginalised and stigmatized, even in an openly gay urban area of South Africa. This is similar to findings from other studies on gay men (Berger, 1984; Quam & Whitford, 1992; Sullivan & Losberg, 2003).

The following table provides a brief introduction to the fifteen participants interviewed. Demographic questions were asked at the beginning of the interview.

NAME and AREA (Pseudonyms)	AGE	BIRTH PLACE	HOME LANGUAGE	RELIGION	RACE (For Repre-sentivity)
Charles (Cape Met)	46	Bangalore, India	English	Anglican, not really religious	White
Michael (lecturer at UWC)	42	District Six, Woodstock	English and Afrikaans	Undisclosed	Coloured
Harold (Cape Met)	28	Retreat, Cape Town.	Afrikaans and English	No religious beliefs	Coloured
Ashraf (Cape Met)	25	Durban, KwaZulu - Natal	English	Muslim	Indian
Candice (Cape Met)	31	Athlone, Cape Town	Afrikaans and English	Apostolic Faith Mission	Coloured
Andile (UWC)	30	Queenstown	Xhosa	Undisclosed	African
Dirk (Cape Met)	25	Swakopmund, Namibia	Afrikaans	No religious beliefs	White
Grant (UWC)	22	Mitchells Plain	English	Old Apostolic	Coloured
Lebo (UWC)	Undis-closed	Vanderbijlpark	Tswana	Anglican	African
Clinton (UWC)	Undis-closed	Undisclosed	English	Anglican	Coloured
Sipho (UWC)	20	East London	Xhosa	Undisclosed	African
Moegamet (Cape Met)	Undisc losed	Manenberg	Afrikaans	Muslim	Indian
Suleiman (UWC)	23	Cape Town	English	Apostolic Faith Mission	Coloured
Jacques(lecturer at UWC)	45	Messina, Limpopo	Afrikaans	Dutch Reformed Church	White
Justin (Cape Met)	29	Kimberley, Northern Cape	English and Afrikaans	Muslim	Coloured

4.3.4. Data Collection

According to Trafford and Leshem (2008), inductive methods of data collection are influenced by philosophical traditions, each with its respective schools and disciplines of thought. They suggest that they tend to be less structured than deductive methods, more open to modification and adaptable to contextual circumstances. The primary form of data collection was individual in-depth interviews. Below I elaborate below on these processes as well as argue for the value of such a method for the data collection of this particular study.

4.3.4.1. In-depth interviews

The individual in-depth interview is a qualitative technique that was suitable for the study population that I targeted. Narratives about constructions of gay relationships lend themselves to face-to-face interviewing. Johnson (2001, p. 104) suggests that to be effective and useful "in-depth interviews develop and build an intimacy; in this respect they resemble the forms of talking one finds among close friends". Arguably, trust and respect are two vital aspects of in-depth interviews and, if they are not present, the interview is likely to fail or have significant challenges. The levels of trust and respect can determine how much the respondent is prepared to self-disclose to the interviewer. Johnson (2001) states that the interviewer's aim is to develop progressively with the informant the kind of mutual and co-operative self-disclosure associated with the building of intimacy and trust. However, it takes great skill to accomplish this when one is working with asymmetrical communication norms, very dissimilar to those one usually associates with building intimacy and trust, as in actual friendship. Friendships take years to develop, whereas in an interview one has only have a few hours to develop a relationship that will deliver data that has 'depth' and validity. As a gay man, it required 'selective' self-disclosure on my part to prompt the participant to be more open and relaxed in the interview. This disclosure was primarily around finding similarities of experience in the gay village.

This technique of collecting data has been particularly examined since the onset of social constructionism (Mead, 1988). Many authors have explored how to conduct in-depth interviews (Atkinson, 1998; Cicourel, 1964; Denzin, 1989a, 1989b; Douglas, 1985; Fontana & Frey, 1994; Geertz, 1988; Holstein & Gubrium, 1995; Lofland & Lofland, 1984, 1995; Merton, Fisk & Kendall, 1956; Rubin & Rubin, 1995; Spradley, 1979; Wax, 1971). Goffman (1989, p. 125) suggests that the goal of in-depth interviewing is "one of subjecting yourself…and your own social situation, to the set of contingencies that play upon a set of individuals, so that you can physically and ecologically penetrate their circle of response to their social situation, their work situation, or their ethnic situation". I took my understanding of gay men and through semi-structured questions attempted to draw out new or similar ideas on the subject from the 'expert' participants.

A second aim, according to Johnson (2001), is to go beyond the common-sense explanation of experience, and to explore the contextual boundaries of that experience or perception, in order to uncover what is usually hidden from ordinary view or reflection or to penetrate to more reflective understandings of that experience. These are the cultural boundaries or sexual practices that are not normally discussed in a group setting, but could be explored on a one-to-one interview basis. In South Africa, for example, because of our racialised society, an isiXhosa-speaking gay man may find it difficult or impossible to explain how he undergoes cultural rituals to a non isiXhosa-speaking person. However, his story brings new knowledge to researchers studying black gay men, so I had to find a strategy to bridge the racial divide. I reflected on my own knowledge of Xhosa rituals developed over many years of interaction with Xhosa co-workers and students.

Johnson further states that deep understandings reveal how our commonsense assumptions, practices and ways of talking partly constitute our interests and how we understand them. This aligns with feminist post-structuralist theory (Butler, 1993; Sedgwick, 1995) where iterations, reiterations and sedimentations in performativity contribute to an understanding of the binaries of heterosexuality/homosexuality. The recognition of these binaries was evident as the interviews progressed.

Finally, Johnson (2001) says deep understandings allow us to grasp and articulate the multiple views of, perspectives on, and meanings of some activity, event, place or cultural object. I specifically chose gay men from different cultures, religions, ethnic groups, ages and roles in order to develop a more complex 'picture' of the focus area and to make comparisons or connections if possible. Although it was tempting to feel that I had not collected sufficient material – one always tends to want more 'depth' – there had to be a cut off point (saturation point) where I halted the proceedings, as I felt that enough data had been collected to answer the research questions in the study.

My personal gay identification and experience of the gay community facilitated some advantages in undertaking the in-depth interviews. As Denzin (1997) and other authors suggest, lived experience and member status is no longer stigmatised. Riemer (1977) calls it 'opportunistic search', where researchers use their insider knowledge and member status to gain further knowledge. Until the mid-twentieth century, according to LaSala (2003), it was believed that insiders could not perform unbiased research within their own groups and, moreover, that it would interfere with their ability to remain objective. However, it was clear that insider knowledge contributed to the kind of 'in-depth' data that participants shared.

As mentioned earlier on this chapter, I developed an interview schedule which I tested in a pilot study. Tutty et al (1996, p. 62) state that "a written interview schedule is a useful tool even in the most unstructured of interviews and…can serve as a prompt or as a checklist". The semi-structured outline remained the same for the duration of the data collection (see **Appendix B** for the outline). The value of unstructured or semi-structured questioning, in contrast to structured questions, is particularly relevant to in-depth interviewing. Fontana and Frey (2000) suggest that unstructured (or semi-structured) questioning attempts to understand the complex behaviours of members of society without imposing *a priori* categorization which may limit the field of enquiry. Structured questioning, on the other hand, captures precise data that can be coded in order to explain behavior within pre-established categories.

Interviews were conducted either in my office or other rooms at UWC, at participants' homes and workplaces, at my home and at a secluded restaurant – depending on what felt most comfortable and appropriate for participants. As befits a semi-structured outline, most of the interviews did not follow a linear process. After the initial general questions, the focus was on six areas: schooling; the coming out phase; experience of gay life in the Cape Metropole (including UWC); past and present relationships, social divisions that impacted on their relationships and gay marriage and children in relationships. The questions were mostly open-ended (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000) so that the participants could expand in their own time on the particular focus area. At the beginning I would explain the informed consent letter (**Appendix A**) that they would need to sign. Once they had read the letter, two copies were signed. I kept one and they had one. If the conversation during the interview was about sexual practices, I would explain why I was asking that particular question so that the interviewees understood clearly that I was not probing participants to reveal intimate details about themselves for my own gratification. There was 'debriefing' at the end of the interview, where I asked participants how they felt the interview went and how they were feeling personally. I also 'left the door open' if they wanted to see me in future for more debriefing or sharing.

With regard to the recording of the interviews, I audio-recorded all fifteen interviews using a tape-recorder and a digital audio-recorder. All the interviews were transcribed verbatim as soon as possible after the interview, so that 'terms' were fresh and so that information was not lost. I undertook one interview with each participant, except on one occasion where the battery failed and I was forced to come back to continue the interview. Johnson (2001) points to researchers having to learn as much as they can from the interviews. The number of interviews relates to how competent one is as an interviewer. I believe that one improves once the equipment has been 'sorted out' and one has become confident at 'doing an interview' with a particular sample.

Silverman (2000) states that the advantage of doing tape recordings and transcribing them is that they become a public record that is henceforth available to the scientific

community. Furthermore, he adds that they can be replayed and that transcriptions can be improved. The use of Audacity[25] for the last six interviews contributed to better clarity when transcribing.

4.3.4.2. Key informant interviews

The importance of having key informants as part of the cohort cannot be underestimated. I started out by interviewing a key informant at UWC who was able to furnish valuable information on gay rights, apart from discussing his own relationships. Later on, I interviewed another key informant (also at UWC) to obtain more considered opinions on gay relationships from a philosophical perspective, as well as insider knowledge on gay men. This feeds into Fontana and Frey's (1994) argument that an informant is an insider, a member of the group studied, willing to inform the researcher, in order to act as a guide to and translator of cultural mores and, at times, jargon or language. Both informants would be regarded as insiders and 'experts' on gay issues at UWC, as they are openly gay. The classic key informant study within sociology that has relevance for this study, is Whyte's (1955, pp. 279-358) Street Corner Society that examined understandings of key informants, naming them as "the member's test of validity". One key informant at UWC contributed to the validity and trustworthiness of the study by reiterating that he had knowledge of homophobia on the campus. This information was confirmed by two other participants from the campus.

4.3.5. Data analysis

Tutty et al (1996) suggest that the central purpose of data analysis in qualitative studies is to sift, sort and organise the masses of information acquired during data collection in such a way that the themes and interpretation that emerge from the process address the original research problem identified at the beginning. On the other hand, Terreblanche and Kelly (1999) argue that the purpose of interpretive analysis is to provide a thorough description of the characteristics, processes, transactions and contexts of the phenomena

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[25] Audacity is the digital software that is used for transcribing interviews that are recorded on an MP3 player

studied. At the outset, I used content analysis as the basic analysis of the content to identify "words, meanings, pictures, symbols, ideas and themes or any message that can be communicated" (Neuman, 1997, p. 272). Ryan and Bernard (2000) believe that content analysis, unlike schema analysis, assumes the codes of interest have already been discovered and described. Classical content analysis looks for inter-code agreement that measures reliability and validity (Ryan & Bernard, 2000). However, in qualitative research, credibility and dependability have become more applicable (Babbie & Mouton, 2001) as is demonstrated later on this chapter.

The second phase of the analysis of the data was to incorporate a narrative analysis using the listening guide (Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg & Bertsch, 2003). As a prelude to discussing narrative analysis, it is important to examine the literature on the narrative briefly. Many authors from different fields have used narratives in their research. For the purposes of this thesis, it is important to highlight the more recent studies in psychology (Mishler, 2000b), sociology (Bell, 1999, 2000; Holstein & Gubrium, 2000) and social work (Dean, 1995). Narratives have been important in gay and lesbian activism and women's groups. Examples of these are gay rights groups and 'take back the night campaign' that highlights rape and women abuse (Riessman, 2001).

Riessman (1993, p. 3) defines narrative as "talk organised around consequential events". However, Mattingly (2000) argues that the narrative can be 'told' through other mediums such as dance. Two dimensions of narrative, temporality and point of view, have been identified by Ochs and Capps (1996). Temporality is analysed as "two or more temporally conjoined clauses that represent a sequence of temporally ordered events" (Ochs & Capps, 1996, pp. 23-26) whereas point of view is suggested as a "structuring of a plot that turns a sequence of events into a story or a history". There are three functions of narratives. Riessman (2001) states that narratives explore life disruptions, research social movements and political change, and macro-level phenomena. The narratives in this study could be regarded as covering all these aspects, as the participants (that are mostly black) talk of their challenging relationships particularly within the context of

political changes in South Africa. These changes heralded a non-racial democracy, as well as progressive legislation on being gay and having gay relationships.

Mishler (1995) articulates three approaches to narrative analysis: realist, structural and functional approaches. Realist analysis, according to Mishler, focuses on the content of stories, whereas structural analysis explores the rhetorical, aesthetic and linguistic features of text, and functional analysis emphasises the functional characteristics of narratives. Even though the analysis in this study covered all three approaches, the requirements of the theoretical framework (feminist post-structuralism and queer theory) led me to explore the functional characteristics of stories that 'spoke' of power dynamics and interrogated how heteronormativity is followed or resisted by gay men.

The narrative analysis using the listening guide (Gilligan et al, 2003) was an important development in terms of understanding the data more thoroughly. After attending a seminar by Rachelle Chadwick (2007) where she explained how she used the listening guide in analysing women's birth stories in the Western Cape, I saw the potential to implement a similar guide in this study. The kind of significations and reiterations (Butler, 1993) that emerged in her findings appeared to resonate with the focus of the study. The listening guide emerged out of the clinical method of Freud, Breuer and Piaget (Chadwick, 2007), together with the language of music (Gilligan et al, 2003) and so called relational theories (Brown et al, 1986).

There are four steps to the listening guide in narrative analysis, as outlined by Gilligan et al (2003). In the first step, the researcher is expected (a) to listen for the plot and then (b) to reflect upon his/her own responses to the interview, narrator and story. The next step is to create the 'I' poems, which requires that one identify all the 'I's and then link words or phrases so as to create "an associative stream of consciousness…" (Gilligan et al, 2003, p.163). The purpose is to identify the shifts and nuances in the 'spoken word' that are sometimes lost when analyzing a thick description. The identification of resistance within the text of gay participants would be crucial in the analysis. The third step is to listen for the 'contrapuntal voices' in the narrative. (The term derives from musical

terminology [counterpoint]). The aim here is to find 'voices' that are dominant or in tension with each other in the text. The final step is to engage in an analysis of the 'totality' of the first three steps and to link this to the research questions (see **Appendix C** for an example of the narrative analysis).

I started the narrative analysis once all the themes had been identified (see **Step 4, 2nd level coding**). Initially I intended to analyse all 15 participants' narratives using the listening guide, but found that the process was slow and I stopped after six interviews. I experimented with the analysis, in that sometimes I would construct the 'I' poem first and then go to the plot and reflective piece before moving on to the contrapuntal voices. I found the construction of the 'I' poems quite challenging, as initially I tried to identify all the 'I's' and the linking 'verbs' or phrases but later found that the use of 'and', 'and then', 'so', 'because' and other linking words contributed to a flow that was more conducive to poetry and helped to identify significations in the text.

In line with these definitions and descriptions of content and narrative analysis, I have examined the different steps that I went through in analysing the data. These are based on the steps developed by Tutty et al (1996) and Berg (1989) for content analysis.

Step one: Preparing your data in transcript form

As has already been discussed, I gathered the data using a tape-recorder and a digital audio-recorder. I transcribed verbatim each interview myself and read through the transcription many times to begin to establish what themes were present. I used the 'cut-and-paste' method, where I literally identified themes by colour-coding, and then cut out these themes and sorted them into relevant groupings (Tutty et al, 1996). An independent qualitative expert corroborated these themes.

Step two: Establishing a plan for data analysis

When previewing the data, a crucial aspect at this stage was the focus areas in my semi-structured questionnaire. As related earlier, I had identified schooling and higher education, 'coming out', relationships, impact of social divisions, and gay marriage and children as key areas that I wanted to concentrate on, in order to address the research questions. I searched for data that related to schooling and then went on to the next section. If data did not fit into any of the six areas, I coded it under other 'categories'.

Step three: First-level coding

Tutty et al (1996) argue that first-level coding entails identifying meaning units, fitting them into categories and assigning codes to the categories. The process of coding continued after I had colour-coded my data and fitted it into categories. On each file I wrote a name or a 'code' that could lead to a possible theme or sub-theme. Re-reading my 'files', I then began to establish similarities in words or phrases of different participants. I developed rules that could determine whether a category was formed. In most instances, the word or phrase had to be said by three participants but sometimes, if it was within particular binaries, I accepted it being said by two participants. Rules were also applied to participants who were 'different' in their thinking to the majority view. In this instance, there had to be at least two to be included in a category.

Step four: Second-level coding

The process of second-hand coding occurred once I had established the first-level categories and began to evaluate the second-level category. Berg (1989) suggests that one needs at least three independent examples to support each interpretation. In most instances I had three or more examples but there were occasions where I had two, as explained above. The aim was to focus more on the men that had been marginalised, but there were also narratives where gay men spoke about multiple relationships that were intriguing in their construction. In some examples, I included my questions so that I

could demonstrate how I interacted with the participants so as to make them feel comfortable in talking about 'sensitive material'. This contributed to the possibility of my own narrative voice (thoughts, feelings and resonances) being analysed (Gilligan et al, 2003), which is a hallmark of the listening guide. At the beginning of the analysis, I integrated the categories into themes and sub-themes. However, after engaging in a narrative analysis using the listening guide, these themes were enriched and changed by the incorporation of 'I' poems and the contrapuntal voices.

Step 5: Interpreting data and theory building

There were two key steps involved in looking for meaning and relationships in the data (Tutty et al, 1996). Firstly, I had to interpret the data and link it to the theory or empirical studies. Secondly, I had to visit and revisit the theory on feminist post-structuralism and queer theory so as to integrate this lens more thoroughly in my analysis. This process of theory building was consequently time-consuming.

Step 6: Assessing the trustworthiness of results

The final step in data analysis is to establish the credibility and dependability of the study. Dependability refers to whether the results are dependable and that the research process is consistent and carried out according to qualitative principles (Ulin, Robinson, Tolley & McNeill, 2002). I was consistent in the type of questions that I asked (see examples of interviews) and I became less structured in my interviewing style. I interviewed participants over four years and transcribed all the audio-tapes myself, in order to ensure that the process was thorough. Furthermore, listening to the tapes repeatedly enabled me to identify relevant themes and patterns in the data that were crucial in answering the research questions. The rules for coding are clearly set out and the research design and phases have been thoroughly documented. On the other hand, Shefer (1998) argues that there are multiple ways of reading qualitative texts and that others may 'read it' differently.

Credibility focuses on confidence in the truth of the findings, including an accurate understanding of the context (Sathiparsad, 2006). In qualitative analysis, credibility is often questioned because some of the themes that emerge are abstract. However, the narrative analysis (Mishler, 1995), used in conjunction with the four phases of the listening guide, is comprehensive and detailed. This contributed to a deeper sense of credibility. These narratives told stories that were rich in content, but it could be argued that I should have analysed all fifteen using the listening guide. In my analysis, I also 'reflected' on my own extensive experience as a gay man (Plummer, 1995) – - particularly in phase two of the listening guide - to further enhance credibility of the study. LaSala (1998, 2000) states that gay respondents volunteered for his studies, because they believed that as a gay man he could be trusted to portray their lives accurately.

While social constructionist qualitative studies acknowledge the centrality of the researcher and assume the subjective history and location will impact on the entire process of the research, it was also important to ensure that my personal location did not intrude on or lead to exclusions in the data collection or analysis stage. Tutty et al (1996, p. 116) speak about 'threats' to the credibility of qualitative research studies, but others such as Lather (1991) argue that it is the acknowledgement of 'bias' that leads to the credibility of those studies.

4.4. Self-reflexivity

Kendall and Wickham (1999, p. 101) argue that reflexivity means "applying a critical perspective to one's own knowledge claims". The point that is being elucidated is that the researcher must at all times be aware that research is privileged and that when engaging with participants, there must be a recognition of the kinds of 'privileges' that impact on knowledge claims. In my 'location' being a white male lecturer at a university where mainly black, marginalised students are educated creates power dynamics that must be reflected on within the research process. Furthermore, when I am in the gay community, my white male status is 'privileged' above the status of black, male participants because

of residues of the apartheid system. In the next section, I reflect on different aspects of the research process and how using the listening guide (Gilligan et al, 2003) in the narrative analysis allowed me to reflect on my position as a gay man in South Africa.

4.4.1. Reflecting on the research process

When sampling participants in the Cape Metropole, I became aware how my sexual orientation and my own identity as a sexually active gay man was influencing the interviewing process, particularly in that I was afraid that my interest would be interpreted in invasive or sexual ways, or in some ways such that the process might become sexualized through the focus and the process of intimacy that comes with interviewing. There are two theories espoused on how one's sexual orientation can influence the kinds of relationships that, as researcher, one has with the field. Killick (1995) puts a case for abstinence whereas Altork (1995) argues against both repression and concealment. Altork (1995, p. 116) suggests that "instead of blocking out the wealth of sensory input, or relegating it to private field journals, we might consider making room for our sensual responses in our work". In another study, Lang (1996) decided not to observe lesbian women in bars or places where she felt there would be a sexual connotation. She decided that ethically she was bound to be first and foremost a researcher, before being seen as a lesbian. My approach was to position myself as an 'insider' (LaSala, 2003) so as to observe men and 'engage with men' with the purpose of finding participants that would add value to my study. I set clear boundaries around the interviewing process, ensuring that ethical parameters were adhered to.

4.4.2. Reflecting on the narrative analysis using the listening guide

In phase two of the listening guide, researchers are asked to reflect on the plot of the narrative and be contextual in their reflections. Therefore, in this section I reflected on some of the similarities or differences to my own location as a gay man, which is central to understanding how social constructionism (Foucault, 1978) within qualitative research operates. One of the narratives that were particularly poignant was that of Andile. I had

interviewed him earlier and he had spoken about 'abusive relationships' and suggested that he would not experience one again. I was then quite surprised to receive a personal narrative from him detailing an economic abusive relationship with a Nigerian man. My 'privileged' white reaction to the plot in the listening guide was to question why he had not learnt about performances of abusive behaviour in the interview, and then avoided it in his relationship practices. This was judgmental and reflects on how we as researchers, need to be wary of taking on the role of therapist in the research research.

A further insight gained from engaging with the listening guide, is that speech acts can contribute to a misconception about the binaries of masculine/feminine. For example, I was of the opinion that Ashraf was the 'bottom' in his relationship with Deon, as he came across as feminine-acting and has a high-pitched voice. This miscalculation derives from my location as a gay man who has had limited contact with Muslim gay men and, therefore, would not know how a masculine or feminine-acting Muslim gay man would sound. On the other hand, until I had engaged in this research, I had naively believed that feminine-sounding gay men would not be able to perform as a 'top' within sexual practices. This stereotypical positioning may have originated from my own location within gay sexual practices. Similarly, in another interview, I had presumed that Andile was the 'bottom' in his sexual practices because of his soft-spoken voice and reticent manner. This finding is further evidence of how heteronormative power relations can lead to stereotyping of gay sexual practices. Is my understanding of gender stereotypes within gay relationships based on a Western concept of heteronormativity? I became aware of the way in which my own thinking and assumptions are shaped by normative discourses. In this vein, it is known in the 'white gay community' that a powerful presence does not always equate with dominance in relationships, as 'Muscle Mary's' (Plummer, 2005) within the gay milieu sometimes present with high-pitched voices despite presenting with hegemonic physically strong masculine bodies.

Reflecting on other narratives, I could also identify with the homophobia that Sipho experienced when he came to UWC, as I experienced this 'othering' at school and to a limited degree at university. The pain of that experience was revisited, and there was

recognition that my position as a gay researcher has mixed consequences personally, in that I am able to identify with the stories of my participants and this understanding can enhance the analysis but, on the other hand, there is revisiting of humiliating experiences that can reopen old 'wounds'.

This discussion focused on my reflections with regard to the analysis of six narratives using the listening guide. The location of the researcher with regard to privilege and status as compared to the participants was reflected on as well as lessons learnt about stereotyping of binaries and revisiting of painful past experiences.

4.5. Ethics

As a professional social worker, I have been schooled in following a strict Code of Ethics. These are set out by the South African Council of Social Service Professionals (SACSSP) that oversees the running of the profession in South Africa. These ethics are taught at tertiary level and all second-year social work students must sign an oath that commits them to following these ethical principles at all times. As a social worker and lecturer, I have therefore had a thorough grounding in the importance of ethics when practicing social work. Furthermore, for the purposes of this study, the proposal had to pass the Higher Degrees Research Ethics Committee of UWC (in 2004), before I was able to continue with this research.

Key considerations included maintaining confidentiality, anonymity and ensuring informed and willing consent at all stages of the research process. Each respondent received a consent form (see Appendix 2) and had to give informed consent before proceeding with the interview. I also went through each aspect with them verbally so that they were clear what their 'rights' were with regard to this research. This is in line with research protocols and also follows ethics of care (Tronto, 1993) which promotes the view that service providers need to practice competence when dealing with users or subjects.

Informed consent was given by all my participants. This is in contrast to some studies where informed consent has been contested by participants. I suggested to participants that they need not put their 'real' names on the consent form for confidentiality purposes, and two or three used pseudonyms when signing. Wheeler (2003) argues that consent forms should be used to reframe the researcher-subject paradigm, in order to be more inclusive and participatory particularly when the researcher is working with marginalised 'populations'. I used pseudonyms (either chosen by participants or myself) instead of their real names in the transcriptions and in the thesis, to ensure confidentiality and anonymity (Plummer, 2001). Some details about participants' lives were also changed (names of relationship partners) and, in some cases, schools and other details were changed to ensure anonymity.

Another aspect of informed consent that is problematic is that participants do not always understand what the intent of the research is, as explained in the letter or statement (Warren, 2001). In this case, no one appeared to question the research focus. They did have questions on what kind of questions I was going to ask; in some instances I gave them the 'gist' of what I would ask beforehand. This meant that they came more prepared but, on the other hand, they may have given answers that were not spontaneous.

Practising confidentiality with respect to the data was another crucial requirement of the study. I told each one that everything that was discussed in the interview would remain confidential. Further, that at the completion of this research and in order to protect the participants, the audio recordings would be destroyed and the transcriptions kept in a secure locked place in the Social Work Department. With respect to the ethical principle 'no hurt or harm' (Plummer, 2001), I informed participants that if they needed debriefing afterwards then I would be available to see them. I can quote the example of Andile, as highlighted in an earlier section in this chapter, who came back to me six months later and needed counseling over an abusive relationship. I spent time 'supporting' Andile through this difficult period in his life. I urged him to get a protection order against his 'abuser' and spoke to him after he had visited the police station. I recommended that he continue to see a counselor at Triangle Project where he had been counseled previously.

Martin and Meezan (2003) posit that recalling incidents of intimate partner violence could re-traumatize participants and that researchers are ethically obligated to provide them with supportive services.

No payment was offered to participants. However, on a few occasions I did buy some participants food as a gesture of thanks. Some researchers argue that payment can be seen as a means of inducement, which undermines the free choice of a person to participate in research (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000)

Finally, I promised participants that they had the right to withdraw from the research at any time, so as to ensure that their human rights (Morgan & Reid, 2003) would not be compromised. None of the participants withdrew during the four years that the data gathering took place.

4.6. Summary

In this chapter, I outlined the research design which included an exploration of qualitative research within an interpretive paradigm that is feminist and post-structural. The benefits of engaging in qualitative research were unpacked and links made to the research focus. In discussing the research process, I focused particularly on the different phases in the process, including the planning and preparation phase, where the challenge was to find an appropriate sample that would identify gay men that are from predominantly marginalised communities in South Africa. In the next phase, data collection, I explained how it was appropriate to use in-depth interviews as a data collection tool. The in-depth interviews, using a semi-structured interview schedule, managed to illicit a range of narratives that were indicative of gay men's struggles and triumphs in their daily lives.

In the final phase of the research process, I explored how the data was analysed, using content and narrative analysis. It was important to emphasize how the listening guide (Gilligan et al, 2003), using the 'I' poems and the contrapuntal voices, contributed to a deepening of the narrative analysis so that heteronormative and resistant narratives

emerged, some of which were embedded in the text. The reflection on the process gave me an opportunity to unpack some of the dilemmas that emerged with regard to my location as white gay male researcher within the research setting. In the final section on ethical issues, I highlighted the importanance of maintaining confidentiality and not to 'hurt or harm' (Plummer, 2001) participants who have already been oppressed and 'othered' within our society. The ethical principle of informed consent arguably positions the participants as being able to have an influence on how the data is used and managed over the research period. The next chapter is the first of three chapters that reflect the findings and discussion in line with my research objectives. In this chapter, the focus is on narratives of coming out and early and later experiences of being gay in contemporary South African contexts.

CHAPTER FIVE
NARRATIVES OF COMING OUT AND BEING GAY IN CURRENT
SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXTS

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter I will unpack how gay men come out and identify as gay in a South African environment that remains homophobic and heteronormative, despite a Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996) that protects rights of sexual preference and despite progressive legislation that accepts gay marriage (Republic of South Africa, 2006). The narratives that emerge reflect the marginalisation and rejection that gay men experience within a heteronormative society that arguably ensures the exclusivity of heterosexuality and is the suite of cultural, legal and institutional practices which maintain normative assumptions that there are only two genders, that gender reflects biological sex and that sexual attraction between only these 'opposite' genders is natural or acceptable (Kritzinger, 2005). This exclusivity "is embedded in discourses that create rules and regulations for non-conformity to hegemonic norms of heterosexual identity" (Steyn & van Zyl, 2009, p.3).

As a response, some gay men negate the dominance of heteronormativity through 'passing' as heterosexuals or constructing alternative identities that resist or transgress gender norms (Rosenfeld, 2009). The themes that were identified where gay men were marginalised and 'othered' include experiences at home, at school and at University, and also in the context of the broader community. A further set of themes relates to participants' narratives that reveal the strategies they used to resist homophobia and to transgress heteronormativity, in order to realize their desires in the contexts of home, school and university as well as in the gay community. Within the thematic analyis a number of I-poems are drawn on to deepen the analysis.

5.2. Narratives of coming out and practising a gay identity or sexuality

Participants locate their experiences in a range of sites including their home contexts, in school, and later in university contexts, as well as in their broader community context. Their recognition of their sexual orientation has to be viewed within the overriding framework of a heteronormative and homophobic society that accepts the "mundane production of heterosexuality as the normal, natural, taken-for-granted sexuality" (Kritzinger, 2005, p. 477) and its 'othering' of gay men who do not conform to the imperatives of heterosexuality. In the first section, the participants mostly shared how they voluntarily disclosed their sexual orientation to parents and friends, and how this not only undermined the presumption of heterosexuality, but also led to threats of being expelled or rejected by their family. Many of these threats were linked to traditional religious beliefs, which arguably 'enforce' heterosexual norms and values.

5.2.1. Disclosure and passing of gay identity to the family

Most of the gay participants that took part in this study highlighted how they voluntarily disclosed their sexual orientation to their parents and friends. However, some said that they were unable to do this, preferring to attempt to pass as heterosexual (Goffman, 1959). Others had already transgressed gender norms by taking on traits, dress and practices that are considered 'feminine'. Coming out of the 'closet' has been critiqued by Tucker (2009) as a Western concept that can exist only within a particular rigid heterosexual/homosexual binary relationship, where homosexuality is considered abnormal and problematic. He argues that heterosexuality gains authenticity when a homosexual identity is 'disclosed' and 'the closet' reifies a relationship between 'normal' and 'other'. Notwithstanding this critique, for most participants the need to 'come out' was experienced in their societies and their experiences and desires were viewed as 'other' and silenced. In particular, the Muslim participants (Ashraf, Justin and Moegamet) reported that their voluntary disclosure to family and friends led to threats of expulsion and rejection by their families. As Tucker (2009) reports, coming out of 'the closet' can cause harm to those who are rejected by their families and communities. He

believes that there is a need to historicise the experiences of groups in sub-Saharan Africa, as these groups may construct their sexual identity in a different way from those in the West. The parents of these participants appear to come from a particularly strict patriarchal heteronormative discourse, where 'children' must obey their parents and where there is evident an unspoken expectation that their children will conform to heterosexuality "… a normal occurrence derived from biological sex" (Schilt & Westbrook, 2009, p. 443). Ashraf's parents 'lack of understanding', as reflected in his I-poem, is linked to their disappointment that Ashraf is not able to conform to heterosexuality and engage in the privileges that are imbedded in that identity. For example:

> I told them
> I told them over the phone which is much easier
> I mean the reaction was very obviously they don't understand it
> I think a lot of my opinions are very different to them which they don't
> understand completely

Justin was unable to reveal his orientation to his mother, as like Ashraf and Moegamet, he was aware of the strong possibility of rejection by his family (Hendricks, 2008). Even though Justin tries to pass as heterosexual (Goffman, 1959), his aunt reveals that she is aware of his sexual orientation. Her awareness of his being gay reflects the surveillance that Foucault (1978) and Butler (1995) talk about, where heterosexual men and women covertly scrutinise gender performance and appearance, interpreting any sign of gender transgression as evidence of difference and transgression (Dozier, 2005). In this vein, Justin would have to disavow any homosexuality (Butler, 1995) in order to be accepted within a heteronormative society. There is a silent discourse in evident in his I-poem, as his family (his aunt) reports that she is aware of his sexuality but is not allowed to speak about it. In this way, she upholds the heteronormative gender binary (Rosenfeld, 2009). For example:

> I had a guy friend that came over every Friday after work

…she (my mother) is like "you guys look very intimate'

…but

I told her "it's my buddy"

…but my aunty she has got a gay hair-dresser

…and she told me

"I know you are gay"

Moegamet's stated that he voluntarily disclosed to his mother but was already perceived as transgressing gender norms because he was regarded as being 'feminine'. It is within this context that his mother told him that she would disown him unless he 'changed' and rejected his gay identity and practices. His brothers and sisters were also critical of his orientation. The family comes from a Muslim background that is unlikely to support his 'coming out', as it is considered *haraam*[26] in their culture. Such a construction has not been shown to be endemic to Muslim community practices: rather, as Hendricks (2008) argues, there is evidence that homoeroticism has persisted for a long time in Muslim societies, even if not spoken about openly. He adds that Muslim scholars use scriptural texts from the Koran to condemn homosexuality, and that the condemnation is based on patriarchal assumptions and beliefs. Some participants spoke of the cruel rejection they experienced by their families. (This will be discussed later). For example:

Moegamet: My mother would tell me that she would disown me and disinherit me if I didn't come right...my brothers and sisters were unhappy about it...they would basically nag on my head about how wrong it is...

On the other hand, while Suleiman's mother also rejected him when he voluntarily disclosed to her, his father was more accommodating. His mother, who was raised as a Muslim but is now a practicing Christian fundamentalist, had the most difficulty with his 'confession'. As indicated in Suleiman's narrative, at the moment of his mother's rejection, 'he picks up his shoes and goes to his father'. This act is symbolic of letting go of his mother's influence and siding with his father. The gesture is symbolic of agency

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[26] *Haraam* means 'prohibited' in Muslim culture

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and resistance to the heteronormative performance (Butler, 1995). He explored this further when he flaunted (Rosenfeld, 2009) his sexuality as a student at university. For example:

> Suleiman: I was in a club...with my mother...I just decided that I had had enough of trying to hide, you know whenever I wanted to go out I had to hide and lie...and I just said...I went to my mother and I said 'listen here, I like boys'...and she got very angry and she said 'I'll never talk to you again'. And I put on my shoes and went out to my father. My father was cool with it

Clinton reported that his voluntary disclosure of his sexual orientation to his parents led to his father asking an Anglican priest to intervene. The priest used religious texts in his attempt to dissuade Clinton from transgressing heteronormativity. Religion views the story of God's creation as a heterosexual story that is essential to being human (Prager, 1997). Even though Clinton's narrative is traumatic, there are also elements of transgression in his I-Poem ('I am not going to change for no one') articulated in his response to the priest's 'essentialist' (Le Vay, 1993) allegations. This is ironic, as Clinton appears to be essentialising his sexual identity in his response to his father's questions ('I know I was born like that') as demonstrated below:

> …and he asked me "but we cannot accept this, we cannot accept this"
> I said "well, as far as I know I was born like that"
> …no "it can't be that you were born like that, something must have happened that made you like that"
>
> I saw the priest's car pull up
> …and then we sat down, he told me my parents were there…that my parents came to see him and they were very upset
> …Father told me that God created Adam and Eve not Adam and Steve, you know that nonsense
> I said "fine

I respect your view on that

…but nobody will know what

I have gone through before this coming out

I am not going to change for no one"

Harold said that his parents 'always knew' about his sexual orientation arguably because he had already transgressed gender norms by his 'feminine' embodiment (Rosenfeld, 2009). He also said that he received very little support from them because they were about to separate. Their separation led Harold to seek support elsewhere from his friends (Propp, 1968). The rejection of the nuclear family has not necessarily changed the fact that heteronormativity continues to be the dominant narrative within South African society (Tracey, 2007). Harold's alliance with friends may have helped him construct an alternative narrative through his poetry and, eventually, to start to deconstruct what it means to be queer (Roseneil, 2002). For example:

Harold: Coming out was challenging for me...my parents always knew and I kind have accepted that they always knew...

M[27]: Were they supportive?

Harold: Not really...just ignored a lot of things...and at that stage of my life my parents were planning to separate...my main concern was the fact that, like, I don't have a family...my systems of support...so my focus had to change...spend time with my friends rather...

Harold blames his father for not 'being there' to protect him from the abuse he suffered as a child, but he drew on his mother for support. Similar experience has been documented in a range of research that highlights absent fathers (Morrell, 2001; Morrell & Swart, 2005) in South African communities, particularly in those most disadvantaged by the apartheid system, and by related structural issues such as poverty and unemployment (Morrell & Swart, 2005). For example:

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[27] 'M' refers to the interviewer.

Harold: At one point I was very angry with my father...I blamed him for not being there to protect me...you know...

M: From being abused?

Harold: From being molested as a child...

Sipho and Lebo reported that they are 'othered' and humiliated by their family for constructing as 'feminine', as they transgress gender norms within heteronormativity. Sipho was being punished ('grounded') for constructing as feminine, arguably reflects the kind of social sanction and ostracism that Butler (1990) alludes to when discussing gender performance. In his I-Poem, Sipho related how he was confused about the kind of performance he was supposed to engage in when playing with other children, as his parents grappled with his transgression. His parents are gender conformists, arguably from a heteropatriarchal background, that does not accept his 'femininity', as it does not conform to gender norms of how a man should look (Rosenfeld, 2009). Lebo comes from Gauteng and, in his case there is a possibility that his family see him as bewitched or constructing as a hermaphrodite. Simon Nkoli (1995) explains that shortly after coming out to his mother in Soweto, Johannesburg, she decided to take him to a traditional healer or *sangoma* to be 'cured'. De Waal (1995) states that in the townships in the 1980s a male individual with a public declaration of same-sex desire was described as *isitaban*e or its slang derivative *stabane* – words which, he says literally means hermaphrodite or queer. Tucker (2009) argues that the word hermaphrodite names these men as different, placing them into some variant of a heterosexual/homosexual binary that locates them in a category of pre-existing explanation. He adds that these boys who were outwardly effeminate would be raised by their parents as girls, and that this would lead to an understanding that they were different from others in a heteronormative society. For example:

I know that my family was also not kind of welcoming to this thing of me being feminine

I remember being grounded

…they said come back and play with the girls

I know they didn't like it

I was changed around four or five times

…one moment

I am told to play with the girls

…one moment

I am told to play with the boys

…it was really giving me mixed ideas

Lebo, a Tswana-speaking man, also transgresses the dominant gender norms because his body is structured as 'feminine'. He was accepting ('I don't take it personally') of his family's 'correction' of his gender identity despite his insistance that he is a man. The family takes on the 'policing' role (Foucault, 1978) of protecting others from encountering him as female within a heteronormative society. Foucault (1976, 1980) argues that people in positions to claim authority over knowledge (like Lebo's family) are also in the position to use that knowledge to claim power over individuals by defining them, categorising them, and placing meaning on them. This knowledge originates from their understanding of science, religion and culture. Lebo developed his sexual identity from these meanings in an environment that was hostile, abusive and unsupportive. He was labeled and defined by others within a limiting normative discourse of sexual identity (Miceli, 2002). On the one hand, they appear to be 'caring' for his well-being in that they are concerned that he may be 'othered' if he goes to boarding school. On the other hand, they are 'othering' him for constructing an identity that transgresses gender norms (Rosenfeld, 2009). For example:

Lebo:...the people in the house that I lived with my mother and father...they didn't want me to study in a boarding school, so I'll meet people from different cultures, different races that would want to treat me differently...I am more feminine and people will always believe that I am a woman...I will tell you exactly what type of person I am (a man)...but I realize that people when I tell them, they don't believe

what I tell them...and nothing will change their mindset...but I don't take it personally.

Michael described himself as androgynous which he suggests facilitated an acceptance by his immediate family. However, other people raised concerns about his sexuality and he felt neutered ('you don't develop a sexuality'). As Michael was regarded at that stage of his development as either female or male, like Lebo he was characterised as 'other' and rejected because of his categorisation within the gender order (Sedgwick, 1990) and because he is embodied as transgressing gender norms. Sedgwick argues that there is sometimes a disjuncture between homosexuality and masculinity and that gender is centered on androgyny, where a man can have more 'femininity' at the time than 'masculinity'. The need to know whether Michael is 'boy or girl' stems from a requirement for regulatory bodies to categorize a person as normal or abject (Butler, 1993). Even though instability in the hetero/homo binary allows for alternative imaginaries (Jagger, 2008), it is more likely to lead to exclusions and rejection. For example:

> Michael: They loved me fully...even though like I say I was a very girlish boy...but they accepted me...they never questioned that...but what happened...you sort of become neutered...you don't develop a sexuality...I mean I was quite androgynous at that stage...people wanted to know are you a boy or a girl...and I didn't feel I needed to answer that question...I just became extremely defensive...they just took a look at me and said 'you don't fit into anything we know'.

Candice, who is a drag queen[28] in Athlone, was met with anger from his parents when he voluntarily disclosed that he is gay. He argues that they should have known that he was always gay because of his dressing up in women's clothes and wearing make-up. His parent's reaction to his disclosure was arguably a reflection of how interrogation of the

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[28] Drag queen is a term that is used for gay men who perform as 'women' by dressing up in feminine attire and wearing make-up

binaries of heterosexual/homosexual lead to rejection. Fuss (1991) identifies the heterosexual/ homosexual binary as the central organising principle of modern society and culture, which is rejecting of multiple identities (for example, drag queens). Butler (1993) questions whether drag is subversive and suggests that drag is more an example of performativity rather than the paradigm of performativity as it is often regarded. It performs a subversive function "when it reflects the mundane impersonations by which sexually ideal genders are performed and undermines their power by virtue of affecting that exposure" (Butler, 1993, p. 231). In analysing cross-dressing or drag on the Cape Flats, Tucker (2009) reveals that class plays a role in allowing cross-dressers a degree of social safety. He posits that this 'safety' is prevalent because of the close proximity of the living arrangements in disadvantaged areas on the Cape Flats, where lack of privacy is often the norm. In that situation, cross-dressers are openly visible and 'allowed' to function. Queer theory, as argued by Roseneil (2002), believes that the construction and maintenance of heterosexuality through acts of exclusion needs to be interrogated. That Candice was almost 'killed' for his voluntary disclosure is a reflection of his parents' alignment with heteronormativity:

> Candice: My parents knew, everybody knew, but it was a sensitive story to talk about...and I was seventeen when I told them and they were furious, my dad almost killed me.
> M: They never suspected that...
> Candice: But they could see...because all the signs were there. It was long-hair, it was make-up, it was short tops and stuff...and they still didn't want to, it was just 'I was going through a phase'. But at seventeen you can't still go through a phase, not at that age. I was showing those signs from five years. So actually they were in denial.

Earlier in this chapter, some of the participants reflected on how they passed as heterosexual until they came out. Jacques reported receiving a mixed response from his parents when he voluntarily disclosed that he was gay. Before he came out to his parents, he successfully passed as heterosexual. He told his parents that he was involved in an

interracial relationship with another man. His mother was more upset than his father which, according to him, is commensurate with parental 'roles' in Afrikaner culture. He argued that women are usually seen as responsible for their children's actions and are often blamed for mishaps and the like. However, through confronting the 'homophobic' (Meyer, 1995) response, Jacques was able to gain acceptance from his parents. This can be analysed as a narrative of resistance. Jacques was privileged as an academic at the University of the Western Cape (UWC), having the status – due to his academic/professional authority – to stand up for his rights as a gay man as enshrined in the Constitution of South Africa (Morgan & Reid, 2003). He may have passed as a heterosexual and resisted heteronormative sanctions because of his gender conformist behaviour at school and at university, but was able to come out later. This was more acceptable to his parents because of his success in other areas of his life. Similarly, Charles passed as a heterosexual until he came out to his parents. His status is similar to Jacques because of his success in the business arena. It appears that status, material resources, education and 'knowing your rights' may limit social sanction (Butler, 1995) when gender norms are transgressed, but there is still rejection within hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995). For example:

> Jacques: By the time I came out on Boxing Day...I always call it the Boxing Day surprise...my father turned to me and I told him 'I am gay and I have a boyfriend and he is Indian'...and my father told me it is not really a big surprise and my mother was a little bit upset. She cried...in the beginning they pretended that I didn't say it...it was like ignoring...and when I broke up with boyfriend, I told my mother and she started to talk about the weather...but then three years later things started changing...I forced them...I told them about my life. They started to accept it. My mother before she died was very accepting...

> M: So when did you come out to your parents?
> Charles: Much later.

M: Nobody else's business?

Charles: Nobody else's business. And that was fine...but when I split up with Phillip to go to Gavin, I told my parents...

M: What did they say?

Charles: They said they had known for years. It was not an issue. They were very supportive.

Andile in his I-Poem, explained how he was not able to come out to his family while they were still living and is passing as a heterosexual (Goffman, 1959) to them. There is no mention of his father, which is possibly due to his mother being a 'single parent' or his father 'being absent'. In the rural communities of the Eastern Cape, men were historically likely to seek work in the mines and other parts of South Africa, leaving the women to work the fields. The impact of this on family life has been well documented (Bozalek, 2004). In Andile's case, he was raised up by his aunt. He suggests that he used his aunt and sister's focus on education to explain his lack of a girl-friend. The literature highlights how in traditional African culture, gay men struggle to 'come out' due to their 'othering' and marginalization (Cock, 2003; Gevisser & Cameron, 1994; Hoad, 1998). Furthermore, according to Tucker (2009), isiXhosa groups in Cape Town were secretive about their gay construction until the end of Apartheid in the 1990s. Until then, they used the word 'Ivy' to describe themselves. This word was linked to the style of dress or type of music that these men engaged in. The lack of understanding in the community led to homophobic responses to difference. It is in this context that Andile passes as a heterosexual with his family. For example:

I was raised by a single parent
…and unfortunately my mother passed away when
I was eight years old

I was actually staying with my aunt...and with my sister. Then my aunt had to move to Cape Town
…then

I went to stay with my sister...they knew that

I was supposed to have a girl-friend but...they believed that education was the

important thing

I used it as an excuse not to have a girl-friend…

5.2.2. Experiences at school

Participants describe how their realizations of being gay frequently emerged in a school context. Many participants describe how, within the school context, they felt 'afraid', 'secretive' and 'scared' because of the homophobia prevalent in their social context. They feared being 'othered' and rejected by peers and family.

Some of the participants shared narratives about their negative experiences at school which were hinged around the experience of being bullied and 'othered' by their peers. Candice, Michael, Moegamet, Harold, Dirk, Clinton and Suleiman all reported experiencing various levels of bullying at school by peers. Thes use of certain phrases and words – such as 'a girl', 'soft voice' and 'moffie'[29] – represent an unacceptable 'femininity' in a context where hegemonic masculinity means dissociating from all things feminine (Ratele et al, 2007). As gender non-conformists that are blurring the gender binary, these participants are 'othered' because they do not embody gender conformity as their voices are not 'masculine' enough or their appearance is too 'feminine' and this is rejected within heteronormative precepts (Rosenfeld, 2009). For example:

M: Did you get bullied at all?

Candice: Yes, sometimes...boys didn't like it at all...you are a girl so stay away from us.

M: There was nobody in primary school that you liked?

Candice: Not really...they were all bullies...there were always remarks. I experienced it at school.

---

[29] *Moffie* is a derogatory Afrikaans term for a gay man

Moegamet: ...At school it was always this dread of the first day. Stand up and say your name, and my voice is always soft and boys at the back would always perform...

M: Was there an incident?

Dirk: There were quite a few boys at school that told me...that would shout at me and say 'moffie' and you would just ignore them you know...it's like emotional abuse.

M: You never saw yourself as gay?

Michael: No look I had been called names from a young age...a moffie in Manenberg...

M: So you were bullied?

Michael: Yes, I was bullied.

Butler (1990) argues that gender is performed according to socially sanctioned gender and sexual practices, and that men who are attracted to other men will be punished within the gender order through stigmatising and undermining practices like ostracism and name-calling. There is a wide range of evidence for such punitive practices ranging from prejudicial attitudes to hate crimes in the South African context, as illustrated earlier in this thesis (Amnesty International, 2001; Dworkin & Yi, 2003; Hendricks, 2008)

Most of the participants reported experiencing their first gay sexual thoughts and intimate contact while they were at school. Clinton shared how he 'passed' as heterosexual (Goffman, 1959) and therefore struggled with the thought of being sexually intimate with another boy. Foucault (1979) argues that the technologies of bio-power have led to sexuality becoming linked with strict identities that are regarded as fixed and essential (Hirst, 2004) where heterosexuality is viewed as necessary and compulsory (Jackson, 2006). These constructions lead to a justification of heteronormativity and the 'othering' of homosexuality as illegitimate. Even though Clinton was able to pass as heterosexual, he realised that he would have to continue to align with heterosexuality or face sanctions

for stepping out of normative gender roles. He described how this led to feelings of anxiety and emotional distress. These feelings are highlighted in his I-poem below:

> I reacted very drastically towards that…when he made sexual advances to me
> I didn't think it would happen so soon…it rattled my cage a bit because
> I think on an emotional level
> I wasn't quite ready to face sexual intimacy with men at that stage…because of
> my psychological emotional conflicts
> I had within myself
> I couldn't really face it at the time

Harold experienced 'official' anal penetration for the first time at the age of fourteen while at school. Although he was already identified by other boys as transgressing gender norms because of his embodiment, the experience was traumatic for him, as he had been sexually molested at the age of four (see a discussion of these abusive practices in Chapter Seven). He was reticent in talking about it and used an analogy of having his apple 'picked'. Harold could have confused the analogy of having your 'cherry picked', which refers to a woman's virginity being broken. Within a heteronormative culture in which penis-vaginal penetrative sex is viewed as the only legitimate form of sexual practice (Bettcher, 2007, p. 56), gay penetration is regarded as a breach of a natural process. Arguably, Harold was being positioned as 'feminine' where penetration is feminized and he describes in the I-poem how he is made to feel a victim, when being penetrated as a young 'virginal' boy by an older man. For example:

> I had official penetration with a man at the age of fourteen
> I was penetrated
> …and the fact was
> I can't actually speak about the situation
> I can't actually
> …it's a bit too private
> …and

> I was a boy
>
> …and
>
> I was being picked for the first time…like a tree with an apple

His early experiences of sex while at school gave Harold a sense of self that was vulnerable to having sex, particularly in a community where he says abuse of young gay men by older straight-acting men is commonplace. For example:

> I had this almost need for sex
>
> I always understood that
>
> I felt the coloured community is very
>
> …and
>
> I don't know if this is undercover…but it's like the young men are used by whoever in the community wants to use them
>
> …by so-called straight men…it's still happening today

5.2.3. Experiences in tertiary educational institutions

For those respondents who studies further there was the expectation that they would be more comfortable at university than they had been at school. However, Sipho and Lebo report experiencing severe homophobia when they arrive at university primarily because they are seen as 'feminine'. Sipho was under the impression that the tertiary institution where he was studying represented a progressive agenda that would incorporate an acceptance of gay and lesbian students. In studies in England, universities are expected to develop policies for addressing discrimination of gay and lesbian students as the result of the Gender Equality Act of 2006. However, there has been a lack of implementation and enforcement of these policies (Ellis, 2008). Similarly, there is a clause in the South African Constitution where discrimination against any person because of their sexual orientation can lead to legal steps being taken (Republic of South Africa, 1996). Ellis (2008) argues that going to university may be the first time that many young gay and lesbian students are away from their parents for a lengthy period, and it is also the first

time that they can fully explore their identity. Sipho reported that he had experienced homophobia from his parents while at home, and was hoping that UWC would be an affirming experience. It was within this context that Sipho suggested 'he couldn't wait to get to university' as illustrated in his I-Poem:

…it was here that

I experienced what it really means to actually experience negativity

towards homosexuality

I just couldn't wait to get to university

…because

I was going to be with open-minded people

…when

I got here

I got a totally different response from the social environment

As argued in this thesis, gender is performed within discursive frameworks of normative gender roles, social sanctions and mores. Within this framework, transgressions may result in punishments that range from social ostracism to legal control (Butler, 1990; Foucault, 1981). Sipho experienced this 'punishment'on various levels, particularly in the form of name-calling and other homophobic practices. In a recent quantitative study on homophobia in universities that was conducted in England, Ellis (2008) reports that 23, 4% of the 291 LGBT[30] students surveyed indicated that they had been a victim of homophobic discrimination since being at university. The most common form of harassment, according to Ellis, comprised derogatory remarks (77, 9%), direct or indirect verbal harassment (47, 1%) and threats of physical violence (26, 5%). This study also reports that the majority of incidents were perpetuated by students (76, 5%), which is borne out by Sipho's story in his I-Poem:

…each day that

---

[30] Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered

I lived in the first year was about me having to deal with the fact that people don't
like me

…and it got to the point where actually

I knew that it was going to happen

I expected to be called names

I expected to be insulted…and it was quite offensive

…it went to a point where before

I went to class

I would think twice

…should

I really go to class

…do

I really want to meet people

I also considered a lot of things

…when

I get to that class

…do

I go there thirty minutes before everybody comes in

…so that

I don't have to walk in while everybody is sitting and they look at me and they get
the opportunity to say these things

I consider these things

The impact of homophobia on Sipho was profound and he said that he had to seek
counselling. The main perpetrators of homophobia are likely to be heterosexual men who
rigidly align themselves to the binary of heterosexuality/homosexuality (Roseneil, 2002).
Students who are isiXhosa-speaking are "likely to place great emphasis on overt
masculinity as a defining characteristic of manhood and boyhood – with effeminacy
remaining associated with women" (Tucker, 2009, p. 130). These men follow

heteronormative precepts that produce sexual selves and manage relations (Rosenfeld, 2009). It is argued by Rosenfeld that heteronormativity informs social action and interpretation and becomes not only an organising principle but an organised concerted activity. As Sipho discloses in his I-Poem, he could 'walk tall' but once he was confronted with the full force of homophobia he was unable to cope. Roseneil (2002) argues that there is a destabilization of the hetero/homosexual binary at work; however this is not evident at this stage of Sipho's narrative. For example:

> …and it got to a point where
>
> I felt anxious around men and developed a phobia towards men
>
> I really hated men
>
> I see two or three men coming my way
>
> I would walk towards them feeling anxious and walking tall
>
> …and once
>
> I passed
>
> I realized on my God my hands are sweating
>
> …and
>
> I knew something was wrong

Lebo has a similar homophobic experience but unlike Sipho, he tried to downplay the impact of the rejection. He was 'othered' by men in his residence because he was 'seen' to have a 'feminine body' which did not conform to dominant gender norms. According to Butler (1993), heteronormativity or heterosexual hegemony is involved in the crafting of matters sexual and political such that any queer practice is disallowed. Spaces, such as shared bathrooms, are likely to expose any bodies that do not conform to the norm physically. There is immediate regulation by the homophobic men within the setting, and Lebo is forced to withdraw himself. In Ellis's study (2008), she found that many of the specific incidents of homophobic discrimination that were reported occurred in student accommodation. In another study, Cruz and Firestone (1998), report that 'feminine-acting' men are frequently abused by straight-acting men. This abuse is the consequence

of heterormativity being regarded as the norm within society with any transgression of that norm being punished (Butler, 1990). For example:

> Lebo: Guys will treat me like a woman. They won't actually go into a shower with me or something like that because I am a woman to them.
>
> M: Are they scared you are going to look at their penises?
>
> Lebo: No, not really.
>
> M: But you have a male body?
>
> Lebo: They always think that I am female. They hardly think that I am a male. I don't know why.
>
> M: Aren't they discriminating against you?
>
> Lebo:..I don't want to inconvenience anyone...
>
> M: Are you not excluding yourself?
>
> Lebo: Ja, ja, I like excluding myself in a lot of things...It's better to stay away than getting negative feedback.

Some participants engaged in activism as a challenge to the homophobia[31] and heteronormativity they experienced in the tertiary educational setting. For example, Suleiman was part of the student team that tried to build a gay and lesbian organisation. He said that the Muslim students were negative about the possibility of forming a gay group. In some Muslim countries, gay men experience severe persecution or even death (Dworkin & Yi, 2003). In her study on homophobia in England, Ellis (2008) reports that there is resistance to visibility and inclusiveness of the LGBT community. She adds that this lack of inclusiveness has led to LGBT people refraining from being open about their sexual orientation and therefore colluding in their own oppression by passing as heterosexual. This is similar to the kind of rejection experienced by gay men before gay liberation at Stonewall in1969 in the United States (see Edwards, 2005) and suggests that while gay men may have rights within the Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996)

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[31] I used UWC as a site as part of scholarship requirements (as highlighted earlier) and am not suggesting that it is the only university that has a homophobic culture. There is a large body of work internationally and some locally that show how campuses are not welcoming to non-normative sexualities and gender.

there is in fact little acknowledgement by those that subscribe to the binaries of heterosexuality/homosexuality on the campus. For example:

> Suleiman: When I started the gay society I faced huge upheavals. The people were saying how it was wrong and how sick it was.
> M: Who was saying these things, black guys?
> Suleiman: No, Muslim guys. They were totally like...you are sick and you will go to hell...

Harold, a former student, who was 'othered' as a gender transgressive (Rosenfeld, 2009) believes that the challenge for visibility for gay organisations is that the organisations that still function as gay-friendly are, geographically speaking, poorly positioned on the campus. He says the physical location of the Gender Equity Unit and the Performing Arts Department on the fringes of the University serves to marginalise these departments not only geographically, but also symbolically. Leap (2005) and Elder (2005) studied how the gay white community in Cape Town 'othered' black and Coloured gay men by concentrating the gay commercial sector in an area far away from the townships. This leads to social exclusion which is likely to be experienced at UWC as well. In addition, Harold raised the question of the kinds of students that come to UWC, suggesting that they come mostly from working-class backgrounds where certain prejudices and stereotypes prevail. These are men that are from heteropatriarchal backgrounds that have been socialised into believing that they are superior to gay men and women (Connell, 1995). Some black men may also have bought into the discourse that being gay is unAfrican and have notions that gay black men are traitors to their nationality (Hoad, 1998). The literature on black gay men's experiences highlights how severe homophobia and oppression is, particularly in Muslim dominant countries (Judge et al, 2008). Harold narrated these concerns in his I-Poem as follows:

> …and
> I think the games played is too much at UWC
> I think that UWC doesn't have

I mean look where the Gender Unit is…at the fringe of the university…the same

as the Performing Arts Department…so if you look at the geographic

…and

I think the community…UWC is not easy to be gay on

…and

I want

…because

I think at UWC you are dealing with rural and working class 'black'

I am doing inverted commas now

…who have been raised with certain stereotypes and certain prejudices

…they don't respect you and respect is something you see

I see it…people talk

I realize what is happening

Jacques, who is a lecturer at UWC, describes the homophobia in the university residences as quite severe. He believes that students are being harassed in these places and the study by Ellis (2008) substantiates his sentiments. For example:

Jacques: So there is some basic homophobia...I imagine if you are a student it might be more difficult. In fact, I was involved in helping a group of students setting up a gay and lesbian organisation and they all said it was very difficult. It wasn't easy to be open, especially if you are in the residences. You will be terribly harassed there.

5.2.4. Experiences of being gay in diverse communities

Ashraf related in his I-Poem how he grappled with the realisation that he was gay and Muslim. Key to the realization of his sexuality and identification of himself as gay is how it conflicts with his Islamic religious beliefs which espouse that 'homosexuality is a sin' (Hendricks, 2008). Furthermore, the norm that "heterosexuality is natural or right maintains the dominance of heterosexuality and prevents homosexuality from becoming a

form of sexuality that can be taken for granted" (Bryant and Vidal-Ortiz (2007, p. 756), would impact on how Ashraf identified as gay. Even though he is 'aware' that he is gay, he is forced to pass (Goffman, 1959) as a heterosexual selectively associating (Rosenfeld, 2009) with friends and family in order to hide his sexual orientation. In this instance, he would have to avoid young boys that are gender nonconformists so as to protect his position as a passing heterosexual. The silence of his parents' 'not knowing' comes from a heterosexist position that any 'abject other' (Butler, 1993) is culturally unacceptable and divorced from their thinking of the binary of what is normal/abnormal:

> I am Muslim
> I should always have known
> …that
> I was gay
>
> I mean
> I couldn't tell my parents
> I couldn't tell my friends because all my friends were pretty much against it
> I knew how they spoke about the other people in the class
> I mean no-one in my family knew

Other Muslim participants, like Justin explained how it is 'taboo' to be gay within the Islamic faith and described how they must keep their orientation secret. This would arguably necessitate taking on a heterosexual identity as a gender conformist (Rosenfeld, 2009) and passing as a heterosexual with family and friends, so as to survive within that milieu. Justin's conforming would include engaging in the roles and tasks of a gender conforming boy, such as going to mosque and following his Islamic faith as a heterosexual. This he describes in his I-Poem below:

> I am a Muslim
> …so
> I go to mosque

…not as regularly as

I am supposed to

I kept everything a secret

I was Muslim and its taboo being gay for a Muslim

Clinton stated that, on a broader societal level, he was distressed by his perception of homophobia and his knowledge of the rejection of his sexuality and desires. Discourse of difference and 'being wrong' seems to be strongly interwoven with religious discourses that frame participants' experiences of dealing with their growing awareness of their sexual orientation. In his I-Poem, Clinton recounts how being gay is unacceptable because of his family's religious beliefs. Some religious institutions, in the context of heteronormativity, play a regulatory role in controlling sexualities through labelling them as 'sinful' or 'sick' in South Africa (Steyn & van Zyl, 2009). It is argued by these institutions that reproductive marriage is the signifier of successful heteronormativity. In Clinton's case, because of his religious background, he passed as heterosexual and conformed to gender norms at his school, while hiding his true sexual orientation. Difference or *differance*, as in Derrida's (1982) notion of iterability around speech act theory, foregrounds the possibility of change and transformation. As Jagger (2008) explains, the materiality of the body leads to meaning being temporary, which allows Clinton the possibility of identifying with his sexual orientation over time. For example:

I was too small to label it

…but

I knew that this was something different

 …and

I was afraid of going there

...but it was something that filled me with a lot of fear and anxiety…because we were brought up very religious…the message that you got from the church was that it was wrong

Two isiXhosa-speaking participants, Sipho and Andile, went to initiation school. They had different responses to the initiation process that highlighted their challenging transition to adulthood within the context of constructing as gay within a heteropatriarchal rite of passage. Sipho had already been 'othered' for not embodying the right kind of mannerisms and deportment as he grew up as a boy and was openly transgressive, while Andile had passed as a heterosexual boy and decided to undergo a heterosexual practice to maintain a front of gender conformity.

Sipho's construction of himself as a gay man was influenced by his experience of *Ulwaluko*, which is defined as "a complex initiation cluster which marks transition from young to more complex (isiXhosa) adult masculinities" (Gqola, 2007). Sipho constructed his initiation experience as 'special and good', but it was evident that his experiences during the ritual also served to 'other' (Tronto, 1993) and marginalise him on some levels. Given that he was allowed to enter the rite of passage of *Ulwaluko*, traditionally viewed as the route to 'real masculinity' (Gqola, 2007), even though openly gay (that is, generally rejected as not exhibiting 'real masculinity'), this acknowledgment of Sipho as a man (notwithstanding his sexuality) was experienced as empowering for him. However, the impact on Sipho was mixed, since he was not received as fully equal to other men during the rite of passage. However, due to his perceived sexuality, he reported his being viewed as 'special'. He outlines it thus:

> Sipho: And I got special treatment there. You know they knew that I am gay. There were certain things that they shouldn't do. I mean we were all naked there. Okay we would cover ourselves, you know. But they knew when I am around they need to cover more, because when I am not around they don't really care…So they showed that kind of respect that they are covering more. And I know that they covered up because they felt attacked by my presence. But they felt, they understood what it means for me to be around naked men….And they had traditional meetings and they knew they did not have to call me for that,

because I don't relate to things that would be spoken about there…But I did not experience negativity about myself. I was happy. It was great…

The discourse that is used here is again one of silences and the 'unsaid' (Willemse, 2007), as well as of assumptions that are made about masculine constructions of heterosexuality and homosexuality. While Sipho clearly experienced the process as positive, especially in his appreciation of being included in the traditional framework of achieving manhood, there are also aspects of the experience that highlight his marginalisation as a gay man. 'Being naked' and 'needing to cover more' reflects homophobic constructions of gay men as sexually obsessive. This appears to be congruent with the argument by Edwards (2005) that gay men in Western countries are constructed as fixated on 'bodies' and sex without love, and this does appear to be articulated in studies of gay men. Rankotha (2005) in his study on isiZulu-speaking gay men, identified how the physical appearance of other men, being handsome, well-built, preferably with a big penis, was most admired. This is 'unsaid' in Sipho's narrative, but the implication is there – his assumed sexual desires are what the other IsiXhosa-speaking men are concerned about when 'uncovered'.

While Sipho interprets his fellow initiates' response to him in the most tolerant way as evidence of their concern for him, knowing that he is sexually attracted to men, the assumption that gay men can only relate sexually – in other words, the notion of a gay hyper-sexuality – underlies the way in which other participants responded to him. Moreover, the way in which he was excluded from certain of the rituals, 'the traditional meetings' that he did not have to attend (probably on the basis that he is not a 'real' man and does not need all the information that the others receive), further highlights a position of exclusion and isolation and questions about his entry into masculinity.

Andile reported that he engaged in *Ulwaluko* (Gqola, 2007) at the age of nineteen, and did not experience the 'othering' that Sipho experienced because he was with his family. His 'silence' or distress about his sexual desires is similar to the unsaid discourse (Willemse, 2007) that was alluded to earlier. However, unlike Sipho, he is not open about

his orientation. His 'denial' feeds into the marginalisation that he experiences as a man passing as heterosexual within a heterosexual rite of passage. He expresses it as follows:

> Andile: We were only family...there was my brother and my cousins there. There were no outsiders.
>
> M: So you must have been taught to be a straight man?
>
> Andile: Ja, definitely. Honestly, I didn't think of anything. I keep on telling myself that whatever they are saying I might do some things from their teachings. But about marriage or something like that, that won't be possible.

5.3. Narratives of resistance and transgression

Also evident in participants' narratives are resistant and gender transgressive narratives that contest the dominance of heteronormativity and interrogate the binaries of heterosexuality/homosexuality in a queer and positive way. Butler (1990, p. 40) postulates that "it is only within the practices of repetitive signifying that a subversion of identity becomes possible". She states that power is not something that is simply external to the subject; it is something that works on and through subjects in a process of reiteration. Furthermore, reiterations are not mechanical, because the reiteration of power not only temporalizes the conditions of subordination but also renders them active and productive. Resistance in constructing a gay identity is built on reiteration of power, where the subject defies heteronorms that are oppressing him/her. Transgression within queer theory (Adam, 2002) built on gay liberation (Edwards, 2005) in the 1990s to question how the binaries of homosexuality and heterosexuality came into being. It aimed "to delineate the regulatory regimes that sort sexualities and subjectivities into valued and devalued categories" (Adam, 2002, p. 19). Furthermore, it is argued that queer theory critiques heterosexual masculinity as exploiting and denying its homoerotic impulse (Simpson, 1994). The I-poems of Ashraf, Clinton, Harold, Sipho, Justin and Andile are unpacked together with the narratives of the other participants.

5.3.1. 'I want to live': Subversive stories of coming out

Once he had disclosed his orientation, Ashraf came to the momentous realisation that it was acceptable for him to be gender nonconforming and consequently, to stop passing as a heterosexual (Goffman, 1959). Ashraf believed that he had the strength to cope with the ramifications of being gay as outlined in his I-Poem below:

> I can live this
> I can live now
> I want to live
> …even though
> I said at some point
> I will come out
> I think what gave me confidence is when
> I found
> I was
> I was gay
> I think that gave me confidence

Clinton, on the other hand, found a galvanising narrative to come out to his family. In addition, he found that this led to his empowerment and agency. The recognition by Clinton that he performs as a gender transgressive allowed him to construct a resistance narrative, particularly to take on his family and their religious beliefs. There are various assumptions within Western religious debates about homosexuality where anti-gay religious (and essentialist) thinkers believe that homosexuality is unnatural while pro-gay thinkers argue that it is a moral choice (Moon, 2002). Queer scholars such as Moon argue that God may have chosen gay men to challenge the binary of man/woman marriage, and that sex between people of the same sex may be good. Clinton made a choice (as he describes in his I-Poem) to be 'himself'. In other words, he essentialises his sexual orientation and found the agency to come out to his family, as illustrated below:

I said to myself, no…this is enough…enough is enough

…even if my parents throw me out

I will have to go and squat in one of the townships

I would go and stay there

I know

I can be myself

…and

I am not going to live a closeted life anymore

I decided

I was going to write my mother a letter

I started with her first because

I feel more comfortable with her

I wrote her a letter and in the letter

I just gushed

I just poured everything out

I said "okay fine'

I am on this roll now

I am going to exploit it

…and

I am going to get my father

I said to him what the scenario was and how I feel, all those kinds of things and

My father didn't look bowled over at all

…my father said "if that is how you feel, there is nothing we can do about it"

When Clinton's father later told him that he could not practice his sexual orientation in his house, he (Clinton) responded emphatically as demonstrated in his I-Poem. Clinton found resistance to confront the hierarchical power relations within his family, as he recognised that he had been 'othered' for not conforming to gender norms. He was

beginning to challenge the hetero/homosexual binary and to recognise that non-normative sexualities are acceptable (Roseneil, 2002). For example:

> I said
> "I do have a problem because now you are discriminating against me, because all
> my brothers and sisters can bring their girl-friends and boy-friends, and
> I don't see why
> I should be treated differently…because
> I am gay"

Clinton reported that his parents came to be more accepting of his sexual orientation. However, it is more likely that their change was driven by the fact that he proved himself to be 'stable' and not an 'embarrassment'. It happens that gay men have to prove themselves in a variety of areas in order to be valued, since their gay identity is seen as an 'embarrassment' in a heteronormative society. His success should also be contextualised within the changes in gay rights (Republic of South Africa, 1996) which have allowed gay men to participate within the economy, with less fear of being discriminated. Clinton's ability to placate his family's concerns about him and reassure them that he is reliable and stable, is arguably a resistant narrative leading to their recognition of his self-worth. For example:

> M: How did your mom feel about you now?
> Clinton:...A sixty degree turnaround...I think at the end of the day they felt
> nervous about me being a gay person and making it out there but I always said to
> my mom..."my family will never have to be embarrassed about me as a gay
> person"...and I think at the end of the day I have proven that…

After coming out, and during a difficult period in his life when his parents divorced, Harold started to be subversive in his writing of poetry. As his family comes from a poor community on the Cape Flats, Harold was forced to look outside of heteronormative networks to find solace, and to begin to fashion an alternative career in performance

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poetry. The use of the words 'I was growing through changes' in his I-Poem suggests that Harold was beginning to challenge the binaries of hetero/homosexuality as he discovered his true self. For example:

> I think I was going through too much
>
> I didn't think about it
>
> I was growing through changes as a person
>
> I was growing
>
> I started writing (poetry)…and reading books on Zen

5.3.2. Attraction and popularity at school

A number of participants shared how from a young age they started to feel attracted to boys at school, while others spoke about being popular and described how this helped them to resist gender norms.

Some participants followed the heteronormative practice of initially being attracted to girls, but then performed a resistant narrative which described their attraction to boys, thus transgressing heteronormative boundaries. While not representative given the small numbers of participants, it is interesting to note that generally the more 'feminine' acting men in the study (viz. Candice, Sipho, Harold, Moegamet, Michael, Dirk, Lebo and Suleiman) signified their attraction to boys first, whereas the 'masculine-acting' men (Charles, Jacques, Ashraf, Clinton and Justin) signified an attraction to girls initially.

Both Ashraf and Clinton, who are 'masculine-acting', found a connection with other boys in a 'conservative way' that belied their heteronormative background, whereas Harold and Suleiman, who are 'bottoms'[32], used their popularity as performers to engage in a resistant narrative with the help of the popular girls in the class.

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[32] 'Bottoms' is a queer term for gay men who are passive within gay relationships

In his I-Poem, Ashraf portrays his experience of gay desire in subversive terms, describing how he begins to be curious and excited about his attraction to other men. For example:

> I was in Medical School
> I would like actually looking at a guy
> I want to actually kiss this guy

Clinton came to recognise that he enjoyed signifying his attraction to boys, which is at odds with regulatory regimes (Butler, 1990) that argue that attraction is between a men and women. Clinton was unable to describe what happened to him ('and then it happened'), as sexual desires for gay men were 'secretive' in the 1980s in South Africa, due to the dominant discourse at that time that homosexuality was "marginal, perverse, unnatural, 'other', subject to a range of different legal, medical and social sanctions and forms of regulation" (Roseneil, 2002, p.31). Furthermore, his family's fundamentalist religious beliefs would have influenced his discourse of 'having sex with a man' On the other hand, Clinton 'liked it' which is the beginning of a resistant narrative arguing that gay sex is pleasurable. This he articulates in his I-Poem:

> …and
> I liked it
> I liked it
> I was looking forward to it at school
> …it was nice, the physical kind of connection
>
> I was in standard eight…and an older sibling of mine, my sister…she had a friend of hers was gay
> …and so he connected with me…and then he asked me to go with him one day…in my school holiday, he was in the Knysna area…and then it happened there at that place

Harold experienced 'name-calling' as light commentary, which was queering homophobic rhetoric in a way that suggests agency. For example:

> I befriended certain people who were seen as gay and we could relate
> I experienced some very light commentary

Commentary could refer to a 'sports match' which Connell (1983) would argue as a site for hegemonic masculinities where the stronger, bigger boys would dominate over the weaker, more effeminate ones. Sarthiparsad (2005) reports from her study, that some 'alternative' boys in schools in KwaZulu-Natal were not interested in sport, but were able to compete in other areas and to gain positive agency from that. In this instance Harold 'befriends' certain people at his school, which activates his resistance.

Moreover, Harold claimed power and popularity from his social group. This resistant narrative is at odds with literature on gay young men's experience of school in countries like the United States. In a study by Miceli (2002), it is argued that schools are dominated by heterosexual hegemony, where meanings and knowledge about sexual identity are entrenched in a heterosexual/homosexual binary that privileges heterosexuality and oppresses and dehumanises homosexuality. He adds that these institutions are organised forces of heteronormativity that shape the experiences of gay students. The effort by gay students in these institutions to change some of the heteronormative dominance is perceived as a threat and an attempt to recruit young people to their 'lifestyle'. More recently, Miceli (2002) suggests that attempts have been made to focus on democratic rights of gay and lesbian youth. In South Africa, the legal changes made to the Constitution around the sexual orientation clause (Republic of South Africa, 1996) and the acceptance of gay marriage (Republic of South Africa, 2006) has empowered gay men in school settings. It is probably within this context that Harold was 'allowed' to be popular with his fellow students, as he explains in his I-Poem:

> I am very blessed
> I have always run with the popular people...that kind of saved me

...and

I think

…that

I am just a popular person

I think my personality is really out there

I was never an outsider...so people would have to take very strategic shots at me

to be able to get me...and it would have to be outside the comfort of my social

circle.

Suleiman, even though he was bullied initially, was able to resist the dominant masculine 'commentary', establishing an inventive strategy to challenge the homophobic rhetoric. His alignment with the 'good-looking' girls, who are also subordinated (Connell, 1995), created a powerful team that was able to contest heterosexual boy 'dominance', for a time. For example:

M: You said the guys called you a freak?

Suleiman: Not freak, but like fag.

M: Name-calling?

Suleiman: Ja. It ended in about a year. It stopped.

M: Why do you think that happened?

Suleiman: I made friends with a couple of powerful girls...and they were all good-

looking girls. They (the boys) realized that they would have to be friends with me

in order to get the girls.

Suleiman also reported that he was allowed to do 'drag shows', which he enjoyed. However, it is not clear whether this is transgressive theatrics (Adam, 2002) which is a positive experience that is empowering, or whether he is regarded as a 'freak show' that is laughed at for being a 'pervert'. Miceli (2002) argues that some gay students make an attempt to change their schools by claiming a voice and a space for themselves. Suleiman recognised that he fitted into their stereotype and gained strength from that knowledge. He appeared to subvert heteronormative dominance through creative means. Deutscher

(1997) suggests that parody (or drag) shows that gender norms are not stable. For example:

> Suleiman: I mean I had loads of fun at school....in terms of being gay. I would do drag shows for them because that is what they expected and they were always fun. I fitted into their whole stereotypical view of gay people or homosexuals in general....because that is what they wanted. I wasn't going to try and blow their minds out while they are at school...and it was fantastic pranks. I even entered Miss Legs at school and I actually won it.

Sipho, on the other hand, interrogated the binaries of male-female in a very particular way, which highlights how inherently unstable it is (Roseneil, 2002). He reflected on how boys developed an attraction to him because they thought he was a 'girl' and he appeared to 'go along with that'. At this stage of 'innocence' there is limited categorisation of masculinity/femininity as highlighted by Sedgwick (1995) and kissing another boy/girl is acceptable to a degree. However, there are some boys who are 'disgusted' and this feeds into the argument that at an early age heteronormativity is operating as a mode of regulation of identities. For Sipho, this implies that he does not fit into any of gender conforming categories. There is an element of 'transgression' (Adam, 2002) and positive agency ('I felt excited') when he talks in his I-Poem about being touched for the first time. He also spoke of being 'embarrassed', which is arguably a delayed response to the realisation that he has transgressed heteronormativity. For example:

> I have always looked at other boys...in terms of preferences, likes,
> dislikes...because in grade one...
> I had a crush towards a boy
> ...and
> I still remember when it started
> ...because
> I was the one who was feeling this way
> I know in this period there were a few boys that

I was attracted to

...and in actual fact boys were encouraging it...because some boys would come

and kiss on the cheek and some boys would kind of touch or walk hand in

hand...and the way they address you as a girl...they were treating me as a girl.

…some were fascinated to see a feminine boy and some were disgusted to see a

feminine boy

I think it was in grade three

…in grade three

I was seven

I remember this time because it was at this time that

I was touched

...and

I remember one of them touched me…it was at this point that

I felt something happening.

I felt excited, happy, embarrassed...everything was there

I was touched and

I felt something and, ja, it was great.

5.3.3. 'I am gay, I am gay, I am gay': Flaunting and resistance in tertiary education

In tertiary educational settings, participants spoke of resistant and transgressive narratives in response to the discrimination, prejudice and social exclusion that the gender nonconforming gay participants experienced – as mentioned in the first part of this chapter. However, it must be contextualised as coming from a very small base (three participants). However Butler (1994, p. 38) argues that "we don't know when resistance is going to be recouped or when it will be groundbreaking. It's like breaking through to a new set of paradigms". Suleiman, Michael and Jacques argue that gay men are not as marginalised as it appears and that there is resistance to gender conforming on the UWC campus. Suleiman flaunts the fact that he is 'out and proud' and 'accepted' by many students. His confronting of the issue is what many gay political activists both overseas (Altman, 1971) and in South Africa (Fine & Nicol, 1994) were calling for after gay

liberation. They were of the view that the development of the gay clone and hypermasculinity (Edwards, 2005) undermined the struggle for acceptance and led to the rejection of the 'feminine' (Harris, 1997). Further, Suleiman confronted straight men with the discourse that gay men do not want to have sex with straight men. The fear that straight men have of engaging in homosexual sex is linked to the theory that is espoused by Butler (1995), that heterosexual men must disavow any homosexuality to be regarded as 'masculine'. Suleiman highlighted an important aspect of gay life that is often forgotten in the stories of gay men, that it is 'fun' to construct a gay, queer identity. Plummer (2005) argues in this vein when describing the multiple 'sexual' identities and possibilities for gay men and straight men. For example:

> Suleiman: Yes totally out...completely...everybody knows that I am gay. I mean I came here as a gay person. I think being at the university has opened many doors...it was closed. They had gay people, but they were very closeted and very quiet about it. And here comes this boisterous, open, out young thing and he thinks he can take on the world. And all his friends screaming from the top of the hills 'I'm gay, I'm gay, I'm gay'. And everyone was like 'whoa'. In the past six years I have seen so much change at the university...more acceptance at the university.
>
> M: So give me examples of what you did to try and break this homophobia?
>
> Suleiman: I would sit at tables and say 'hi, my name is Suleiman and I am gay'...and it got around so quickly that everyone knew that I was gay...and I think for them, for the guys, it became this tangible thing...like 'oh my God, he is gay'...and he is not hitting on me. So finally they came to realise that gay guys are not just wanting to jump into the sack with straight men…

Suleiman was pleased about how many women are supportive of gender transgressives. This is in agreement with Harold, who also highlighted the value of having supportive women on the campus. His articulation of an alliance with lesbian and other women challenges the critique that gay liberation was at the expense of the 'feminine' and that women have been marginalised (Lapinsky, 1994). On the other hand, both participants

appeared to buy into a sexist discourse when they suggested that women want to be part of their organisation. For example:

> Suleiman: Mostly girls...and they are totally eager and 'that sounds fantastic and we want to join and we want to be part', because I think gay societies shouldn't be all gay people, it should be for everyone who are comfortable with their own sexuality.

> Harold: ...the women love you...

Key informants Jacques and Michael agreed that there have been positive changes at UWC with regard to resistance to the dominant discourse of heteronormativity. Roseneil (2002) argues that 'a critical community' has developed within the wider lesbian and gay community, in which new ideas about sexuality, gender, embodiment and identity are being created. This is beginning to happen at UWC where gender nonconformists are beginning to emerge (Rosenfeld, 2009), despite the insidiousness of homophobia. Jacques' relationship with his partner, Sylvester, is acknowledged by staff and he is open to students about it. He reminds staff and students 'very subtly' that he identifies as gay and has a partner. This is in contrast to Suleiman who 'shouts it from the rooftops', but whose actions have the same outcome. He is recognised and 'respected'. The fact that Jacques is acknowledged in the gay and heterosexual community for his work in his chosen field, may have led to his being respected and may not necessarily mean that he is accepted for his sexual orientation. For example:

> Jacques: No everybody knows.
> M: How does that feel?
> Jacques: It feels normal. I don't even consider or think about it.
> M: Do they acknowledge it? Do they ask about Sylvester?
> Jacques: Yes, because he goes to the end of year function. I mean my secretary...he calls and she asks when is he coming to visit...they don't appear to

be upset if I refer to my partner...but I am very much acknowledged as a gay man...it's not hidden or ignored.

Michael's argument that gay men at UWC are making important decisions about their lifestyle resonates with what Plummer (2005) says when referring to gay men constructing their alternative identities. He posits that gay men do not have to follow the norm for gay men. He adds that gay men are interrogating the binaries of masculinity/femininity and homosexuality/heterosexuality. The salience of this has been highlighted by Shefer (1998) when looking at South African masculinities. In his comparison of the experiences of the working class and the middle classes, Michael suggests that there is more 'surveillance' in the working-classes. This concurs with Harold's position on working class men coming from rigid backgrounds. However, both participants appear to be buying into a classist discourse in which unitary categories of class and assumptions of culture are evident. Given the powerful historical intersection of 'race' and class in South Africa, such discourses may also reflect racist/ethnicist assumptions where certain groups are seen as more homophobic and conservative than others. Also importantly, Michael appeared to be suggesting that what Butler (1990) and Foucault (1978) call 'covert power', where powerful institutions constrain what people can or cannot do (in terms of 'free choice' in relationships), might be giving way to a more open 'space' (gay rights and civil unions) where people are allowed to choose what they like or what they want (Plummer, 2005) in relationships. However, there is a gap between political/civil/ constitutional rights and the actual material experience of freedom. Civil unions have been critiqued as a heteronormative imposed strategy of controlling gay men and women (Lind, 2008), even though those who have married may benefit in terms of financial security. For example:

Michael: I think things are changing...being at a young age and having to come out and we all get born into straight families...it's always traumatic. I would never want to tell my parents that I am gay...if I am straight I don't need to tell them...so I fight that...certainly the youngsters now seem uncomplicated about it...the way I see it people now have a totally different idea...are living different lifestyles when

it comes to sex...where it is more of a continuum...you don't make a choice at a certain stage...certainly boys start off by wanting to explore with other boys...

M: Say more...it's a continuum of what?

Michael: I think the continuum of straight and gay...or men and women...they say...it's the person who actually determines what is going to happen in that relationship...it seems obvious to me from my understanding that people are more open to themselves about things...whereas before you were taught this is wrong...boys must go with boys...nowadays people don't come out with being taught stuff like that...they explore in an uncomplicated way...I mean when I was growing up...you could be 'outed' and lose your job. You could go to jail for having sex. That is gone.

M: Negative consequences?

Michael: Yes, yes, yes. Even now...there are certain lines that you dare not cross...working class you are fucked...there are very strict gender roles from a very young age...certain middle-class people...your second or third generation middle class people have a more independent way...none of that censure or observation...surveillance...

Homophobic 'forces' that have difficulty accepting more resistant and transgressive constructions of sexuality still prevail. In the extract below, Suleiman expresses concern about how other gay men see him on the campus. Internalised homophobia (Meyer, 1995) amongst hyper-masculine and 'closet' gay men, threatens to destroy the gains that more 'out and proud' progressive gay men are making. Rosenfeld (2009) speaks about gender nonconformists (for example, Suleiman) that threaten gay men who are passing as being heterosexual. Rosenfeld argues that their co-presence or proximity to gender non-conforming gay men could lead to observers to conclude that the gender conformists were gay as well. The ridicule that Suleiman refers to is arguably about the gender conformists attempt to claim allegiance to heteronormativity and membership in that category (Rosenfeld, 2009). Within hegemonic masculinity they would be regarded as complicit (Connell, 1995) because of their homonormativity within the hierarchical order. For example:

Suleiman: Other gay guys ...at the University...like I have been ridiculed by a lot of the gay guys...who say 'how dare you?' 'You are so loud and proud!'...and we are peaceful men...why, you can't say that all gay men are quiet and listen to classical music...you know there are all sorts...difference…I'm just the brighter crayon on the box.

Michael warned against fundamentalist churches on the campus. Fundamentalist religion takes scriptures as word-for-word truth in contrast to modernists who contextualise scriptures (Moon, 2002). Vermeulen (2008) argues that 'right-wing religion' has waged a homophobic campaign in the Western Cape against gay organisations and gay men, in this regards, has particularly targeted universities. Michael reflects this as follows:

Michael: Religion is a big bugbear. Many people who style themselves as religious...so there are people...together with surveillance and the church...even on campus His People are quite (active)...

5.3.4. 'Gay sex is enjoyable': Resisting gender norms in community practices

Both Ashraf and Justin (both Muslim) started to explore their attraction to men at erotic oases (Henriksson, 1995) and began to enjoy the sexual practices that are now affirmed by their acceptance of their orientation. Ashraf had been denied his same-sex desire by his conservative culture's adherence to the homosexual/heterosexual binary that has manufactured a deviant 'other' (Adam, 2002) which was where Ashraf had been languishing. When he was finally able to 'reveal' his homoerotic desire for other men in a transgressive narrative, he was 'cruised'[33] in a gym and was opened up to a new reality that gay sex is enjoyable. In the words 'I chose' in his I-Poem, he expresses a liberatory (Edwards, 2005) discourse that celebrates a queering of his real identity. For example:

I went to a gym

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[33] Cruising is a gay term that refers to gay men being sexually pursued by other men

I was cruised by like six or seven guys in the community

I was immediately…open

I thought

I was hiding it so well (laughing) and so

I said "okay, I can't hide it anymore it seems"

I chose

Justin engaged in his first sexual experience in Angels bar in the gay village, and he began to transgress gender norms. As Justin has grown up in a heteronormative culture where the heterosexual framework is "centred upon the model of penis-vagina penetration" (Bettcher, 2007, p 56), his first gay sexual performance would be a transgression of this normative model. Further transgressions occurred when he got 'hard when kissing guys'. Shilt and Westbrook (2009) argue that heteronormativity requires men to ignore other men's bodies so as to uphold heterosexuality. Justin's recognition that this act of 'getting hard' was a determining factor in his constructing a gay identity, reflects on the importance of gay sex in 'performing ' as a gay man. This is clearly demonstrated in his I-Poem:

I had my first sexual…ja, my first sexual experience with a guy

…the first time

I kissed a guy was at Angels

I started going on my own

…and

I started dating guys

I got hard when I started kissing guys

…that's why

I came to the conclusion

…that

I must be gay

Moegamet and Suleiman were able to find more unconventional resistant narratives while exploring erotic adventures (Mutchler, 2000) in different settings. Moegamet suggested that he was almost raped by other men but realised in the rape situation that he was enjoying the interaction. Kimmel and Levine (1998) argue that men are taught from childhood that risk-taking is one of the cornerstones of 'masculinity'. Unsafe sex, including rape, continues to be regarded as a 'masculine' activity that proves to men that they are real men (David & Brannon, 1976). It is not clear why Moegamet would regard a rape situation as 'nice' but it is likely he is recognising (at the age of fourteen) that 'penetration' by another man is something that he would find enjoyable, despite the risks involved. When Moegamet said 'he ran' and then realized 'this is nice for me', even though he was arguably engaging in a risk situation, he was flaunting his sexual orientation while transgressing boundaries of sexual erotic adventures (Mutchler, 2000). For example:

> Moegamet: At the age of fourteen...one night I was travelling home and these big guys...they basically wanted to rape me...I ran...and then I realized basically this is nice for me.

Suleiman explored erotic adventures (Mutchler, 2000) with boys in church. The playful way that Suleiman relates with other boys ('I would move my head erotically') is synonymous with early explorations of heterosexual boys, but in anti-gay religious terms where to be gay is unnatural, this "would signify humanity's fall as they believe that human beings were created heterosexual and that homosexuality is a part of society's degenerations "(Moon, 2002, p. 314). Over and above this, Suleiman transgressed norms of heterosexuality when he 'flaunted' his sexuality. This is against the culture of normative heterosexuality that is enforced in schools, where anti-gay jokes, insults and harassment of gay boys predominate (Miceli, 1998). For example:

> M: When did you start thinking about boys?
> Suleiman: In a sexual manner, or boys in general?
> M: Whatever...

Suleiman: I think I always did...I had to explore my sexual side at a very young age...so I would be in church and I would act like I was tired and I would put my head on their lap and I would move it erotically...they were about eleven or twelve...and it became erotic...and I was in boarding school...and it was only me and one guy and we were sitting in a corner and I was getting so horny...

5.4. Conclusions

In this chapter, I have explored experiences of coming out or realization of gay desires and sexuality in the different contexts of the participants' lives, including narratives relating to the home, school and university, and in the community. Most participants reported that their voluntary disclosure of their sexual orientation to their families and friends was met with a mixed response. Participants from strong religious backgrounds were threatened with expulsion and rejection by their families for transgressing heteronormativity by identifying as gay, and their humbling experience is linked to conservative religious beliefs. Two feminine-acting men reported that their sexual orientation was taken for granted because of their embodiment – which meant that they did not have to 'come out' – and this led to a homophobic response from their parents. The reaction of the latter was similar to the two participants who blurred the gender binary (Rosenfeld, 2009) by dressing up as drag queens and appearing androgynous. The findings highlight how the feminine-looking gay men were 'othered', 'bullied', sexually abused and exposed as sexually obsessive within a variety of school settings, as they did not conform to gender norms in terms of embodiment. In contrast, masculine-acting boys were able to pass as heterosexuals, conforming to gender norms until they came out to their parents and families at a later stage. At tertiary institutions, homophobia was experienced by the feminine-acting men because of their embodiment which led to name-calling and ostracism from mostly working-class students, who were mainly black and Muslim. In their respective communities, Muslim and African participants reported 'othering' and rejection as they tried to participate in religious and other practices.

Embedded in the negative experiences of homophobia across these sites, the participants also speak of the positive experiences of realising their gay desires. Further, they articulate resistant and transgressive narratives that interrogate and challenge the binaries of heterosexuality/homosexuality. Some of the participants describe how they strategically manipulated certain forms of power and status and/or applied certain coping strategies to challenge the negative experiences they encountered in the different contexts. There were subversive stories of coming out which were illuminated by resistance to religious beliefs in families and finding agency through performing poetry. Furthermore, the performing of social popularity on different fronts was used to undermine the dominance of heterosexual boys at school. Some of the participants who reflected on their experiences at university argue that the university is open to more resistant and transgressive opportunities for gay students who 'flaunt' their sexuality successfully, or for gay lecturers who are comfortable with talking about their partners. Lecturers critique how gay rights and resources on campus like the Gender Equity Unit at UWC have empowered gay students despite the homophobia. There is contestation whether tertiary institutions are giving way to a more 'open' space for gay students, because of legal changes. However, it is questionable if the legislation has made any impact at all, as working class black men, gay men who are passing as heterosexuals, and right-wing religious groups use surveillance to protect heteronormative spaces. Others spoke about how being sexually aroused evoked a resistance to heteronormative performance, whereas two explored erotic adventures in unconventional settings which transgressed gender conforming boundaries.

As unpacked in this chapter, it is clear that the participants' many challenging experiences reflected in the process of coming out and realising their non-normative sexual desires play a role in shaping how they engage in sexual intimacy and relationship. In the next chapter, I will examine how participants construct the relationships they set up once they have acknowledged their desires and become sexually active.

CHAPTER SIX
NARRATIVES OF RELATIONSHIP PRACTICES OF GAY MEN

6.1. Introduction

This chapter explores how participants construct relationships and to what extent such narratives reproduce heteronormative practices and identities or rather, challenge these through narratives of alternative or flexible constructions. The challenge of structuring gay relationships has been argued in the literature (Murray, 2002). There are different typologies that have arisen in the last twenty years, since gay relationships have become more visible. Murray (2002) argues that gay relationships may be structured by differences in age, gender, class and egalitarian comradeship in a society. As he highlights, there is a need to examine the intra-cultural diversity within homosexualities as well as the dominant discourse of the predominant sexual ideology. It also should be recognised that one person may understand the same behaviour differently on different occasions with different partners. This I can attest to, as a white gay man interviewing predominantly black participants. As Adam (1986, p. 20) reports, that "social coding practices may be uneven, incomplete or in transition".

The chapter is structured within the key themes that emerged as salient in the way in which relationships were narrated by participants. These themes include the following: the importance of gay male spaces for facilitating relationships, modes of relationships, heteronormative models of relationships and sexual practices in relationships. The chapter highlights how, throughout these different thematic areas, participants subscribe to more heterosexual models of relating or heteronormative values and practices, while at other times they may challenge and resist them. The focus in this chapter will again be on the I-Poems and contrapuntal voices of Ashraf, Clinton, Harold, Sipho, Justin and Andile, with the other narratives woven in.

6.2. Importance of gay male spaces for facilitating relationships

In heteronormative and homophobic societies, gay relationships have a particular form and shape of beginning and ending that is generally different from heteronormative relationships, due to the wider context of being marginalisation and being 'othered'. The importance of dedicated gay male spaces emerged as particularly important for participants, both in contemporary post-1994 South Africa as well as during the period of apartheid where both interracial relationships and gay relationships were equally prohibited. While such prohibitions have been legally erased, divides are still evident and impact on relationships, however in some ways serve to undermine notions of 'difference' that continue in the post-apartheid phase. The meetings of gay men across 'race' during the apartheid era emerges as particularly salient with respect to forging forms of solidarity across the divides of race.

It is noteworthy and unsurprising that in a heterosexual dominant society the majority of the participants reported meeting their partners in gay clubs, bars or restaurants in the gay village (Elder, 2005; Leap, 2005). In his I-Poem, Ashraf relates that he met his second relationship partner, Deon, a white Afrikaner in Bronx Bar (Bronx Bar is a popular action bar and gay space in the Central Business District of Cape Town.) Furthermore, in their first meeting, hardly any words were spoken - as befitting of 'conquest' in the heterosexual male sex-drive discourse (Hollway, 1984), where men plot how they will win over their female partner. On the other hand, Ashraf reported that he 'didn't take him home', which is arguably at odds with his hegemonic voice that is controlling (the 'I' in the I-Poem dominates the interaction) and actively leading towards sexual intimacy. For example:

> I went to Bronx and that is where
> I met Deon
> …he was dancing and
> I went up to him
> …and

I liked him

…and

I said "now I am going to dance with you"

I was dancing with him and we barely said a word to each other

I gave him (my number)

I took his number

…and after

I kissed him

I didn't take him home

I asked him "do you want to go out to dinner with me?"

Jacques revealed that he also met his current partner, Sylvester in Bronx Bar. Tucker (2009) believes that for some coloured queer men, it is the 'othering' of gay men in coloured communities combined with the tolerance and forward thinking about queer sexuality of some white communities would have led to this meeting in a predominantly 'white' gay space . Jacques told of how they shared email numbers and had sexual intercourse only after six months. He reported that there was a hesitation or hiatus in the initial stages of the relationship because Sylvester was 'in the closet', but it also may be an indication of their not being clear about gendered roles at the outset, as they both later rejected gender categories (Butler, 1995). In her study on heterosexual relationships, Tracey (2007) states that some of the participants queered their performance in heterosexual relationships by refusing to engage in sexual intercourse. For example:

M: Can you describe your relationship? How did you meet?
J: I met Sylvester in Bronx and we exchanged email addresses...and we sort of became friends. He was not really ready...he was still anxious about having a relationship...he hadn't been out of the closet that long. And after about six months we became involved...which was the first for me because I first sleep with a person.

Clinton related that he too met his first partner in a gay bar in a historically white area, but the context is far more politically significant as it happened during the apartheid era, when coloured men were not entitled to occupy 'white' spaces (Elder, 1995). The Immorality Amendment Act (No. 57 of 1969) of that period would have prohibited sexual intimacy or liaisons between coloured and whites, which in the case of gay men would have been reinforced by sodomy laws. The phrase 'and then we spoke to the guys' is arguably the negotiation that took place to allow entrance to the 'white' club. Gay bars and clubs were separated from heterosexual clubs in South Africa. This allowed gay men to 'come out' in a safe space, but also meant that gay men could be regulated and controlled (Foucault, 1976). Castells (2004, p. 272) posited that "when gays are spatially scattered, they are not gay, because they are invisible". These spaces were necessary for queer men, both to socialize and for political representation (Tucker, 2009). Instead of inhibiting Clinton, he spoke of 'coming home' highlighting the importance of gay men occupying spaces where they can meet and socialize. This could cut across other divides, like the racialised divisions, during this historical period. The meeting of his first partner is 'tagged on' at the end of the narrative, suggesting that he may have had mixed feelings. On the one hand, he was overjoyed at meeting another gay man whom he liked but, on the other hand, he was aware that he was doing something illegal. As Murray (2002) states, discreet forms of 'illegal' homosexuality are tolerated as long as the do not become too consuming or passionate. Arguably the lack of passion - as illustrated in the I-Poem below - is a reflection of how subordinated Clinton felt within a society that was dominated by hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995) and where gay sexual practices were prohibited:

> I was twenty-one
> …another friend of mine at school that was also gay that had explored the gay sub-culture at that time…and he would come and visit me…he would always tell me what is going on
> …and
> I always used to find it fascinating and

I said to him "man you must take me sometime, when you go again, take me with,

I want to see what is going on"

I went with him one evening to the disco

…and we got in at the door and then we spoke to the guys

and you know when

I got inside that place it was almost as

I came home in a sense

…and

I met someone at the club

I liked him, he liked me

…and we said let's see more of each other

Moegamet met his partner at a gay club and they subsequently decided to attend a wedding together. Tracey (2007) argues that everyday rituals of connection function as elements within a narrative of similar experience, behaviour or worldview. Moegamet and Angelo connected over a wedding ritual, and this led to a mundane lunch date, mirroring heterosexual behaviour. This is arguably how many gay couples meet, finding pleasure in the ordinariness of being together. This is demonstrated in the excerpt:

M: How did you meet Angelo?

Mo: At the club we spoke and then we were going to go to a wedding together…and he phoned me and said "You are avoiding me, and I'm avoiding you and you promised me all these things, that you are going to go with me to this wedding. "Listen," I said, "I didn't have your number and I didn't know where to contact you." Anyway we set up a date for lunch. And he came to my office. We went out for lunch.

First encounters reflected the age or era of gay and political history when the participants started having relationships. For example, Charles reported that he met Phillip, his first partner, in the early 1980s in England when gay liberation (Edwards, 2005) was at its zenith, and multiple partners were the norm in that country and the United States

(Hocquenghem, 1972; Mieli, 1980). Charles revealed that he and Phillip had started a relationship despite Phillip's having a partner already. He compared Phillip to Jeremy Irons, the film actor. This connection with an attractive 'performer' is an example of how an almost mythical 'character' may have a guiding influence over a relationship. On the other hand, this 'imagining' of an actor can be linked to psychoanalysis - as bound up in Butler's (1993) theorizing of the ways in which the body in its material reality comes into being through identificatory processes and desire that are structured by social and psychic regulation. She argues that this works through imaginary processes that are bound up with signification. In identifying with a heterosexual actor, Charles is being influenced by the heterosexual imperative that shapes these imaginary processes and signification. The discourse of attraction is hidden in the words ("…and then I went down and explained and he said 'I am really sorry, come in and have a glass of brandy' ") and is indicative of how men do not talk about attraction and intimacy (Robinson, 2008). In contrast to the attraction they felt for each other is a hidden discourse of the rejection and 'othering' that gay men experienced at that time. This is reflected in Charles's explanation that his car was broken into because a copy of Gay News was visible on the back seat. The narrative below, which can be seen as echoing a heteronormative construction of a relationship, is typical of this era. As indicated in the extract, they moved in together two weeks after meeting:

> Ch: …and almost instantaneously I was intrigued with the person who lived in the flat below. He was a young similar age English guy as well. He had a Golf convertible and he was this very Brideshead Revisited type. Looked like Jeremy Irons, I suppose. Anyway my car got broken into in the forecourt of our apartment block and I went down one evening and explained and I said 'listen you'd better put your car away' because mine had got broken into. It had got broken into and all the windows smashed up because I had left a copy of Gay News in the back seat of the car. And then I went down and explained and he said 'I'm really sorry, come in and have a glass of brandy' so I went in and his friend Mike was there because he was with somebody else…To cut a long story short two weeks later I moved from upstairs to downstairs.

Charles related that he met his second partner in a public toilet in England, which was how some gay men met other men before Internet dating (Wakeford, 2002) and after gay liberation (Edwards, 2005). Similar to the finding of studies by Humphreys (1975) and Delph (1978) on men's sexual behaviour in public toilets, Charles and his new partner (Gavin), engaged in stereotypical masculine sexuality, where privacy depends on the silence of the interaction ('I just watched') and denotes limited emotional commitment ('we had sex'). The words 'I'd come back over and over again' is arguably from the male sex drive discourse (Hollway, 1984), with conquest being the driving force, or through repetition and iteration (Butler, 1993) Charles is imagining another sexual conquest. This narrative appears to transgress (Adam, 2002) the boundaries of normativity, but the sexual practices are commensurate with hegemonic male performance. For example:

> Charles: And I tried to create an alternative, parallel life where I would go off into a public toilet. And actually not do anything but just watch (laughing) because I was quite scared of doing anything. But then I think I never did anything, I just watched. That was basically it. But then on one occasion I met this young guy, and became more, I was intrigued by him. Twenty-one year old kid. This was 1994. And then I'd come back over and over again, so he would always be there. And eventually after the third time of this meeting and I got scared that he would come out and hang around my car, and I would drive off. And the third time I said "Okay, come in!" We went to a flat that I had and we had sex. It wasn't penetrative sex again. And to cut a long story short I decided to leave Phillip for this twenty-one year old kid.

In speaking about his third long-standing relationship, Charles stated that he met his partner Stephen in a gay sauna in London. Stephen was a businessman living in Thailand, where complex variations across gender and sex lines are apparently characterised by both transvestite and homosexual behaviour (Altman, 2002). There is, however, a romanticised view of Thailand, argues Altman, based on travel and business experiences that disguise the reality of persecution, discrimination and violence involving opponents of homosexuality who most likely come from hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005). It

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may have been in this context that Stephen decided to leave Thailand ('he was trying to get out') and return to England to be with Charles. Financial growth at the beginning of this century was at its optimum, which meant that gay men and heterosexual men criss-crossed continents seeking quick profits and relationships that were cross-cultural. This is illustrated below:

> Charles: And then in November, 1996, I met this guy in the sauna, an American guy, called Stephen. Very good-looking guy. He was just there for the weekend. He was living in Bangkok. We spent the week-end together and he flew off to Bangkok and before he even landed he was sending me text messages from Bangkok and all the rest. Then basically he decided to move in with me in London. Moved over from Bangkok to London and we were together for three years.

Both Suleiman and Harold said they met gay students while studying at UWC. Suleiman argued that he met his partner innocently, while he was showing him around the University. In asking about a gay and lesbian organisation on the campus, his partner is signaling to him, that firstly, he might be gay and, secondly, that he is comfortable with talking about alternative sexual practices. There is a playful interlude that hides the tension that both feel because 'coming out' could have different consequences. Gay men are aware that revealing their sexual orientation may be empowering for a potential relationship, but at the same time it also positions them as being 'other' or marginal within hegemonic masculinity. A critical view of coming out of 'the closet' from Tucker (2009) is that it suggests a unitary and fixed identity category, where the subjects and their identity exist prior to their 'coming out'. He argues therefore that there is an assumption that coming out represents the end of inauthenticity and self-alienation for the individual. According to Hayes (2000), this leads to an argument that those who do not free themselves from the closet are simply in denial and suffering from a secretive mode of sexual identity. There is no suggestion of denial in this interlude, but rather that there is influence of a rigid heterosexual/homosexual binary relationship. For example:

M: How did you meet?

S: He was here on an exchange programme. And I was showing him around the university and he asked me if there was a gay and lesbian society. And I said "no" and I asked him "why, are you gay?" and he said "I am". Then what happened was we started chatting quite often. And then he wasn't sure whether I was interested or not. So we chatted more.

Similarly, Harold revealed that he made friends with a gay student and that they had a 'lovely' relationship. Friends in heterosexual relationships play the role of helpers in narratives, according to Propp (1968), in supporting and encouraging the relationship which appears to be happening at the outset in this 'normative' gay relationship:

M: What happened? Did you meet somebody or what?

Ha: I got to the university…it was great the first year…I hung out with my friends and…towards the…end of the first year I met somebody… I made friends with this guy and we got along very well and all our friends continued to be together and this was a lovely relationship …which almost nurtured…it brought that latent…I think homosexual aspect of our personalities to the fore…

Sipho related that he also met Nico through a friend. Like many of the participants (Ashraf, Jacques, Clinton), he began to construct an inter-racial gay relationship. In South Africa inter-racial relationships have been historically rare, not only because of the legacy of the apartheid system, but also because most black men feel 'othered' by white men in the gay village (Leap, 2005). There is a connection through music and talk, which is normative for heterosexual relationships. As Butler (1990) argues, repetition and reiteration leads to sedimentation of the performance. For example:

Si: And then she called me into her bedroom. And when I went, boom, there is this white man in the room. And I went in and she introduced me to him as well. This is Nico, and …guys are coming now. And I'm like, I'm set up and I'm

having fun, the music is playing and she makes me come and sit next to this man and we talk, and then we started talking, talking and talking.

Other participants met partners in different ways. Justin reported that he met his partner through his ex-partner while they were away for a weekend, while Ashraf said he met his first partner by 'accident' which led to 'cheating'. 'Cheating' or infidelity, which is reported by a number of participants but must be understood within the context of gay relationships being 'othered' and rejected within a heteropatriarchal society, prior to legislation allowing civil unions (Republic of South Africa, 2006). Furthermore, studies on monogamy and non-monogamy articulate that gay men who have sex outside of the relationship may be looking for more excitement, or there may be a communication breakdown (LaSala, 2001). Similar to other heteronormative narratives, the discourse is one of silence (Willemse, 2007). For example, Justin says they met and 'they became close and clicked'. It has been reported in other studies that sexual intimacy is not spoken about or is taken for granted by gay men (Robinson, 2008), which is a heteronormative discourse. This is demonstrated in the following extract:

> M: How did that happen?
> J: It's actually a funny story...my first boyfriend was cheating on me with him. I came to know about it but during that time me and him became more friends because he was having kind of a relationship with him as well. Then we all went away for one weekend and he...I don't know...came with the week-end saying "this is just a buddy of mine and whatever", and I thought no fine I know already who he is. And the two of us started speaking and we became close and we clicked.

Ashraf reported that he met his first serious partner accidentally in the street. It appears to be similar to the way in which heterosexual relationships may start. There is hesitancy and nervousness expressed in his I-Poem ("I asked him 'are you okay', I always ask 'are you okay?'") in the first interaction typical of two people meeting by chance. There is

uncertainty about how far to go ("…and I just gave him my number") which is synonymous with Internet and cell phone dating (Wakeford, 2002). For example:

> I met a lovely, lovely person just on the street
> I was coming out of the gym and he worked in the city
> …he had a lot of books…he dropped them
> I
> I helped him to pick it up
> …and
> I asked him "are you okay?"
> I always ask "are you okay?"
> I didn't know whether he was straight or anything
> …and
> I just gave him my number and
> I went back to work you know

6.3. Modes of relationships

Some participants speak about having relationships that are monogamous and nuclear, whereas others appear to transgress such normative standards for relationships that are arguably modeled on the nuclear heterosexual-model of family (Roseneil, 2002). Such practices should be understood within the context that, for gay men after gay liberation in predominantly Western countries (Edwards, 2005), the norm was open relationships and multiple sexual partners (Mutchler, 2000). Green, Bettinger and Zacks (1996, p. 216) argue that some counsellors who judge male couples as dysfunctional, based solely on the presence of outside sex, might be operating from a "heterosexist frame of reference". This is countered by the belief that open relationships may be workable for some gay men (Bepko & Johnson, 2000). Most studies agree that there are a proportion of coupled gay men who agree not to be sexually exclusive (LaSala, 2001). However it was not clear whether that would occur within a context of monogamy or non-monogamy. Tucker (2009) postulates that in some communities on the Cape Flats the possibility of engaging

in monogamous gay relationships is unlikely for the reason of homophobic violence, where queer African men coming into contact with Xhosa and black African value systems are 'othered' and rejected. The premise that to be gay is 'unAfrican' (Hoad, 1998) is reinforced by elements of Xhosa tradition which place great emphasis on overt masculinity as a defining characteristic of manhood and boyhood with effeminacy, which is associated with women (Tucker, 2009). These cultural aspects impacted on the modes of relationships that were unpacked by the participants.

Some of the participants talk about how their relationships are monogamous and how their partners are controlling or dominant. Harold states that his first relationship with a black gay man at UWC was troubled by cultural differences, reflecting a heteronormative discourse that was dominant and 'othering'. He relates how when he spoke about 'something that was gay' he would be reprimanded for including it in the conversation, which is arguably his 'masculine' performing boyfriend controlling what he is allowed or not allowed to say. This behaviour – which suggests monitoring and surveillance – is what Butler (1995) alludes to when arguing about social restrictions imposed on women and gay men in a heteronormative society. As Harold's boyfriend appeared to come from a heteropatriarchal background, where men dominate and 'other' women, he was trying to replicate his cultural dominance in his relationship with Harold. This is illustrated in his I-Poem:

> …my boyfriend was black
> I didn't understand the rules
> …like
> I would get into trouble
> …and
> I would be speaking about something that was probably gay
> …and then
> I would be reprimanded for it afterwards
> …because how could
> I not know that that is not part of the conversation?

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Sipho suggested that his second relationship, which was based on similar heteronormative assumptions that Harold experienced, was also monogamous. He was positioned as a 'woman' and a 'wife' in the I-Poem. Also evident are certain expectations from his masculine partner that are silent and unsaid (Willemse, 2007). For example:

> …he was…he also wanted to be seen as masculine and he was the one that was blatant as treating me as a female
>
> …he called me his wife

In terms of relationships that were not monogamous, Charles states that he was loyal for seven out of the eleven years that he was together with Phillip, until he had a 'one-night' stand in Ireland. In a similar scenario, LaSala (2001) describes counselling two men whose relationship was affected by one partner having other sexual liaisons. He suggests that sexual non-inclusivity needs negotiation and that, if there are sexual partners outside of the relationship, it should be limited to only one encounter. Furthermore, partners should practice safe sex with that outside partner. In mirroring heteronormative performance, Charles performed as the 'masculine' partner in this relationship. However, after this experience he began to be more flexible (Plummer, 2005) in his sexual and other practices – as demonstrated later in this chapter. Charles describes his 'infidelity' in the following narrative:

> Ch: While with Phillip? No, not…I went to Dublin on one occasion…Seven years I would say…And after seven years I decided that I wanted to…I don't know, I went to a bar, because I was on business. Met somebody, came back and I was paralytically drunk and then I ended up having my watch stolen and money stolen. It was one occasion I was in my mind unfaithful to this guy and …paid the price for it. So there was an awful lot of guilt. But I didn't tell him about it.

Justin's first relationship was not monogamous, as his partner explored sexual relations with other men and (according to Justin) probably infected him with HIV. He described

in his I-Poem how his partner would come and 'lay by me' and he could smell another man's body. This arguably reflects how some gay men who engage in sexual encounters with men outside of their relationship are 'othering' of their partners. His partner appears to be complicit with hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995), in that the 'feminine-acting' man is taken for granted (Hearn, 2004) as someone who would accept 'other' sexual liaisons as part of a heteronormative-style relationship. This is aligned with heroic positions as posited by Wetherall and Edley (1999) in terms of psycho-discursive practices. They argue that heroic positions conform closely to Connell's notion of complicit masculinity, as they would instantiate hegemonic masculinity, strongly aligning those men with conventional ideals. Hypermasculine gay men (Edwards, 2005) are seen as complicit with hegemonic masculinity as they 'other' the feminine. For example:

> …and he would come and lay by me
> …but
> I could smell
> I mean you could smell another guy's body…

Termination of a relationship is traumatic, whether in gay relationships or heterosexual relationships, but the participants in this study described different ways of ending relationships, which may be heteronormative or resistant. Some spoke about starting relationships while on the point of ending a relationship, while others terminated their relationships because of infidelity. Still others spoke about endings that led to more positive consequences. Using Freud's theory of polymorphous perversity, Butler (1995) argues that loss in gay relationships is problematic because gay men do not mourn the end of their relationships due to the fact that, as infants, to form a gendered identity they had to disavow their attachment to homosexuality. While this is not demonstrated in this study, there are concerns that some relationships end abruptly and that there is minimal time given to mourning the loss of the relationship. Furthermore, endings in gay relationships are not spoken about in most heteronormative settings, as it is not seen as appropriate to give biographical or other details of gay relationships to heterosexuals

(Rosenfeld, 2009) – given that gay men are subordinated within hegemonic masculinity (Skelton, 2001).

Both Justin and Charles told how they started a new relationship before ending their previous one. Justin suggests in his I-poem that his relationship with his first partner was similar to a heteronormative relationship in that he was 'shown' off as a trophy. Edwards (2005, p. 63) states that globalisation has led to men being commodified as aesthetically beautiful and that "the male and the masculine have increasingly become the object as well as the subject of the gaze." In his relationship, Justin felt that his partner was pretending to love him as the 'masculine' partner and that he cheated on him regularly. Ironically, one of his lovers eventually becomes Justin's second partner, which suggests fluidity and an alternative construction to the heteronorm. He is arguably 'getting back' at his first partner for his behaviour, at a time when open relationships were the norm. On the other hand, he may be queering (Adam, 2002) his relationship at a time when gay intimacy was disallowed. In his study exploring masculinity tensions amongst white and Latino gay youth in the United States, Mutchler (2000) reports that white youth who are dominant explore open relationships in which they engage in sex with their boyfriends, as well as with casual partners. For example:

> …he was a player
> …he had an eye for everything
> …it wasn't like a loving relationship
> …it was more like…show people that I have got somebody in my life
> …he would cheat on me a lot
> I found out that he would cheat on me because one of his friends became a good friend of mine
>
> I was still seeing my first boyfriend
> I was seeing him as well
> …it was almost as though
> I am getting you back type of thing

Charles related that he had four long-term relationships over a period of twenty-eight years, reflecting a historical period when gay relationships were transient at the time of gay liberation (Edwards, 2005) and where power and status (affluence) gave leverage to some gay men's choice of partners. On two occasions he ended a relationship because one partner was involved with another person. In his relationship with Phillip, the discourse reflects how Phillip takes on the 'feminine' role of managing the relationship ('You had better speak to him' and 'okay, it's plan B').Wilbraham (1996) argues that such emotional work in heterosexual relationships is taken on by women. There appears to be distrust in his next relationship with Stephen ('I was looking through his gym kit'), which Charles suggested ended as a result of his (Stephen's) 'developmental stage'. Charles reflected on repeated patterns that occur in relationships, where there is non-monogamy. Recent studies suggest that gay relationships that are non-monogamous measure low scores in the areas of satisfaction with sex, affection, relationship tension and commitment (LaSala, 2004). The issue around relationship tension and commitment is likely to arise out of the lack of recognition of gay relationships at the time. Butler (1995), using Freud's analysis of polymorphous perversity, argues that neither an attachment to another male nor its loss can be recognised, which leads to the impossibility of either affirming or mourning homosexuality. Charles falls into this category. In his narrative, he neither recognises his attachment to Phillip ('I told Phillip the situation'), nor his loss of Stephen ('and he moves out') both of which are indicative of a lack of emotional attachment as well as reflecting how gay relationships were marginalised in that period:

> Ch: Phillip and myself went to Tuscany and we came back and I then decided to tell him that I had been seeing, after eleven years, I had been seeing this young kid that I had met… and then he said "you had better speak to him and put an end to it now". I went along and saw Gavin and told him that I can't leave my partner of eleven years etc., etc. …and he (Gavin) was distraught. I contacted him again and it happened again. And then he went up to Scotland and told his parents and

told Ben (his partner) what happened. I told Phillip the situation. So, Phillip said "Okay, well it's plan B, we had had better get you into one of our other flats", we had many flats, "…and you can move in with him".

Ch: But then, it was payback time, because (Stephen) suddenly…he was going through the same sort of development stage, because he was younger than me by eight years and he met somebody on the train on the way to Gatwick Airport, an airline steward…and I don't know, he decided, we had just come back from the gym…and I was looking through all his gym kit and all the rest and I found a note in his bag and…questions…these questions were evidently not directed in my direction. So I ran, as he was getting the papers, he was just walking down the road, I could see him from the apartment, walking down the road to go and get the papers at the local shop. I ran and said "Stephen, I think we need to speak about the gym kit stuff". So he ran back "It's not what you think, it's not what you think". And he ran out of the house and I didn't see him for three days. A week later he tells me that he does have feelings for this Juan guy. And he moves out into one of our flats again.

Andile, Clinton and Ashraf reported in their I-Poems that they ended their relationships because of infidelity. In the narrative of Andile, he spoke of being involved in a long distance relationship that ends in infidelity, while Clinton said he was confronted with jealousy and cheating. Ashraf revealed that his first partner was unfaithful. All these men are constructing heteronormative style relationships, where the binaries of hetero/homo identities are rigid and dualistic. Butler (1997) argues that the unconscious not only sets limits on the kinds of identifications possible, but that these limits are themselves the products of power relations that operate through social regulation. This would lead to the psychic incorporation of (hetero) norms such as recognising infidelity in gay relationships, without deconstructing from where these norms originate (heterosexual social regulations). Both Andile and Clinton constructed relationships which had elements of resistance to heteronormativity, where there partners were versatile in sexual practices, but otherwise were heteronormative when it came to honesty, trust and having

other sexual partners. This compares to the study by Rankotha (2005), where seventeen 'masculine' gay men reported that they preferred versatility in their sexual practices but wanted to have girlfriends as well. Ashraf was in a heteronormative relationship which was also undermined by dishonesty. Even though these relationships must be contextualised as occurring before gay marriage was legalised (Republic of South Africa, 2006), Andile was particularly traumatized by the loss of his partner (and had to seek counselling). This arguably leads to challenges in his future relationship with Steve. For example:

> Andile: …then one day his friend called me "your boyfriend phoned me last week and he said he wanted me to help his boyfriend in East London"
> I just phoned him
> I said to him "where is your journalist friend?" and he couldn't actually deny
> I could even hear over the telephone saying "who?"
> I mean you know when a person is telling the truth
> …and
> I said goodbye

> Clinton:...he was also a kind of control freak, same kind of jealousy about friends
> …then it got to a point when
> I said "no, no my dignity has been undermined in this relationship"
> …if
> I go out and
> I say "I will be back, I am going to family, and I'll be back by nine o'clock"
> …if
> I am not home by nine o'clock he will phone me "where are you ?"…so very much a control freak
> …and
> I had my suspicions about him because many times the story he told me wouldn't tally
> …I would find out that he wasn't quite honest about what he was saying

Ashraf: I was starting to become very serious about him

I was very open about whom

I was

I was very open

I was loving it…but something was not quite right

…he came out and he said "no, I have got a boyfriend"

I didn't expect that

Sipho spoke about how he and Nico terminated their relationship after they discovered that they were both passive and were unable to engage in a sexual relationship. In the I-poem below, it is clear the confusion that exists within Sipho's construction of himself ('I could'… 'I just didn't have'… 'I think I can'… 'I cannot completely') signifies how the heterosexual/homosexual binary works. If you are construed as 'feminine' or 'feminine-acting', your construction has to fall within the ambit of passivity. To construct a more flexible identity requires within the binary a resistance to the normative masculine and feminine construction. Even though it did not occur during that relationship, the positive consequence is that Sipho realised that he could be 'flexible' in his future relationships.This is commensurate with queer identities that are unsettled, destabilized and fragmented (Plummer, 2005). For example in this I-Poem from the narrative of Sipho:

I felt that

I could play another role but

I just didn't have the locus to play another role

I would think okay well

I had to play a flexible role…

I think

I can

I cannot completely be active

…however

I can largely be flexible

Participants have articulated how their relationships were either constructed as monogamous or as non-exclusive, and how this led to challenges with power relations particularly where roles were stereotyped as 'masculine' and 'feminine'. There were examples of sexual non-inclusivity, where the masculine-acting partner 'othered' his partner by having sexual liaisons outside of the relationship.

Endings in gay relationships are traumatic as described by some of the participants. As mentioned earlier, some participants told how they started a new relationship while on the verge of ending a current relationship; while others spoke about how they had ended relationships because of infidelity. One relationship had a positive consequence because the one partner realised that he could be more flexible in future relationships. Most of these relationships were heteronormative, but there were elements of resistance that emerged.

6.4. Heternormative models of relationship

As already explored, most of the gay men in this study follow a stereotypical heteronormative model in their relationships, where one person performs (Butler, 1990) the 'masculine' role and the other the 'female' role. However, what was interesting was that some participants do not always stay in their designated role, or have different roles in different areas of the relationship, highlighting the shifting and fluid possibilities of more alternative and flexible constructions (Plummer, 2005). Sexual roles will not be discussed in this section, but in the section on sexual practices in relationships.

Roles are predominantly defined according to heteronormative principles which articulate that the masculine-acting men should be earning money while the feminine-acting men are expected to be doing the emotional work within the relationship. Butler (1997) argues that this is a political identification, where the unconscious sets limits on the kinds of identifications that are possible and, further, that these limits (for example

heteronormative regulations) are themselves the products of power relations that operate through social regulation. McNay (1999, p. 186) suggests that Butler's focus on the socio-centric concept of the psyche explains the "non-correspondence between hegemonic gender norms and sexuality in terms other than the pre-social imaginary identifications which leave the symbolic intact as an immutable law". The reformulation of the relationship between the psychic and the social, emphasizing the role of the social in psychic subjection, and the development of passionate attachments, both " limit the contingency of the social and the open-ended-ness of identity" (McNay, 1999, p. 187). These arguments reemphasize the either/or of the dichotomies of fixity and how the "instability of bodily categories such as sex and gender are normative ideals that are impossible to fulfill" (Matisons, 1998, p. 23).

Decision-making about money is a socially determined role that is generally taken by the 'masculine-acting' man in a heteronormative relationship. Ashraf who is masculine-acting shared how he enjoyed taking out his second partner to a meal wanting to impress him with his financial 'muscle', together with his normative status as being dominant in sexual practices. He suggested that this special meal may have contributed to more openness and led to the relationship developing more rapidly. This is arguably similar to a heteronormative narrative where 'women' are 'swept off their feet' by the generosity and bank balance of their male partners and are then expected to be more 'open' in sexual practices. The repetition of the 'I' in the I-Poem together with verbs (such as took, went, met, liked) reflects Ashraf's dominant construction in this interaction:

> I took him out to dinner
> …but
> I went all out
> …because it was the first time that
> I met somebody that
> I liked in a long time
> …so

> I took him to Pigalle…when we got there…there was champagne and we had
> oysters
> …it was different to what
> I experienced before…it was open from the start you know…there was lots of
> honesty

Ashraf's social control of his partner is reflected in the use of the 'I' and 'plan' in his I-Poem, showing how he planned (without consultation) to spend time with his partner. Lack of negotiation highlights how some men take it upon themselves to decide for other feminine-acting men what is best for them, without consultation. This is the psychic incorporation of norms as a product of social regulation (Butler, 1997). There is even surveillance and monitoring (Butler, 1995) involved, as he fetches him after work to ensure his obedience as intimated below:

> I loved spending time with him
> I would plan my whole day around him
> I would plan my whole week around him
> I would stay up until one o'clock in the morning to pick him up from work…and
> party with him

However, the relationship started to be challenged when Ashraf questioned his social role as 'provider' (which could be psychic resistance). He also felt that Deon could 'do better' than his present job as a waiter. Butler (1997) explains this as an individual's capacity to withdraw and reattach, which is a source of resistance and the possibility of resignification. This is another aspect of the expectations linked to the normative 'masculine' role, where the masculine-acting person is prepared to pay for everything, but then expects some return for his investment (which could be linked to corporate power). Ashraf's criticism of Deon's job is linked to the lack of financial reward that the job as a waiter offers, and is 'othering' of the class signification in which Deon has placed himself. Ashraf appears to be complicit with hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995) as he tried to persuade Deon to take on another job. It is perhaps ironic that Ashraf

is a Muslim gay man who is constructing a dominant discourse over a white Afrikaner, given the history of apartheid, in financial practices. Tucker (2009) argues that some white queer men in Cape Town did not create a political identity and did not engage in political struggles around sexual identity rights. It is not clear how Deon 'fits' into these categories, which might be behind his unhappiness at his positioning ('I don't think he liked that') within roles in this I-Poem:

>…he wouldn't have to ask and
>I would pay
>…and he knew
>I would pay his rent every month
>…"I need to pay my rent"
>…immediately
>I would go to the bank
>
>I gave him lots of options
>…and
>I don't think he liked that
>I was like "you can work here, you can do this and you can do that, you know"
>I told him you know when you work for somebody…you get paid to do a certain job
>I was trying to show him that he was being abused you know

Justin reported that his second partner was upset with his earning a higher wage and that this caused tension in their relationship. Justin spoke of a heteronormative narrative, where as the 'masculine' performer he was expected to earn more than his feminine-acting partner. There seemed to be a competitive edge in their relationship which could not be resolved. It appeared that Justin's partner was identifying as 'passive' within sexual practices, but was resistant to the norm when it came to the work environment. According to Lloyd (1998, p. 40), this reflects the fluidity that Butler is referring to when she says "resistant forms of identification, although constituted in the same field as power

relations, would appear to have the potential to contest, maybe even subvert, dominant norms of gender". Furthermore, there is a likelihood that his partner may be 'passing' as a heterosexual within his work environment (Rosenfeld, 2009), which may give him agency to resist Justin. On the other hand, Tracey (2007) argues that in heterosexual relationships where the 'female partner' devotes too much time to employment, there is a possibility of conflict. As both Justin and his partner were employed in this relationship, it is possible that there was role conflict. Tracey (2007) suggests that the female partner would undertake emotional work (Wilbraham, 1996) to try and manage the conflict, but in Justin's relationship it is not clear from the I-Poem whether his partner was prepared to take on that role. For example:

> I earned more that what he did
> I think that is what the problem was
> …because
> I mean he always strived to be better in everything in every aspect of our lives…
> I earned a very good salary when I started working
> I mean my first job
> I was earning close to R9, 000…he was a trainer…a top position and he was earning like R6, 500…because he felt better than me in a way…because of his upbringing
> …very conservative

In two narratives that mirror and resist a binaristic model of traditional masculinity/femininity, participants speak about how their roles intersected with their relationship to financial power in the relationship. Both Clinton, who was versatile ('masculine' and 'feminine' acting) and Sipho, who was feminine-acting, stated that they relied on their partners to take on the normative 'masculine' role of supporting them while they were studying. Clinton spoke about being a 'burden' and being 'othered' because of his lack of finances as a student. He suggested that his partner controlled the relationship through having a car and 'calling the shots', a term used in the corporate sector to symbolise male dominance within hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005). On

the other hand, Sipho related that his 'feminine-acting' partner, Nico, should have been more active in their relationship because he was older, more educated, drove a car and had more money. This relationship is resisting heteronormative constructions of relationships because both are feminine-acting. In examining Butler's analysis of identification, Fuss (1995, p. 9) states that "Butler's work provides a considered evaluation of the ways in which any identification is purchased through a set of constitutive and formative exclusions". The possibility of two men identifying as feminine-acting constituting a relationship with the 'exclusion' of a masculine-acting partner, articulates what Butler (2000, p. 150)) regards as "certain forms of instability (that) are opened up within the political field by virtue of the identification itself". Butler (1997, p. 105) terms the identification an injurious interpellation and suggests that these interpellations need to be reworked by inhabiting social categories "through which we are constituted in unintended ways, and in so doing to challenge and change their meaning". It appears that, even though Sipho and his partner Nico are inhabiting an unintended social category, Sipho is unable (at this stage) to challenge and change the meaning and 'calls for' a normative understanding of Nico's role ('him being older, him working…and him having the money…I thought he was the active one') which resists resistance. For example:

> Clinton: I was a student
> …when we go out
> I would never have money to pay for myself
> I felt like a burden financially because of him having to pay my way
> I think he was sympathetic, but in a way he called the shots, he had the car; it afforded him a lot of power in the relationship

> Sipho: Him, being older, and him working, and him being more educated, and him having the car, and him having the money, and him calling the shots for the dates, you know, and I'm just tagging along, I thought that he was the active one…

Roles in the kitchen and in the house are stereotypically performed by the partners in the relationship that are 'feminine'-acting. Suleiman and Harold argued that they identify and signify with the more 'feminine' roles like cooking and cleaning, and that they feel that they are competent to perform these tasks (as regulated). There is no sense of being 'othered' by their more masculine partners but it is still a heteronormative construction. Suleiman's suggestion that relationships are about 'give and take' intimates reciprocity (Connell, 1992). However, he does not explain how this happens, which is a silent taken-for-granted discourse which many women are exposed to in heteronormative relationships (Willemse, 2007). For example:

> Sul: …and I love cooking. I can make huge dishes. And I can spend hours in the kitchen. I love cooking. I think it's one of the most relaxing things. For me giving a massage is more relaxing than receiving a massage. In the same way, I like cooking as opposed to...I love eating, but to be the cooking one is so much more enjoyable… and the thing is you end up taking as well as giving

Harold in his I-Poem below essentializes (Le Vay, 1993) his role of being the cook and cleaner ('I naturally will clean the house'). Butler (1990) states that significatory practices endow particular bodies with social and symbolic meaning, structuring everyday actions of embodied subjects. As Harold is embodied as 'feminine-acting', he symbolically takes on the role of cook and cleaner (constituting acts) in his relationship. It is perhaps ironic that he suggests that he is good at it and enjoys it, but then highlights the need for reciprocal relationships. There is a disjuncture in that he constructs a cooking persona, but articulates a theory that would suggest sharing of the cooking and cleaning duties ('there should be a certain amount of reciprocity') in this example:

> Har: I think the bottom just kind of fall into that role…we almost take on that role
> of being submissive
> …like
> I am going to clean the house and make the food
> I love to cook

I love to entertain

I naturally will clean the house

…this is how

I have been raised

I cannot change

I see things that aren't neat and

I will fix it

I think that the problem…there should not be a need for domination

I think relationships across the board…there should be a certain amount of

reciprocity

Ashraf related that he saw himself as taking on traditional 'masculine roles' in the sexual practices of his relationship with Deon, but also performed so-called 'feminine' roles like cooking and cleaning which resists the heteronorm (Roseneil, 2002). However, according to Ashraf, this ability to perform both stereotypically masculine and feminine roles appears to have 'othered' Deon, who performs a stereotypically feminine role in the bedroom but tries to be masculine-acting with his friends. This arguably points to 'unconscious' resistance to forming the psyche (Butler, 1997) in both their cases. Butler states that in developing an identity, the importance of the role of the social in the formation of the unconscious cannot be underestimated. That Ashraf's background is Muslim would have automatically positioned him as 'masculine', but he has inadvertently subverted that identity by identifying with feminine-acting roles. Furthermore, Goffman (1959) arguing from a symbolic interactionist perspective, posits that 'actors' engage in impression management before specific audiences and can present a different front in different contexts. In this instance, Deon is acting 'masculine' with his friends in public (as a marker of identification in the Afrikaner cultural domain) to impress them and to conceal his 'feminine side', while performing a stereotypical feminine role with Ashraf in private, where there is no need for concealment. The confusion about roles appears to be 'amusing' Ashraf, as he argues that Deon is unable to perform this masculine role adequately particularly with regard to knowledge about rugby (which is a sport that white Afrikaner men strongly identify with). This crisis about

'roles' arguably reflects on how heternormativity regulations (Kritzinger, 2005) force gay men to conceal certain aspects of themselves, so as to be 'passed' as a heterosexuals when in public, while in private there is no need to pass as such as there is no surveillance (Butler, 1995) from the hegemonic group. Goffman (1959, p. 83) argues that the 'actor' relies on others to sustain a "given definition" of the situation. This is arguably a definition of the 'masculine' performance required of Deon in a public domain for him to pass as heterosexual. Friends in this instance appear to be playing a surveillance role (Butler, 1995) of how Deon should be performing as 'masculine', rather than sustaining the 'given definition'. They contribute to his 'othering' in this setting, as Ashraf explains in his I-Poem:

> … actually, it was so funny the one day…actually
> I invited his friends to my house to watch rugby at my house…and the rugby match was going on…and
> I have been to a lot of rugby matches in Durban…
> I know my rugby very well…so my knowledge is actually much better than anyone there…and it was shocking to everyone around him because here he claimed to be this rugby fanatic…and then he has got the feminine boyfriend who is in the kitchen making the odd dinner and making the…bringing the carrot sticks with the dips and everything and

As mentioned previously, in heterosexual relationships it is normally the women who take on the emotional work in the relationship. Moegamet, as the feminine-acting partner in the relationship, takes on the role of being emotionally supportive in his heteronormative relationship. He revealed that his relationship with Angelo took 'time' to develop and that they are very supportive of each other ('we are a great team'). Emotional work in a heterosexual relationship is managing, monitoring and maintaining the emotional well-being of a couple (Wilbraham, 1996). Moegamet says he 'cares a lot' which is part of managing a relationship, but is realistic in that he accepts that his feelings of love are not the same as experienced with a previous partner. His argument that he has to 'rely on himself' is criticism of the role that his 'masculine' partner plays in that he

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(the latter) does not make himself available to help with the management of the relationship. His statement that he could survive without him is reflective of how he probably is concerned that Angelo will leave him at some stage for another man, which reflects his 'othering' within his designated role. On the other hand, he may be challenging the meaning of his 'role' within the context of resignification and resistance (Butler, 1997, 2000) to stereotypical feminine constructions. As part of the emotional work, Moegamet tries to evaluate the relationship in terms of 'give and take' (reciprocity) which is, arguably, monitoring the relationship. He does find some value in terms of what each has given to the other, as he describes in the next example:

> Mo: I won't say that it was love from day one, it was more attraction. Gradually it grew to being a content relationship. We are involved and we are very good for each other. We make a great team. I do care a lot. But it is also not the same love I had with Dennis. There is always a difference. I mean I spoke to a lot of people and they said that look, at the end of the day, love tends to grow on you. In a way Angelo has taught me a lot of things, to rely on myself. The strong person that I am, I was always strong but I feel that should we part, I could, I would be able to survive. I normally thought that I wouldn't survive. I taught Angelo how to use a PC. He has taught me about the closeness of my religion, brought me back to my religion.

Harold, as feminine-acting, also took on the early emotional work in his relationship with his masculine-acting partner. Harold stated that he talked to his partner on Mixit and through 'chatting' they got to 'like' each other. This is a mundane performance echoed in heterosexual relationships in terms of sharing ideas and thoughts. Later on they connected again when he came to see Harold perform his poetry and were able to explore around his ideas within the poetry ('I think that…helped'). This is a creative way of instituting new value systems and new forms of collective identity (McNay, 1999). It is evident from the I-Poem that it is important for Harold not to seen as a sex object, as he feels arguably disempowered by the way that 'masculine' men regard him as 'feminine' (Rabie, 2007) and as not embodying the 'correct' appearance (Rosenfeld, 2009). Harold

speaks of 'loving him' – which according to Robinson (2008), is not often revealed by gay men – for not seeing him like that. His I-Poem speaks of underlying pain and vulnerability experienced as a result of not being respected. For example:

…we spoke on this media called Mixit...we chatted for a while...and
I realized that
I liked…
…as
I told you earlier and he came to see me perform and he saw me perform...and
I think that...that also just like helped...but he's always seen me in that light...he
has always held so much respect for me since the first moment he met me...and
that is what is...that is what
I love about him...he sees me...you know...other than a sexual object...

6.4.1. Deconstruction of heteronormative binaristic roles

Some of the men clearly identified with alternative constructions of roles in their relationships. Charles and his current partner in South Africa share a business and build wealth together, which is resisting heteronormativity in some areas. Thomas, who is masculine-acting in sexual practices (outlined in the section on sexual practices) was reliant on Charles's financial acumen and wealth to help refurbish a flat in London through a loan. Their roles are fluid and unstable which arguably is what Butler (1997) is saying with regard to challenging and changing the meaning of social categories. She adds that in reworking injurious interpellations that can lead to subjection, one needs to understand the structure of the subject, which this view of power exposes as illusionary, together with the workings of power in the simultaneous production of subjects and subjection. Furthermore, it is likely referring to rebellious positions as identified by Weatherall and Edley (1999) in male psycho-discursive practices which highlight the unconventional and promote ambiguity. It is unconventional in that the'masculine'-acting man is not powerful in decision-making around finances (which is illusionary, according to Butler), and it is ambiguous as neither is prepared to construct as dominant

in different areas of the relationship. Their relationship is built on respect and reciprocity (Connell, 1992), which is characterized by similar ages of partners and shared class position. For example:

> Ch: He has created something but no he hasn't brought money to the party. We have created money together. I have helped him create...
>
> M: With the business here…?
>
> Ch: Also in London, I pushed him in the direction of getting a mortgage. I lent him the deposit for a flat. He bought the flat in his name and I facilitated that. We refurbished the flat and we sold the flat and made 70,000 pounds. He paid back the money he owed me.
>
> M: You empowered him?
>
> Ch: I was empowering him…

Jacques and Sylvester have a similar class position in their working professions, and this has contributed to creating reciprocity and equality in their relationship. Neither of the two gay men constructs normative roles in their relationship, which is challenging the meaning of social categories as identified by Butler (1997) and allowing for resignification. On the other hand, McNay (1999, p. 187) is critical of Butler's account of agency and resistance as "a predominantly negative one…which fails to draw out fully the ways in which the symbolic realm is composed of conflicting values and resources which may be actively…appropriated by actors to institute new value systems and new forms of collective identity". In his narrative, Jacques engaged in humour (which could be regarded as a creative way of dealing with conflicting values in his relationship) and was self-effacing about the power dynamics in his relationship. However, Butler (1997) argues that creativity of human action is constrained by foreclosure, disavowals, repudiations and the psychic regulation of desire. In Jacques' reflection, there was hesitancy and a questioning about how equal the relationship is ('it's relatively equal'), which indicates how power is not possessed by one individual (Foucault, 1978) but is an illusion (Butler, 1997) with regard to structuring of a subject. Plummer (1995, p.133) posits that queer stories "shun uniformities….seek out immanences and ironies, and

ultimately find pastiche, complexities and shifting perspectives". Jacques identifies with complexity and pastiche in his description of power. He also wrestled with what both bring to the relationship because of their similar education and class. However, as their relationship is interracial, there are still gaps in terms of understanding the historicity of their relationship. In this regard, it is not certain how their racial differences, particularly in post-apartheid South Africa, play a role in determining Jacques' understanding of power in their relationship. McNay (1999, p. 187) says that Butler runs the risk of dehistoricising the idea of performative agency, because the potential for change is located in "the permanent disjunction between the psyche and the social". This is demonstrated in the narrative below:

> M: Do you think you have equal power?
>
> J: I think it depends on the time of the month it is... (Lots of laughter) sometimes I feel I have more power and sometimes he has more power. We are both...it's the most equal relationship I have ever had in terms of power. It's never...it's always complicated. Ja, it's relatively equal.
>
> M: Is it because of your status?
>
> J: Ja, it's in terms of we have the same education and I have more experience, but I am older...but he is younger and he is in the need of stability. I don't know, somehow there are many factors, emotional, financial and other factors...intellectual factors that make it quite equal.

Roles that are operative in social interactions with friends and partners can reflect differently from roles that operate in sexual practices, or in decision-making about finances. Suleiman, who is feminine-acting, is pro-active in taking his masculine-acting partner to a heterosexual club in Cape Town, taking the lead in resisting heteronormative regulations by kissing his partner in a 'straight' club. Suleiman inhabits a social category in an unintended way (two men kissing each other in a heterosexual environment), changing the location of where intimacy between men can happen. The fact that he could have faced social sanctions and ostracism (Butler, 1995) does not deter him and reflects on how power is an illusion. For example:

Su: And then we finally went out one night. And I took him to a straight club and he couldn't believe the interaction. I mean we were holding hands, kissing in a straight club...and everyone was like whatever...and somehow from his background it would never have happened. It started out in a playful manner and before I knew it we were both delving into something more totally serious.

Moegamet related that he goes to the gay clubs on his own so that he can drink with his friends, as Angelo works a late-night shift. As they construct their relationship based on heteronormative stereotyping, where Moegamet is 'othered' as a 'bottom' in sexual practices, going out on his own and drinking with his friends, (in this he is also transgressing his Islamic religious beliefs) challenges the 'fixed' meaning of social regulations as outlined in the next excerpt:

Mo: …and that's when I decided to, I think I just made a stand where I, every weekend, just went out from Fridays to Sundays… he realized a lot of things, he's not much into clubbing. I am now the party animal basically. I go out and drink with my friends. We seldom go out together

6.5. Sexual practices in relationships

Talk about sexual practices was a strong thread throughout the narratives. Some of the participants shared how they engaged in sex with their partners, but most did not detail these experiences. Sex, however, emerged as a key defining component of the relationship, as it does in heterosexual relationships. While heterosexual sex generally takes place behind closed doors (Somerville, 2000) and is a "product of cultural frameworks" (Jagger, 2008), it is nonetheless popularly displayed as the norm for sexual practice. Non-normative performance is against what Butler (1993) defined as genealogy of the body's materialization, where the category of sex is a means of revealing the ways in which bodies are materialized in the service of the heterosexist norm. It also identifies the role of power and signification in this process. Therefore, in a heterosexist society,

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signification with regard to gay sex is seen as oppressive and most gay men do not speak about it. In this section, the link between construction of roles and sexual positions will be unpacked, which will serve to highlight how some relationships seem to follow the heterosexual or binaristic pattern of one identifying as dominant and the other identifying as passive, or one performing penetration or one performing as penetrated. These relationships subscribe to heteronormative signification, as will be discussed below.

6.5.1. Heternormative model of sexual practices

Some of the participants described how their sexual practices seemed to reflect traditional male-female relationship and found that being in the stereotypic feminine role particularly disempowering. Moegamet argued that his masculine-acting partner Angelo 'demands' anal sex even though he (Moegamet) abhors it. He speaks about a power struggle that leads to sex, which is similar to how women experience penetration in heterosexual sex, which is the result of the male sex drive discourse (Hollway, 1984), where penetration occurs after conquest. Butler (1998, p. 40) emphasizes the realm of sexual reproduction within a Marxist context, and positing that "normative gender serves the reproduction of the heterosexually normative family" which would render gay relationships as unproductive. Anal sex was also prioritised in the study by Rabie (2007) in a semi-rural coloured community of the Western Cape, where the Coloured participants associated the idea of gay identity with constructing as 'feminine' and were expected to practice anal sex. This is similar to how women are 'forced' to have sex, which reflects how cultural performance of sexed and gendered bodies are expected, working "through the production of individual identities via the incorporation of norms" (Jagger, 2008, p. 84). Angelo is mimicking the 'enforced cultural performance' as he is not able to construct an alternative performance at this stage. This is described by Moegemet as:

> M: Anal sex?
> Mo: Anal sex. He has to have anal sex. It literally means him being in control of the entire situation. I mean it's a power struggle. And that is what I have told him.

> He feels that after a big argument, that we should have sex. And I would be so angry. He would still insist that he will not leave me alone until I have just had to give in to the sex thing. He feels that he is young and he is hot blooded. I, on the other hand, maybe fondle and get it over and done with.

Sipho related in his I-Poem that he was also constructed as a 'woman' by his second partner, who came from Khayelitsha, a sprawling African township outside Cape Town. There relationship also mimicked heteronorms and, as Sipho's partner is elder of the two, he is similarly granted privileges in sexual practices - as highlighted in Almageur's (1997) study. Tucker (2009) suggests that a combination of age and the fear of homophobic violence against cross-dressers (and 'feminine'-acting men) in Cape Town impacts on queer relationships. This would likely lead to Sipho's partner utilizing his 'masculine' performance as a way of dominating and controlling the discursive interactions. In a comparable study by Rankotha's (2005), seventeen of the thirty gay Zulu men interviewed practiced inflexible role-playing, with the 'feminine'-acting men also viewed as women while their sexually dominant 'masculine' partners were privileged. The term 'wife' in this context could relate to the lack of words to describe difference in the Cape Metropole. Tucker (2009) states that in the townships in Cape Town there were no words to describe queer sexual identities, as queers were regarded as 'invisible' and that to describe themselves, queers used certain words (like Ivy[34]) rather than terms indicating the sexual activities that they engaged in. On the other hand, the term 'wife' could be regarded as a patriarchal cultural term that denoted 'ownership' of that person. For example:

> …he was…he also wanted to be seen as masculine and he was the one that was blatant as treating me as a female
> …he called me his wife

In Justin's first relationship, he said that he constructed as feminine-acting and was penetrated by his 'older' masculine-acting partner. This compares to a heteronormative

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[34] 'Ivy' was considered as a term to denote music, dance and fashion styles rather than particular sexualities (Tucker, 2009)

narrative that describes heterosexual male sex drive discourse (Hollway, 1984) where sex is regarded as unstoppable and executed by an idealised masculine body that dominates. Butler (1993) states that the materiality of significations is shaped by a symbolic order that is both phallocentric and heterosexist, which depends for its stability on the exclusion and repudiation of the abject to heterosex. Justin and his partner's signification follow the normative route where the 'feminine' partner experiences considerable pain and appears to have no agency in this I-Poem ('I was okay afterwards') which is similar to women's heterosexist experience. Butler argues for an emergence of an alternative anti-heterosexist imaginary. She believes in displacing the heterosexual imperative, which reifies the duality of sexual difference. For example:

> … one day we started kissing and started getting a bit heavy and clothes started to come off
>
> …what if
>
> …he was older…he was twenty-seven and
>
> I was twenty-one
>
> I just said "do whatever you need to do" and he did it
>
> I enjoyed it actually
>
> …he did penetrate me first…it was painful the first time, oh my God but
>
> I was okay afterwards

One of the masculine-acting men explained that he came to recognise his sexual role 'by accident'. Ashraf revealed that he did not know what 'top' or 'bottom' or 'versatile' meant and that he was apparently about to construct as a 'masculine' identity in sexual practices. This 'confusion' about his positioning within sexual practices either demonstrates the 'fluidity' of engaging in gay relationships if not controlled by gendered categories, or that Ashraf is unaware that his work status (a doctor) and his patriarchal Muslim background gives him power and dominance in sexual practices. Butler (1997) posits that the power that produces us is not just external to us but part of us. She focuses on the psychic aspect of power to show how the power that is formative of the psyche is social in origin (Ashraf's Muslim background) and so open to resistance and change (Is

he a 'top' or a 'bottom'?). Jagger (2008) argues that Butler's sociocentric conception of the psyche emphasizes the political aspects of identification and acknowledges that the unconscious sets limits on the kinds of identifications that are possible. Even though Ashraf is not aware of whether he wants to identify as 'top' or 'bottom', his unconscious sets limits (based on his cultural schemata) and he constructs a 'top' identity. As Jagger (2008) explains, these limits are themselves the products of power relations that operate through social regulation (for example, the psychic incorporation of norms). Therefore, these limits are also likely to define how the 'bottom' engages in ensuring the satisfaction of the 'masculine' partner. Ashraf said that his partner had the 'condom and the lubricant ready' which illustrates how considerate he was as a 'bottom' (probably because of his unconscious positioning within power relations), but also because he recognised that his identification with the 'feminine' role within a gay relationship positions him as a subordinate player, within power relations that operate through social regulations. In the I-Poem below, the 'I' together with certain action verbs demonstrate Ashraf's confusion about his role in sexual practices:

…the first time

I had sex…you know it was fantastic

…so

I knew that was the right person

I never had penetrative sex (before)

…top and bottom and versatile

I had no idea what that meant

…and

I didn't know what

I was

…apparently

I wasn't a bottom

I mean he did everything

I think because he had much more experience than me

I mean he had the condom ready and the lubricant and everything

…you know

I was not prepared

I think that is what made it easy and

I was twenty-four.

6.5.2. Deconstucting gender binarisms of sexual practices

In contrast, Harold and Suleiman spoke about the joys of constructing as a 'bottom' in their current relationships. They are resisting the construction of 'top' and 'bottom' as necessarily representing power inequality. Furthermore, they are arguing for what McNay (1999, p. 187) calls the reformulation between the psychic and the social in psychic subjection in Butler's work. This would lead to a "pushing of a feminist understanding of gender identity to a new terrain which avoids the either/or debates on the dichotomy of fixity with regards to identity". Two South African studies argue that submissives can also access power. In the study by Mclean and Ncgobo (1994) with IsiXhosa-speaking men on the mines in Gauteng, power was accessed by 'passive' *skesanas*[35] in their relationships. They posit that *skesanas* are flexible and can take on a more active role as they get older. This reinforces the argument that bodily categories such as sex and gender are unstable, and that the view that normative ideals are impossible to fulfill can lead to resignifications (such as taking on different roles). These resignifications are identified in the relationships of Justin and Charles and are described later on this chapter. Another study by Reid (2005) in Mpumulanga, argues that power relations can be reformulated in different ways by 'passives' but he was not arguing that it happens in sexual practices. Reid said that 'passive' gay men in the hair-dressing industry resignified power in their relationships with their more active partners in the township near Ermelo in Mpumualanga because they had employment. Class, according to Tucker (2009), is clearly marked among township inhabitants. He adds that for queer men in the township, there is a clear division of the 'haves' and the 'have-nots', and that this is also influenced by age.

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[35] A boy who likes to be penetrated

In demonstrating what he believes is a more fluid and resistant construction to normative sexual practices, Harold uses the phrase 'I am allowing it' in his I-Poem as a response to the 'masculine' partner's need to penetrate '…they can get into me'. This arguably reflects the 'unconscious' in the formation of identity (Butler, 1997) and the negotiation that takes place between the person penetrating and the 'receiver' of the penetration in a more resistant performance. Harold describes the act of penetration as a 'game' where he holds a lot of the aces as 'men cry for what I have to give'. The link of penetrative sex to emotions such as 'crying', is demonstrating the value that Harold gives to his identifying with the sexual performance. He is suggesting that what he has to give will lead to tears of joy and pleasure, in contrast to the pain and humiliation that he experienced when he was sexually abused as a young boy. This process of identifying 'sex with pleasure' is applicable to what Butler (1997, p. 40) argues as "resistant forms of identification…(which) have the potential to contest, maybe even subvert, dominant norms of gender". On another level, Harold utilises his poetic skills to 'comically' reflect on how he revelled in his 'femininity' ('I would be one of those business women'), which again underlines the potential for feminine-acting gay men to subvert dominant norms of gender as highlighted below:

Har: I think a lot of my lovers get off on the fact that they can get into me

…but then they don't realize that

I am allowing it

I do understand the power aspect of it

I have tripped within my own self

I think if

I was a woman

I would be one of those business women…walking around in three-piece suits and stiletto heels

…that is how

I see this gay game

…you know

I see myself as very powerful

I think

I hold something that is very powerful

I need to see myself as a powerful entity…because of the fact that men cry after

what

I have got to give

…they fly from Jo'burg to Cape Town…over weekends of what

I have to give

Suleiman also 'allows' his partner to penetrate him, which again reflects that power relations can be reformulated by feminine-acting men who perform as submissives ('I was in control') in sexual practices in a flexible construction (Plummer, 2005). Furthermore, he talks of how 'submission is a form of control', which is what Butler (1997) suggests when she questions how to rework injurious interpellations. She posits that social categories need to be inhabited in unintended ways (subverting submission), so as to challenge their meaning. For example:

> Su: … Mmmm. And the thing is you end up taking as well as giving. And you see it on other levels. It's weird because I am able to read people very well. So I mean submission is a form of control...so that for me, like it wasn't as if I was in control. I allowed him to take control which means I was in control. So that was what I was doing essentially.

There is a further example of reworking injurious interpellations. In his second relationship, Justin reported that he 'switched' and performed as a 'top' in his sexual practices, which is either trying to claim benefits which are offered to gay men who are 'masculine-acting (Edwards, 2005) or may be resisting and resignifying normative power relations. Charles also revealed that he 'switches' in his relationships. As he has explored four long-term partnerships, he said that the process of engaging in a number of relationships has led to the possibility of normative power relations changing. It is clear that Justin began to 'discover' the workings of power (which Butler [1997] regards as illusory) which led to this switch. Both Justin and Charles are interrogating the binaries

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of hetero/homosexuality (Roseneil, 2002) in resistant narratives. Halberstam (1998) argues that a fixed, essential or dominant version of men and their sexualities becomes deconstructed (when binaries are interrogated). This is highlighted in the stories of Justin and Charles. Jagger (2008) in analyzing Butler's allowance for resistance and resignification suggests that resistance is not always successful. Justin refers to this when he doubts that he will be penetrated again. However, he flags the possibility later on in the I-Poem which suggests that there is instability, as posited by Butler (1993) when reflecting on the materiality of the body. This is illustrated in the following example:

> I was the top in the relationship
> …like
> I learned of the gay life
> I discovered that
> I like giving…penetrating…like being a top
> …the first guy that
> I was with…he was probably the only guy that actually did penetrate me
> I don't feel like it anymore
>
> …now recently
> I recently started to get those urges (to be penetrated)...but you know you have to find someone you like to do it with...and with the status as well...it's too much of a hastle...but
> I am sure
> I will get there...

When Charles engaged in a relationship with Phillip, he performed as the active partner, but then constructed as submissive in his next relationship. He suggested that Gavin (his next partner) 'flipped', which is where resistance and resignification took place. This change reflects on the new queer ways of thinking about gendered categories that Sedgwick (1995) posits, where 'old categories' are deconstructed. In his next long-term relationship (with Stephen), the normative gendered categories are again 'queered' and

Charles reported that they both penetrated. In his current relationship with Thomas, he has 'reformulated' power relations by 'allowing' his partner to penetrate him. This resignification is explained as a compromise, as he is 'dominant' in business. Plummer (2000, 2003) argues that the new gender order touches on shifts in gender, bodies, relationships, eroticism, identities and families. Charles seems to be articulating that in gay relationships there needs to be a resistance to normative gendered power relations and, in the narrative below, demonstrates how fluid identities can be constructed:

> Ch: I had started having penetrative sex with Phillip at that stage, unprotected, and we were very much together…and I was the active partner anyway
>
> M: Were you the active…?
> Ch: No, that's the irony, Gavin flipped. He became more active…
>
> M: Were you again the penetrator (with Stephen)?
> Ch: That was equal.
>
> Ch: (Thomas) is mostly active.
> M: And is that okay?
> Ch: Ja, it's fine. But I think …ja.
> M: Has it changed the power dynamics?
> Ch: I guess it happens that way because (pause) in the sense that I am perceived as the power player for producing the business and the money and all the rest. This empowers him in a different way…

Both Andile and Clinton report how they would like to resist normative gender power relations in their sexual practices and are able to convince their partners of the value of being versatile and flexible. In the literature, 'flexibility' in gay relationships is synonymous with equal satisfaction according to Rankotha (2005), which does appear to reflect an alternative construction; however, there are contradictions. In his study in KwaZulu-Natal, thirteen of the thirty men interviewed argued that 'as men they both had

to be equally satisfied in bed'. The contradiction is that they can have girl-friends as well. Andile states that he is not prepared to back down on his 'cry for flexibility' and ends up negotiating a relationship that is non-sexual with his Rwandan partner, which is inhabiting a social category in unintended ways (Butler, 1997) and so changes the meaning of gay sex. McNay (1999) posits that Butler's account of agency and resistance is conceived in terms of negativity or constraint and questions the lack of emphasis on creativity of human action. It appears that Andile and his Rwandan partner have creatively instituted a value system that is based on non-penetration intimacy. It is unusual that they spoke about 'love', as Robinson (2008) reports in his study that gay men do not generally express their love for their gay partners. Only one interviewee out of eighty gay men interviewed, according to Robinson, expressed that his relationship was meaningful to him when he revealed his love for his partner. On the other hand in a survey on intimate relationships of African-American gay men in the United States, Peplau et al (1997) reported that 61% of the men interviewed said that they were 'in love' with their partners. It is not clear whether Andile in this I-Poem saw his relationship as having meaning when he expressed love, but he is arguably saying that 'love' is more important than penetrative sex. He is also foregrounding other ways of justifying his sexual desires which he does not outline. He may be reluctant to highlight these other 'performances' as he may not be sure what kind of sexual pleasures would be suitable for his partner at this stage. Plummer (2005) argues that there are many other sexual identities that gay men embrace (for example, foot fetishist, the hypersexual) when queering their identities that these also takes into account race, class and other social divisions. For example:

> …he made the same comment that he never did it
> …then
> I said "if this is the case, I won't allow you to do it to me"
> …because if
> I allow him to do it, then
> I must go to someone outside and
> I don't think that will be the right person

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…then he said to me for him sex is not important "if I don't want him to penetrate me then he does respect that"…far more important is love

…then

I said "okay, let's give it a try"

…there are other ways you can justify your sexual desires and he said "okay"

On the other hand, Clinton related that he was flexible in performing in sexual practices even though his partner wanted to construct a more active role. Clinton and his partner 'feel' their way through their sexual practices which highlights how some alternative or flexible sexual encounters are more 'fluid', and more 'unpredictable' when there is no conscious agenda on normative power relations. As posited by Plummer (2005), queer intimacies bring challenges, as the world is seen as more fragmented and pluralistic. As Clinton argued, he was not prepared to be merely the 'passive' one, which suggests that he was prepared to fight for his sexual rights ('I demanded it') within his relationship. This is, arguably, recognition by Clinton of his rights within the Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996) which has allowed him to resist normative power relations. He describes this in the following excerpt:

M: Flexible?

Clin: Both of us were flexible. He in a way wanted to be stronger than me in terms of that. He wanted to be more active.

M: Was he negative about being the passive one?

Clin: He never really verbalized it, but I sensed it. But I demanded it, because I wasn't prepared to be the passive one throughout the relationship. But it didn't really become an issue because of the fact that he was comfortable with…

M: Did you negotiate it or was it *sommer*…?

Clin: It just happened.

M: So it wasn't really discussed?

Clin: We felt our way through it.

Jacques stated that he and his current partner do not believe in roles, and that their sexual practices are commensurate with that philosophy. As highlighted earlier, Butler (1997) regards agency as the matter of reworking injurious interpellations and of unsettling passionate attachments to subjection. Both these men expose power as psychic regulation that can be resisted and resignified ('we don't have roles'). Jacques argued that other people have perceptions that his partner is 'female', but does not say in what way they regard him as such. On the other hand, this could refer to his body not conforming to 'masculine'gender norms. Jacques suggests that it is people who are less educated and come from the working class that may stereotype his partner. Harold argued in his interview that working class black African men 'other' gay men at UWC. According to Butler (1990), sexuality is 'performed' and a heteronormative masculine script is constructed that disavows femininity or homosexuality. This masculine script may contribute to the 'othering' of Jacques' partner as a feminine construction. However, Jacques and Sylvester are both queering this script by refusing to conform to these 'roles' in their relationship, which shows that they are resisting the way that heteronormative scripts are performed. This is illustrated by the following example:

> J: No, although people have perceptions that my partner conforms to the female gender stereotype...we don't really have roles about who cooks, who cleans, who is the sexual active partner.
> M: Is that the norm in South Africa?
> J: I actually really don't know. I think there is among the less educated and lower social economic status a need for people to fit their roles into traditional heterosexual roles, and to be either the one or the other because it makes it easier and less dangerous.

6.6. Conclusions

In this chapter, it is evident that there is a thread running through the different themes of meetings, relationship practices, gender roles and sexual practices where gay men speak not only of mimicking heteronormative values and practices, but also of resistance and

resignification. Both the latter challenge normative gender roles and gender power relations. The relationships that echoed heteronormativity reflect on a rigid binary of monogamous/promiscuous, masculine/ feminine and active/ passive that conforms to hegemonic masculinity. Meetings occurred in gay bars, clubs, flats and toilets which reflected gay history of the time of the performance. Relationships were mostly monogamous, but some participants reported infidelity from their partners which must be seen within the context of gay men agreeing to be non-exclusive. Roles highlighted heteronormative constructions in that participants followed the gender stereotype with regard to decision-making, emotional work and household duties. There was resistance to normative gender power relations where roles were not implemented, or where some participants spoke of confusion with roles, where one person constructs different roles in different environments. In sexual practices, the norm of masculine-acting men penetrating and the female-acting being 'penetrated' was established in some relationships. However, some argued for the rights of 'bottoms', which is a reformulation between the psychic and the social in psychic subjection promoting sharing of power. Another participant constructed a non-normative performance where he and his partner have creatively instituted a value system that is 'based on love'.

Further examples where participants told of resistance and resignification of normative gender power relations occurred when gay men interrogated and deconstructed normative roles and sexual practices, which led to more flexible or alternative constructions in their relationships. These occur when the participants switch or negotiate their role in sexual practices, which exposes power as psychic regulation. Stories were also told of how they blur heteronormative boundaries in social interactions. High status, class, racial privilege and sexual rights appear to challenge fixed meanings of social regulations contributing to these alternative constructions. However, less privileged gay men in this study also resisted stereotypical roles and were prepared to be versatile in their sexual practices.

The next chapter analyses and discusses the narratives that spoke of power and abuse in gay relationships.

CHAPTER SEVEN
NARRATIVES OF POWER AND ABUSE IN GAY RELATIONSHIPS

7. 1. Introduction

Chapter Seven focuses on narratives relating to experiences of power inequality and abuse within relationships with men that participants share. Some experiences of abuse begin in childhood and/or adolescence while others they are more a part of their adult sexual relationships. In this chapter, I argue that such experiences must be read within the broader patriarchal, homophobic and heteronormative context of South African society, in which that which is constructed as 'feminine', continues to be 'othered' and marginalized facilitating a range of abusive and violent social practices. These include sexual abuse of young boys, as well as the operation of forms of violence and abuse between gay men in their adult relationships, when framed in a heteronormative mould. The experiences presented here appear to be similar to heterosexual women's experience of abuse, also occurring within rigid binaries where both men's performance is stereotypically heteronormative. In this context, gender roles and sexual practices are often performed within an active/passive gender binary with limited agency for the person who performs as 'feminine'/ 'passive'. None of the 'abusers' has been charged in court, according to the participants, due to the fears of gay men of being 'outed' (Lambda Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project, 2003; Levanthal & Lundy, 1999).

As mentioned above, the kind of 'abuses' that are performed in these relationships are similar to those in heterosexual relationships. However, the physical abuse is between two men and sometimes the men who are 'abusing' are physically smaller than their partners. On the other hand, psychological abusive practices are primarily constructed in the relationships where power is contested, and where cultures and values clash and are not understood. This is often linked to communication break-downs and includes verbal abuse and threats. For some participants, the experience of abuse in their relationships with other men first happened in childhood experiences of sexual abuse. Three participants reported that they were sexually abused as children.

Butler (1991) argues that heterosexuality is both compulsory and fundamentally unstable, where acting outside of heterosexual norms brings with it "ostracism, punishment and violence". As highlighted further in this chapter, some participants in this study constructed themselves as traditionally 'masculine' and 'passed' as such (Goffman, 1959). These participants at times buy-in to traditional forms of 'othering' and devaluing of those men who perform in more traditionally 'feminine' ways (facilitating abuse and violence). Further reiteration of normative power relations occurs in this and other relationships and can lead to economic abuse, particularly where there is unemployment. The chapter is presented with the following themes: gender non-conformity and child abuse, the interaction of race, class and other forms of social inequality that facilitate abuse, the interaction of heteronormative models of relationship with abusive practices, coercive sexual practices and agency and resistance in response to abusive practices. In some narratives, there are combinations of different kinds of abuse that have also been highlighted in the literature (Abrahams, 1999). There were only six participants that spoke of experiencing abuse in their relationships, namely, Suleiman, Andile, Sipho, Clinton, Dirk and Candice. Others reported what they viewed as abusive 'elements' in their relationships.

As highlighted, three coloured gay participants experienced coercive gay sex as young children which had negative consequences for them. This they describe in the next section.

7.2. Gender non-conformity and child abuse

For some of the 'feminine-acting' boys, school was associated with coercive gay sexual experiences. Three of the gay men (Harold, Candice and Moegamet) reported being sexually abused by teachers and community members (known to them) while they were at school, and spoke of how this impacted on their self-esteem. These stories tell of damage to future relationships and a sense of anger with their parents whom they blamed for not protecting them. Harold described how he was sexually molested at the age of

four and suggested that the experience has had a profound affect on him. Already at that age, he was observed as not conforming to a heterosexual identity. His rejection was arguably at the level of embodiment (Rosenfeld, 2009) and was reflected in the words ('I was different') in his I-poem which highlights that even at four years old, a particular look or way of walking can lead to a public impression that you are gay. Abuse of young feminine-acting boys, can be compared to how young women are treated in society. Butler (1993, p. 19) regards this as a political act. She suggests that women are raped or abused because of their sex. She regards the category of sex as "a principle of production, intelligibility and regulation which enforces violence and rationalizes it after the fact". The heterosexual men or gay men passing as heterosexual (Goffman, 1959) take advantage of difference to claim their hegemonic right to have sex with 'feminine' boys as described in this I-Poem:

> I was four years old
> …and the person that
> I befriended in the new neighborhood…came to fetch me one afternoon and had
> sex with me

Candice and Moegamet reported being sexually abused by older teachers at school and in the home. Drugs, such as cocaine, were used by the teacher to 'knock' Candice out and then he was raped. The experience may have been related to the socio-economic context of these schools. The commonplace context of substance abuse and violence in these communities is documented in studies, showing the widespread nature of drug dealing and gangsterism in these communities. Furthermore, this experience is also linked to the impact of apartheid and racial capitalism. The majority of working-class schools on the Cape Flats are still marginalized, economically disadvantaged and over-crowded, as are many other schools across historically disadvantaged communities in South Africa. Here again, Candice's 'feminine' appearance would represent a failure to embody and uphold the heteronormative gender binary. This hegemonic discourse, according to Butler (1999), requires that only a certain kind of subject or body is recognizable as 'feminine',

and when there is transgression there are punishments (for example, rape) for the bearer of that flawed identity. For example:

> Candice: It happened with one of my teachers. I was very young; I was about fourteen years old. I could recall that experience...God, I don't know...it's difficult to talk about...You know what happened, I had coke...went to his class, had coke and can't remember nothing after that...he gave me this coke...and it's very sensitive, not even my parents know about it. I have been keeping it a secret for all these years and nobody actually knows about it. You are actually the first one...
>
> M: So it's still painful, when you think about it?
>
> Candice: ...There was enormous pain afterwards...it was my first experience now and it was painful...

Moegamet's experience of coercion is exacerbated by his perception that his mother facilitated the abusive experience by turning a blind eye, in that she assumed that the teacher could be trusted to look after her son. The 'showing' that he is speaking about is arguably sexual molestation of a minor by a school teacher. This hidden discourse was highlighted in Harold's narrative when he spoke of coloured men 'using' other men sexually ('young men are used by whoever in the community wants to use them'). For example:

> Moegamet: ...And I had a school teacher, he was my mathematics teacher and he taught me dancing...he invited me to his place and he showed me...
>
> M: Did he show you physically?
>
> Moegamet: Physically, physically...and we did it physically as well.
>
> M: And how old were you?
>
> Moegamet: Eight years old. Eight...he would come and collect me and speak to my mother...and my mother said 'no, you must go, because it's dance class'.

Candice also shared how such abusive experiences involve secondary abuse, as the teacher manipulated the silence and continued abuse by threatening to expose him via a video-tape. As Candice had been bullied from a young age (the words "I am scared' is highly likely to mean fear in a broader sense) and begins to construct an identity, his self-esteem is fragile and 'undermined', so that the threat comes within the context of his marginalisation and subordination within the hegemonic hierarchy that starts at school. Connell (1983) explains how dominant boys take up space and how boys that do not 'fit' are subordinated. Sathiparsad (2006) reiterates that 'alternative' or resistant masculinities are rejected by the dominant boys in schools in KwaZulu-Natal and that the 'feminine' boys are marginalised. Moreover, this experience impacts negatively on Candice's future relationships. His comments about 'feeling dirty' are similar to those experienced by women who have been raped by men (Bewley, Friend & Mezey, 1999). His experience led to an abusive relationship, which is covered later in this chapter. This extract outlines his emotional state:

> Candice: ... and then afterwards I was threatened. There is a video-tape made about it. So I have to come back all the time, otherwise I will be exposed. At that age what do you know? You see I never saw the tape but he said...I was scared.
> M: ...Do you think it affected your future relationships?
> Candice: Yes, it did. It actually did...even having sex with a partner, I feel dirty afterwards, you know, I don't want him.

Arguably, none of the men in this sample was able to expose their perpetrators either at the time or later, because they were seen as gender nonconformists (Rosenfeld, 2009) and, as such, are marginalized within a heteronormative society (Levanthal & Lundy, 1999). While it could be argued that young girls/women suffer similarly from such silencing in the face of sexual abuse at school, the experience of gay sexual abuse may be complicated by homophobia and multiple 'othering' processes. As one of the key informants argues: gay men are 'fearful' of laying a charge (for any kinds of abuse) as it would mean their going to court and possibly being 'outed', which could negatively impact on their future. These examples highlight their reticence:

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Candice: I don't even see him you know...

Moegamet: It's only now with the abuse things that come about, that I have realized....

Harold: I didn't share it with anybody up until...standard nine.

Gay men in these 'abusive' relationships met at various sites within the Cape Metropole, including the Internet, which is a new arena for sexual and relationship practices. These meetings were primarily heteronormative in construction, as these men reported.

7.3. The intersection of class, 'race' and other forms of social inequality that facilitate abuse

Many of the participants spoke of meeting their partners within a stereotypical heteronormative framework, but highlight how class, 'race', age and other forms of social inequality facilitated abuse as the relationship developed. Suleiman, who is feminine-acting, described how he met his 'masculine-partner' while working. His partner was his manager and already the normative power relations were clear in that the more masculine partner starts a process of reiteration (in this regard, Butler [1997] argues that power is not wielded by a subject but works through subjects in a process of reiteration), where he renders the feminine-acting new recruit subordinate due to his status within the work-place. The manager abused his position as his senior by asking him out on a date, which is likely a violation of office policy. However, because of his reiteration of power, he took advantage of his dominant position, suggesting a date or a drink which as a precursor to taking advantage of the younger man. Furthermore, it can be assumed that the manager was passing as heterosexual (Goffman, 1959), who did not want to admit his sexual identity at that stage. Tucker (2009, p. 98) posits that coloured gay men who are heterosexually-identified men, have no need to come out, as "they were never in the closet to begin with". For example:

Sul: I mean I had just finished school. I was 17. Young, boisterous, trying to figure out the world and I had just started going to gay clubs. And I was thinking, oh, my God, what fantastic places and I started working and my manager...I was standing at the till one day, seeing what was going on at the door, and he had come up to me and he said to me "would you like to go out for a date or for a drink or something?" and I'm "that's okay" and only then I realized what in fact was happening. That he was picking me up. So I said "that's okay, that's fantastic" and then we started meeting

Sipho, who is feminine-acting, met an older isiZulu-speaking man at UWC and they started talking and exchanging cell-phone numbers. As it was Sipho's first partner, he explained in his I-Poem how he prepared himself for the 'dating game' with his masculine partner by imagining how it was going to unfold. Butler (1990, 136) argues that gender is an enacted fantasy, in which "acts, gestures and desires produce the effect of an internal core or substance, but produce this on the surface of the body". The imaginings that Sipho talks about is likely to be a 'fantasy' where he is beginning to enact a heteronormative style of meeting, where certain desires and/or gestures are produced. Here an older 'masculine-acting' man desires a younger 'feminine'-acting man. There is little 'excitement' in the example below, which is possibly because Sipho is maintaining the 'illusion' of reproductive heterosexuality:

Sipho: …and October
I met my first boyfriend in October…he was older
I was eighteen and he was twenty-nine…and
I met him in some meeting on campus…then we started talking, he took my numbers, and
I knew the way this happens, you become approached, some takes your numbers, someone calls you, someone wants to meet you, you go on your first date,
I knew that this was going to happen.

Dirk, who is feminine-acting, revealed that he met his 'older' boyfriend at school in Namibia and immediately described his partner as too 'butch'[36], which suggests that power relations are normative where the 'masculine' partner sustains the notion of heterosexuality. Cruz (2000) argues that being older ('he was thirty-five') and stereotypically the masculine partner leads to 'othering' of the feminine partner (Dirk) in abusive gay relationships. The context of Dirk's first relationship in Namibia must be understood within the political reality of homosexuality being publicly condemned by Sam Nujoma, the former Namibian President, who at the same time asked Namibians to "totally uproot homosexuality as a practice and to revitalise our inherent culture and its moral values…" (Gevisser, 1999, p. 962). For example:

> Dirk: Ja, at school I had a boyfriend but he was a bit too butch for me. He was much older, he was thirty-five. And I was nineteen.

Candice, who is a drag queen in Athlone, said that he met his first boyfriend while working as a hairdresser. He highlighted how his boyfriend was originally a client and that he had a girlfriend. A study by Rabie (2007) found that 'gay' is defined as 'feminine' on the Cape Flats and that 'masculine' men discard these men once they have 'used' them. Furthermore, they engage with girlfriends as well. Tucker (2009) maintains that the coloured community is well aware of the fact that men who perform a masculine gender identity have sex with cross-dressing queers. This 'acceptance' should not hide the possibility of maltreatment, which is discussed further on in this chapter. Candice had hoped for 'Mr Right', which is a heterosexual concept that women aspire to as well. Mutchler's (2000) research on masculinity tensions identified that one of the sexual scripts that was utilised by the young men was that they were looking for romantic love and were 'Waiting for Mr Right '. In the romantic story, Mario fantasizes for a real gay man that is masculine, muscular and straight-acting. This is not clearly stipulated in Candice's narrative, but is arguably what he is looking for in this example:

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[36] 'Butch' refers to gay men that perform a hyper-masculine script

Can: This is an interesting one, this is a five-year relationship. So now I thought I had Mister Right. Also one of my clients, we became friends and then there was the girlfriend at that time.

Andile, who is masculine-acting, spoke about how he met his third relationship partner Steve, a Nigerian, while surfing the Internet. Even though chatting on the Internet has been prevalent for many years (since the onset of web-sites such as Gaydar that cater for the gay community), recent research has identified that the Internet provides more than merely a chatting and email space, in that social identities and political identities are made possible through Internet exchanges (Barry & Martin, 2000). Steve, as a Nigerian, met Andile, an isiXhosa-speaking gay man, through chatting on one of the gay sites. It was the 'mystery' surrounding Steve as a foreigner that convinced Andile to contact him. Butler (1990, p. 136) points to how sexuality is regulated within the "obligatory framework of reproductive heterosexuality and that people who act outside of appropriate gender norms are policed and punished". Even though Andile was involved in a non-sexual relationship with a Rwandan in his previous relationship, he appears to be unaware of how it is imperative that in African countries political disciplinary practices are at work to sustain compulsory heterosexuality at all costs. According to Judge (2008), the Nigerian Government recently banned homosexuality and gay marriage through implementing the Same-Sex Marriage (Prohibition) Bill. Andile's meeting with the Nigerian should be contextualised within the outbreak of xenophobia in parts of South Africa (Davis & Snyman, 2007), including in Gauteng, where his future partner was living. The use of the 'I' in the I-poem below arguably reflects Andile's urgency in wanting to meet this new foreign person, such that he forgot to check his residency status:

I met Steve
…while
I was surfing the net
I viewed his profile
I liked it
…as

I thought that he was a match

I also thought that he was a compatible partner

I had decided that

I should call him

I called him up and

I used to call him everyday

I sent him one picture on a cell-phone

I started to ask him that he must tell more about himself…he told me he is

originally from Nigeria

I didn't ask him about full residency status

…as

I felt it was not important

7.4. The interaction of heteronormative models of relationship with abusive practices

Although it is not generalisable, given that this is a qualitative study, it is important to note that the power inequalities and abusive experiences reported by participants tended to emerge out of relationships that were framed in a traditionally heterosexual mode, in which stereotypical binaristic masculine and feminine roles were performed by the partners. In particular, the partner constructed as 'feminine' was generally at the receiving end of abuse, as is the case with traditional heterosexual abusive practices. Decision-making and finances were reported to be mainly controlled by the 'masculine'-acting men whereas the feminine-acting men were likely to do the emotional work and to focus on household activities, like cooking and cleaning. Social interactions in these relationships were marked by heteronormative-style practices, where jealousy led to exclusions and repudiations.

7.4.1. Instrumental control and decision-making

Suleiman experienced conflict within decision-making in his first relationship when he suggested a picnic in his manager's room and that it needed to be cleaned up. As he was performing in a stereotypical 'feminine' role, he was 'disciplined' for making decisions by his masculine partner ('don't ever tell me what to do'), whose role was threatened. In the definition of gay abuse formulated by the Lambda Gay and Lesbian Project (2003), it is reported that one partner seeks to control the thoughts of their intimate partner. This appears to be happening in this incident. In the narrative below, Suleiman realised that the disciplinary action was constructed 'in his (partner's) head' which is a recognition that power is assumed by the person who sustains the 'illusion' of compulsory masculinity (Butler, 1990), which is complicit with hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995):

> Sul: …then the first time that there was any sort of like abuse was when he was on the phone one day and I said to him "we can make a picnic in your room and you must clean your room" and he was like "don't ever tell me what to do" and I thought "oh, my God". I didn't know what was going on. And then that's when I realised, not realised, but that's when it started like 'shoo, that's in his head' and then it just changed.

As outlined in his I-Poem below, and in describing his relationship with Bongani, a Zulu man, Sipho experienced the application of the dominant gender binarism, with himself negatively constructed as the 'female' and undermined for his apparent physical similarity to stereotypical femininity:

> …he is a man; he wanted to be a man
> …you know
> I must treat him like that
> I knew he wanted to act masculine

In reiterating his control in power relations, Bongani demands that Sipho get a smaller phone as his hegemony is threatened by Sipho's having a bigger phone. Size is used in this instance as a metaphor to underline how 'small gestures' are utilized to ensure that binaries are maintained. Sipho's self-esteem is eroded by his partner's controlling performance ('that broke me down'). The use of an 'othering' discourse by his 'masculine' partner, following on from the homophobic responses from his peers within his class at UWC, could have led to the internalised homophobia (Meyer, 1995) that Sipho experienced later on this relationship. For example:

> Sip: …but he would tease me about my phone, that you have got quite a big phone; that is "why when you talk to me, …okay baby finish, this phone is to heavy for me. You must get another phone, man, why would you go around with such a phone", he would say…and I remember…
> M: The size of the phone…?
> Sip: The size of the phone being big. And he was having this small phone. "I am having a small phone, I've got it, and you must get it". That was one that really broke me down…

Andile and his partner experienced conflict around decision-making with regard to finances, which led to economic abuse. Steve manipulated his 'relationship' with Andile to access a computer and financial support. The use of manipulation is recognised as a form of emotional abuse in heterosexual relationships (Bewley, Friend & Mezey, 1999). Even though Steve performs the feminine role within sexual practices, he appears to subvert this role by aligning himself with compulsory heterosexuality, where inappropriate gender norms are punished. This is demonstrated in Andile's I-Poem:

> I remember when his brother called to tell him before he left Cape Town that his laptop was stolen
> …he asked me if
> I could help him to buy a new laptop as he had business that he had to do online
> …he asked me if

"I can borrow him R4, 000"

I don't know

I was shocked

I didn't have the money at the time as it was a huge amount

…but

I managed to raise the R4, 000 and

I gave it to him

The fact that Andile was open about his finances may have contributed to his marginalisation within his relationship. In his I-Poem, he appears not to recognise that Steve is abusing his 'trust'. Steve is likely to be positioned within the discourse that 'to be gay is unAfrican' (Cock, 2003; Gevisser & Cameron, 1995; Hoad, 1998) and is policing his partner, as in this example:

I trusted Steve with everything including my finances because

I used to discuss any finance issues with him

…he knew how much

I earn every month

Candice, as a drag queen, was expected to finance his financially active 'masculine' partner - a result of his 'othering' in homonormative gender power relations. As the feminine-acting partner, it appeared that he had to 'pay' for services rendered in the sexual arena, as his partner identified with compulsory heterosexuality, where the abject is disregarded. His partner was also using the power that is taken for granted in hegemonic masculinity (Hearn, 2004), where the masculine-acting partner determines how the subordinated person's (Candice) money should be spent. In a heteronormative-style relationship like Candice's, marginalisation would operate in other areas of the relationship as well. For example:

Can: He worked but then he still, and still "my car needs this" and "I don't have all the money" and "I want this because I have this to pay and I have that to pay" and I must give. And it went like this all the time.

The feminine-acting men in abusive gay relationships are expected to take on the domestic roles in the house, and there is intense surveillance (Butler, 1995) that can lead to punishment if those roles are not performed to a high standard. For example, in his first relationship, Candice was physically assaulted by his partner after preparing a meal that was 'not satisfactory', which is arguably linked to psychological abuse (Bewley et al, 1999) in heterosexual relationships. Lenneer-Axelson (1997) reports from a study on perpetrators of abuse in Sweden, that men who identify with a group conforming to violent patterns of behaviour (traditionally male) are like this because of their patriarchal position within their society. According to Leneer-Axelson (1997), these men's idea of male control and male self-command results in reluctantly accepting disappointments, without their being able to describe their own feelings or feel empathy for women.

Candice' traditional partner comes from the coloured community on the Cape Flats, where studies have suggested that domestic violence is endemic. Abrahams' (1999) study on domestic violence, which was completed in three municipalities in Cape Town (including the Cape Flats) involving 1 394 workers, reported that 40% of the men abused their partners physically and psychologically. Furthermore, conflict was associated with attempts by men to control their women, their sexuality and their households. The findings are all relevant for this study, as some of these men came from the area where Candice was abused, and his partner particularly wanted to control the household, including food preparation. This is outlined below:

Can: There was one day I came from work and I made some thing that he didn't like. He was very choosy when it comes to food and I made curry.
M: You were the cook, were you?
C: Yes, I played the whole woman's role in the house. And I made curry and it was a bit too strong, the taste of the curry and he threw me with the plate and he

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didn't want to eat that. But I just pulled my face, the plate would have been in my face it went into the wall. The next minute I was on the floor and then this man actually hit me with a brick on the shoulder and there was just blood everywhere and I just left it. I didn't even make a case against him. I just left it like that.

Sipho, as the feminine-acting partner, was expected to engage in the roles of cleaning and cooking in his relationship which mimicked heteronormativity. As stated in his I-Poem, his partner Bongani appeared to suggest that it would be a privilege for him to take on those roles while he was working (stereotyping gender norms). The household duties are expected to be done by the 'women' in Zulu culture, and men are expected to take on other stereotypical 'male' roles outside of the house - which is indicative of a heteropatriarchal society. Rankotha (2005, p. 167) reveals that " in Zulu traditional masculinity culture, the rough tasks are done by men, while the women take on tasks that require continuous attention such as housework, cooking, beer-making, sweeping, fetching water and gathering wood." This is arguably Bongani's experience and he intended to 'police' that aspect of the relationship, as is described below:

> …he was "before you go home in the December holidays, you must come live here with me, so that I can actually feel the experience of you, of myself having to go to work and leaving you behind…you do my laundry and you cook for me"

Andile's partner Steve, as the feminine-acting partner, took on the roles of cooking and cleaning while he (Andile) was at work. Steve appeared to be successful in this ('I picked up weight') but arguably in this I-Poem did not see himself in a stereotypical feminine role, as there were other areas of the relationship where he contested power. For example:

> I have something for breakfast before I go to work
> I come back he would make sure that
> I have a cup of coffee or tea and as a result
> I picked up weight
> I was living a happy life

7.4.2. Heteronormativity and emotional abuse

The emotional work in these relationships was mostly undertaken by the feminine-acting men who frequently reported being exploited by having to fulfill this nurturing role on their own. In his relationship, Sipho stated that he provided emotional support ('I must just hold him') to Bongani. This is comparable to 'women' providing the nurturing side in a traditionally heterosexual relationship. In the male sex drive discourse explored by Hollway (1984), it is argued that with the 'masculine' sexual drive being unstoppable, women are obliged to develop the emotional bond in the relationship (Wilbraham, 1996). Bongani's expectation is for Sipho to fulfill that role in the relationship. This is outlined in the following excerpt:

> M: …did you feel that you were nurturing him …?
> Sip: Yes, yes, emotionally I was because all the time he would have his stresses at work. He would call me, I would talk to him. And he would come over to me and we would like talk. And he would be just like a baby. He wants to cry and I must like hold him. Reassure him, this and that.

Candice was also expected to engage in the emotional work in his second relationship. He revealed that he was expected to raise a baby while his partner (who fathered the baby) went out with women. Women in some heterosexual relationships are expected to look after the children while their husbands explore extra-marital affairs; so Candice as the feminine-acting partner is rejected as abject and must be punished for reiterating heteronorms. This is reflected in the controlling messages ('I am not allowed to go out' and 'it's our baby') used by his partner to undermine him. Furthermore, there is physical abuse to add to the psychological abuse, which is a norm in heterosexual abusive relationships in South Africa (Abrahams, 1999; Jewkes et al, 1999; Mafokane, 2002). Moodiness, as described by Candice, is attributable to men not displaying their feelings. Cruz and Firestone (1998:161) argue that abuse in gay relationships is likely to be similar to heterosexual abuse, in that the 'masculine' man is not able to display emotions like

'fear, tenderness, trust, love and weakness', as these are attributes associated with being 'feminine'. This is demonstrated in the example below:

> Candice: In this relationship, this guy (also) saw girls and I never knew. So I was playing the mothering role with this child...he will go out and I am not allowed to go because I am supposed to look after the baby. So he actually made me feel good like 'it's our baby' and that went on for five years...I was also beaten up all the time...he was a very moody person.

Some stereotypical components of gender normative roles that are associated with emotional abuse were also evident in the narratives that highlighted abuse. Thus the experience of normative possessive and 'jealous' masculine behaviour on the part of the masculine-acting partners, where there was reluctance to allow the partners constructed as 'feminine' the freedom to leave their homes is a sign of jealousy. Jealousy from a constructionist perspective "is conceived as being produced within the interactive space as a complex social production mediated and generated by culturally available knowledge's" (Stenner, 1993, p. 115). This performance of jealousy is arguably what Butler (1997) calls exclusions and disavowals (in other words, not allowing partners any space to engage with other men because of the fear of monogamy being breached) that operate in the psyche to form identity. It is more likely that hyper-masculine gay men who often pass as heterosexuals (Goffman, 1959) are likely to disavow their gay identity, becoming complicit with hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995) to ensure that their relationship is exclusive.

Dirk is accused by his masculine-acting boyfriend in Johannesburg of seeing other men in gay clubs and is then beaten. His boyfriend used other friends as surveillance (Butler, 1995) to report back on his activities. Dirk stated that he was 'beaten' without being questioned. In studies on heterosexual abuse, it was reported that women also experience similar kinds of abuses where they are beaten without question (Abrahams et al, 1999, Jewkes et al, 1999). In their study on abuse in gay relationships, Moore and Bundy (1983) report that 86% of their cohort had encountered physical abuse in friends, lovers,

or roommates, and of the behaviour experienced, 73% were punched, kicked, choked and bitten. It is not clear in this example from Dirk's narrative what actual 'beatings' took place:

> Dirk: There were these stories. People were telling him stories that they were seeing me here and there. And he asked me "what am I doing there?" but he didn't just ask me straight away, he first beat me, then he asked me.
> M: And you had other sexual partners?
> Dirk: No, I didn't.

As the excerpt below illustrates, the power disparities between Clinton, a student, and his first partner, who was economically active, are clearly visible. In his I-Poem, Clinton uses very strong language to describe his partner ('he was a control freak'), which suggests that he experienced the relationship as 'othering' and rejecting There appears to be little opportunity for Clinton to negotiate around power because of his financial position. Women experience the same rejection in heterosexual relationships in that they are subordinated because they do not bring money to the relationship. Skelton (2001) argues that 'othered' masculinities are constructed so that hegemonic men can be dominant. For example:

> …very dominant…he was a control freak, he wants to call the shots all the time
> I was powerless
> …in a way
> …even with our friends he was a very jealous person

Suleiman related how he was 'othered' in a gay club after attending a party with his abusive masculine-acting partner. There was an argument about 'jokes' and this led to verbal and emotional abuse. Butler (1997) refers to the regulation of desire, where there is foreclosure, involving disavowals and repudiations. The verbal abuse by Suleiman's partner (where he refers to him as a whore) is a repudiation of his own position within the relationship. He aligns himself with heteronormativity where women ('sluts') are othered.

These degrading comments are similar to the swearing, shouting and screaming that heterosexual women must endure in psychologically abusive relationships (Bewley et al, 1999). Coloured 'masculine' gay men, according to Rabie's (2007) study, do not see themselves as gay, discarding their feminine-acting partners once they have grown tired of them. The narrative below highlights the use of verbally abusive language:

> Sul: Yes, we had an argument in the club one day. We had gone to a party and he was doing jokes as usual, and I said "please don't do it, not tonight"...and he was "what the fuck do you think you are?" and "fuck off, you are such a fucking big slut" and "you fuck everything"

7.5. Coercive sexual practices

A number of participants spoke about how they were abused within sexual practices, which included experiencing psychological abuse around sex, engaging in 'kinky sex', being attacked while performing sex and possibly experiencing sexual abuse. In one narrative, sex was not spoken about, which highlights how some gay men struggle to talk about their sexual practices. Again, these practices were experienced as heteronormative in that the 'masculine' men engage in penetration while the 'feminine' men perform as penetrated, despite resistance to the norm from some of the participants.

Sipho suggests that even though he accepts that his masculine-acting partner is going to penetrate him, he arguably has a right to question whether he can engage in penetration as well. Butler (1993, p.15) highlights the "forcible and reiterative practice of regulatory sexual regimes" which sustains social performances. She draws on the work of Freud and Lacan to argue that social norms that regulate identificatory projections are construed as heterosexual imperatives. Sipho, within this context, has no right to question whether he may penetrate his partner as it is against heterosexual social norms. However, Butler (1993, p. 16) argues instability is produced by the effort to fix the site of the gendered body. These bodies are "abject unintelligible bodies which form a constitutive outside to the realm of intelligible bodies" and can be subverting or resisting gender practices. This

is futher evident in Andile's narrative in that he states that he did not want to be penetrated by his Rwandan partner unless he was able to penetrate him, which led to a non-sexual relationship. What both Sipho and Andile are interrogating is the gender binary of active/passive, dominant/submissive or tops/bottoms in gay relationships, as emerges in this I-Poem:

> …not that
> I wanted to penetrate him but
> I wanted to ask
> …because
> I knew that you get the full spectrum of different gay preferences

The link of abuse to experiences of homophobia must also be emphasised. For example, in Sipho's I-Poem, he describes how his self-esteem was eroded by fellow students at UWC, who ostracized him by 'calling him names such as *stabani*[37]'. This may have influenced his response to Bongani. The literature identifies that lack of self-esteem is a risk factor for abuse in gay relationships (Renzetti, 1997). Sipho's poor self-esteem may have been recognised and exploited by the gay partner, Bongani, in his domination of their sexual practices. In the quote below some internalised homophobia is evident in Bongani's response to their love making, as well as his disgust at the appearance of faeces:

> …he told me beforehand
> "I hate it when I have sex with someone, and the person just bleeds or I see faeces on my…around the condom"
> …so this night we are having sex and
> I don't know what happened but there was faeces around the condom and the way he reacted you know
> …because he was so angry "Jesus, what is happening, take this off, take this off, I am not going to touch this"

---

[37] Gay man in isiXhosa

The use of a 'blaming' discourse by heterosexual abusive men as an attempt to reassert their dominance in their relationship has been well documented in the literature (Bewley et al, 1999). A similar pattern emerges in Sipho's narrative which, while recognizing the emotional abuse, is nonetheless tolerant of it, as is the case in many heterosexual abusive relationships. He appears to condone it with his conciliatory discourse in his I-Poem ('my baby is angry'):

> I think
>
> I understood him so much
>
> …yes
>
> I had to take the rubber off…it was my faeces and you know…my baby is angry
>
> …and
>
> I had to take it out

There is manipulation in his partner's apology that is reminiscent of how abused women are spoken to. Furthermore, there is evidence of traditional Zulu behaviour (Rankotha, 2005) in his consideration of his partner before their first act of sexual intercourse. In contrast to his abusive and disempowering tendencies, Bongani acted as a 'gentleman' in his approach to sex, which is possibly illustrative of traditional heterosexual practices and, in this case, serves to protect Sipho as the 'feminised' partner. This is demonstrated in the following excerpt:

> Sip: He was quite the gentleman. It was quite negotiated. We slept together four or five times, without having sex, because I wasn't ready, because this was my first. And he was telling me that "I am patient, it's okay". He was always saying, it's okay. On the day when I allowed him he asked me "Are you sure? Every move that he made, he made a move and he said, "Are you sure?" another move, and "are you sure?" So he took me through the whole process…he was quite a gentleman

Candice said that he was 'othered' while performing as a 'bottom' in sexual practices. He told how he was tied up and beaten as part of the 'kinky sex' practised by his partner. In exploring traditional sex roles, David and Brannon (1976) identified four key dimensions that mirror heteronormative sexuality. One of the dimensions relevant to Candice's narrative is "give 'em hell" which is an aura of aggression, violence and daring and where the implication is for heterosexual men to conform to rough and violent sex. Butler (1995) has argued that gay sado-masochistic and leather practices parody heteronormative masculinities, thus subverting rather than reproducing hegemonic masculinity. However, the sexual practices that are performed by Candice's partner appear to be reproducing heteronormative gender relations. Consequently, Candice revealed that he engages in these practices because he believed that he had to sacrifice for love ('I felt I loved him…'; 'you don't want to lose him'). Jewkes et al (1999) report that, in the Eastern Cape, isiXhosa-speaking women were prepared to be beaten by their partners as an offering of their love. The phrase 'being in love' is sometimes used as a reason why women stay in abusive heterosexual relationships. For example:

> Candice: He was kinky. He used to tie up a person and hit you…he will use candles and stuff. I felt I loved him at the time…you (are) blind because…you don't want to lose him…I thought this tieing up was fine…and then I saw the whip.

Dirk said that he may have been sexually abused by his partner during sexual practices as there was no negotiation about sex. Risk-taking has been documented in heterosexual sexual practices. Lindegger (2009) argues that risk-taking of young males in the Western Cape has led to women being marginalised in sexual practices. As the 'feminine' partner, it appears that Dirk is also vulnerable to risk-taking within gay sexual practices. Butler (1993, p. 19) believes that women's sex, in its materiality, can lead to coercive sex. The category of sex is seen then as a principle of "production, intelligibility and regulation…which enforces violence and rationalizes it after the fact". This leads to some meanings prevailing and to the foreclosure of others. Dirk's 'rape' is in line with this

theory where, as the feminine-acting partner, he is expected to rationalize the rape as a punishment for performing the 'feminine' role in his relationships. For example:

Dirk: There were a few times that I had sex but I didn't really want it.

Justin explained in his I-Poem that his first partner probably infected him with HIV through engaging in unprotected sex. This is arguably psychological abuse as, according to Justin, his partner did not inform him of his status. As his partner performed as the 'top' in the relationship and was expected to mentor him about sexual practices in gay relationships, it was distrurbing to Justin to discover that his mentoring had been inappropriate. The partner who engaged in penetration in this sexual practice appeared to be following the heterosexual male sex drive discourse (Hollway, 1984) and compulsory heterosexuality (Butler, 1990), where sex is natural and unstoppable and is executed by a masculine body that invests men with the power to physically dominate. In heterosexual relationships, it is the essentialising of sex that makes it mostly women who are vulnerable to be infected with HIV. Justin appeared to be in a similar position in that he had no power to prevent the 'infection', as he was younger and less experienced than his partner. As the focus of the HIV/Aids pandemic has shifted to mainly heterosexual women in Africa, Reddy et al (2009) argues that homosexuals have been forgotten (once there was recognition that HIV/Aids was not a gay plague) and the focus moved to heterosexuals (Morrell & Swart, 2005). Studies in South Africa highlight how young men of all groups are participating in activities associated with HIV risk (Scalway, 2001) which impacts on vulnerable young women and men. Even though Justin uses a blaming discourse "that was like a death sentence" to describe his reaction to finding out about his status, his story reflects how feminine-acting young men in gay relationships are vulnerable, like women, to practices of unsafe sex. Furthermore there is limited support for them. The I-Poem below, which is constructed from his narrative, highlights the multiple layers of abuse that he experienced:

…Ja, he was the one
…you know

I was very naïve at the time

I didn't know about anything being gay

I just thought you know you have got to do this, so okay fine

I am going to do it

I found out about five years ago

I found out that

I was HIV positive

I just said you know…that was like a death sentence

7.6. Agency and resistance in response to abusive practices

In describing endings in abusive relationships there is evidence that partners found the abuse unacceptable. However, some participants reported that they gained agency during the abusive process. This ability to gain agency is possibly aligned to the focus on abuse in heterosexual relationships in various government campaigns – these are linked to progressive legislation such as the Domestic Violence Act of 1998 (Republic of South Africa, 1998) – or through what Butler (1993) refers to as "the reaffirming of the abject of heterosex". The Domestic Violence Act (1998) now includes abuse between gay men as a domestic violence crime and, even though abuse was reported to the police by only one participant in this study, there appears to be recognition by other participants of the debilitating effects of abuse on their self esteem.

Sipho speaks of how, when ending the relationship with Bongani, he experiences disempowerment and marginalisation in his dreams. (Xhosa culture has a rich and complex understanding of cosmology and the dream world, and visitations by ancestors are believed to provide advice on important issues.) In his case, Sipho reported dreams where he felt he could not assert himself or his desires. He also said that his dreams frequently related to his former partner's infidelity. Sipho's dreams appeared to articulate his experiences in the relationship clearly; however, he seemed to be reluctant to identify

this, despite his suggesting that the dreams were significant, as his narrative below demonstrates:

> Siph: It makes me angry because, normally I'm an assertive person, and I can be very rude as well. I'm very confrontational, really. So I don't understand why in my dreams I go up to people and I tell them, sorry it's not their fault.

Candice was empowered to end his second relationship, as he realised he was experiencing financial and psychological abuse. His parents acted as helpers (Propp, 1968) and allies in ensuring that the relationship terminated. That Candice finds agency in giving his partner an ultimatum is arguably the result of his being empowered. Jagger (2008) states that agency, as alluded to by Butler, can produce a potentially productive crisis, allowing for space for the emergence of an alternative, anti-heterosexist imaginary. Candice engages in an alternative signification as she decides to 'break contact', in order to resist heteronormative binarisms as he describes below:

> Can: You know, what actually happened. It was on a Sunday, and this is how it ended. I was with my mom. At the time my parents stayed with me. He went out that morning and I said "if you are going to come back I am not going to be here anymore". And he didn't take me seriously because his friends picked him up because they were going to some soccer match or something. And you know, my mom said he came home that night and I wasn't there. And I never saw him. I changed my SIM card because I didn't want him to phone me. So that is how it ended. I just said "if you come back I am not going to be here anymore".

Similarly, Dirk reported that he left his relationship because the abuse became intolerable. The ability to resist the power relations where he was 'othered' as 'feminine' is in line with Butler's (1993) argument that the heteronormative imperative must be disrupted. For example:

Dirk: He was keen, but I left the relationship after six months because I couldn't take anymore.

Suleiman argued that his abusive relationship had a long-lasting impact on him which led to his losing belief in relationships. His analysis of his relationship in the narrative below reflects on the workings of heteronormative power relations, where it is imperative that the binaries are interrogated and that the heterosexual imperative is undermined:

Sul: …and I couldn't deal with it anymore. I am just like I am not going to deal with it anymore...it is not going to happen.

After desperately trying to get hold of an 'absent' Steve in Nigeria, Andile began to realise the extent of how he had been economically abused. He told of a 'break-down' and abusive phone calls, which were arguably the result of Steve passing (Goffman, 1959) as a heterosexual in Nigeria, where (as mentioned earlier) regulatory regimes police gender practices. Judge et al (2008) explain that homophobia is rife in Nigeria. Bishop Akinola, Anglican Archbishop in Nigeria, has argued that homosexuality is a Western concept, unbiblical and not African (Vermeulen, 2008). Andile belatedly finds agency and 'outs' him to his family. It is not clear in the narrative whether Steve's family actually believed Andile or was in denial, because of the cultural imperative that to be gay is 'unAfrican' (Hoad, 1998; Morgan & Reid, 2003). The use of the 'I' in the I-Poem reflects Andile's disempowerment ('I would have breakdowns', 'I didn't sleep' and 'I would take painkillers') and the beginnings of agency ('I had enough' and 'I told his sister'), as he explains:

I would have break-downs and burst into tears…there were numerous occasions where
I witnessed Steve's abusive episodes over the phone
I didn't sleep as usual and
I would take pain-killers with the hope that they would make me sleep

I had enough

I think they deserve to know how Steve survived in South Africa

I also told his sister that Steve…was my gay lover

I also told him (Steve's brother) that Steve was my gay partner

As a consequence of the 'outing', Andile received threatening text messages from Steve that are filled with homophobia and a 'rejecting' discourse ('go and fuck your brothers'). The operation of hate speech is recognised by Butler (1997, 41) as not "destroying the agency that is required for a critical response". She argues that hate speech provides the possibility of agency because of the citational, temporal nature of the speech acts, including those that are injurious. Even though Andile is hurt by the text messages, within his vulnerability he finds the possibility of resistance. In this regard he is aided by the Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998, which regards threats and hate speech as abuse. For example:

"I don't know you…I am not a gay guy, so go and fuck your brothers…I am going to send the message to your office to let them know you are a gay man and to your family too…"

Andile is enabled, despite the hate speech and the threats, to seek a protection order from the police services that represent regulatory regimes (Artz, 2005) in the Cape Metropole. However, he later reported to me that the police were 'othering' of him in their response and he had to seek recourse at the Independent Complaints Directorate. This is a further example of the agency and resistance that materialized in response to the hate speech. The use of action verbs in the I-Poem ('I will', 'I can') is arguably where agency is found, as highlighted here:

I felt that my safety is being compromised because he will stalk me not only in my house but also in the workplace because he knows exactly where I work

I will do my utmost to protect myself where

I can

Andile is desperate for what he thinks is 'love' but his self-esteem has been undermined by the abusive experience. His emotional commitment to Steve was unpacked earlier on in this chapter as showing resistance to the gender binaries of masculine/feminine, where the feminine-acting partner is expected to take on the emotional work in the relationship. As the masculine-acting partner he subverted gender practices by taking on this role. On the other hand, his 'continuing love' as described in his I-Poem resonates with how women see their male partners after being abused in heterosexual relationships. Many speak of wanting to go back to their partners because they still love them (Bewley et al, 1999). Agency, according to Jagger (2008), cannot guarantee a sought after solution. For example:

I never gave up on him so easily because…
I still love him
I forgive him

7.7. Conclusions

In this chapter, I presented an analysis of the experiences of power and abuse as reflected in participants' narratives of their gay relationships, from early childhood to adult. Three participants shared coercive sexual experiences as children (sexual molestation). In this regard, it is noteworthy that all the abusers were living 'heterosexual' lives and were not punished, as the survivors were reluctant to report their experiences to the police (not only for fear of being 'outed', but also because the police act as a regulatory regime that propagates compulsory heterosexuality).

All abusive experiences reported emerged out of heteronormative stereotypes, where the 'masculine' partner dominated decision-making and where the feminine-acting partner was expected to engage in cooking and cleaning, as well as performing the role of emotional support. Participants reported surveillance and/or punishment to ensure

compliance. In social interactions, normative roles (signifying jealousy) were utilised to undermine and 'other' partners in different settings.

In sexual practices, psychological and sexual abuse occurred where normative gender power relations were in operation, leading to experiences of unwanted sexual practices (constructed as 'kinky' by participants), coercive sex and being infected with HIV. There were further examples where abuse was linked to homophobic and traditional cultural practices.

Finally, some of the gay men experiencing abuse in their relationships appeared to resist normative gender power relations, in that the majority of survivors found agency to end their relationships in different ways. This agency, as alluded to by Butler (1997), emerges out of hate speech and other negative occurrences, suggesting that power relations can be interrogated and that this can lead to the shifting of binaries such as active/passive.

CHAPTER EIGHT
CONCLUSIONS, REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1. Introduction

This study was motivated by the need to give visibility to gay mens stories in the local South African contexts. These men have mostly been 'othered' and rejected within a heteosexist and homophobic society. The goal of the study was to interrogate narratives of how gay men construct being gay and their relationships within the particular current context of post-apartheid South Africa and changes in legislation with respect to LGBTI rights.

Within this broad aim, three primary objectives were engaged: 1) how do participants narrate their experiences of 'being gay'; 2) how do participants make meaning of the kind of relationships they have engaged in with male partners; 3) to what extent have participants experienced differences of power and abuse in their relationships with other men. The findings that emerged in response to the three objectives of this study will now be interrogated within the theoretical framework of feminist social constructionism, also drawing on the conceptual frameworks of queer theory and critical men's studies work on hegemonic masculinity. From this discussion, it will be important to highlight the contribution to knowledge production, and to make some recommendations on how this research may add value to policy and interventions with respect to gay relationships in South Africa. I conclude by identifying challenges with respect to this research project and, further, identify emerging research areas which could be explored when engaging in further research on gay identities, practices and relationships.

8.2. Persistence of homophobia at different levels of society

The narratives that were shared by participants highlighted how homophobia continues to exist within different spheres of society which they encountered at all stages and all places in their lives from the moment they realized their non-normative sexual desires.

Participants spoke of how they were 'othered' at school, by their parents and friends and communities. Such experiences even continued at the tertiary educational level when they entered university, expecting to find a more progressive space and increased 'acceptance' of their practices but were disillutioned by negative responses from peers. It is clear that despite progressive legislation (Republic of South Africa, 1996, Republic of South Africa, 2006), South African institutions are still homophobic and not conducive spaces for participants to express their sexualities. This conservatism is exacerbated by conservative religious and cultural beliefs that continue to uphold heterosexual relationships as hegemonic within a heterosexist society. Gay men who adopt what has been viewed feminine roles and behaviours, what I have termed here 'feminine-acting' and who therefore do not conform to gender norms, are most at 'risk' for negative valuations of others, particularly where rigid masculine/feminine binarism is applied. Those men who adopt more traditional male roles and practices, what I have termed 'masculine-acting' gay men appear to be more 'accepted' within society, particularly if they are able to pass as heterosexual (Goffman, 1959) at school and in their community. These men are more 'valued', while the 'feminine-acting' men are rejected and othered for taking on practices defined as 'feminine' and appears to be linked to a vulnerability for such men as they experience physical and sexual abuse at school and elsewhere. The 'valuing' of a masculine construction over those defined as 'feminine' leads to those men being vulnerable to abuse at school, in the community and at tertiary level.

Gay men who pass as heterosexual men and adhere to hegemonic forms of masculinity clearly avoid the multiple rejections experienced by men and boys who not only take on a gay sexuality but also prefer practices and roles of traditional femininity. Such men are doubly rejected and stigmatized – both for failing to conform to hegemonic masculinity and heterosexuality, viewed as a primary marker of the latter. This disclosure intrenches the regulatory regimes (Foucault, 1978, Butler, 1993) that control what is allowed or disallowed in a heteronormative society. Young feminine-acting gay men, in this study, were 'outed' by their peers and their parents (who act as regulatory 'enforcers') as their bodies did not conform to gender norms. Moreover, they spoke of their utterances as not being 'masculine' enough, or being told to play with 'girls' as they constructed a

'feminine' identity. Homophobic utterances, such as 'faggot' and 'moffie', were used by dominant 'masculine' boys at school to sediment heteronormative power relations from an early age. Some of the masculine-acting participants who passed as heterosexual, voluntarily disclosed to their parents and peers later on, with a mixed response. Charles's parents said that 'they always knew', while Jacques mother 'cried' and 'rejected' him until he 'proved' himself through a successful career, thus achieving some areas of successful masculinity. It appears that these men had to be successful in different spheres of society (which leads to higher status, class etc.), in order to compensate for their sexual choices highlighting how covert power (Foucault, 1978) operates and privileges hegemonic masculinity. This feeds into Butler's (1993) argument that power is illusory, but that certain regulatory practices with respect to bodies and desire categorise what is 'normal' or 'abnormal'.

It is particularly disappointing that participants' narratives revealed a large amount of homophobia in their experiences as students at tertiary institutions. As identified by studies in other parts of Africa, gay men continue to be oppressed within communities that propagate compulsory heterosexuality as the gender norm. Sipho, in this study, speaks of being 'othered' and humiliated by class mates and in the residence, while Harold spoke of 'not being respected…and that you can see this'. Cultural beliefs that to be gay is 'unAfrican' or *haraam* continue to play out, despite legislation that outlaws discrimination (Republic of South Africa, 1996) against gay men. Again, it is the feminine-acting men that are targeted for their non-normative 'embodiment' and forced to seek counselling for performing as abject (Butler, 1997). Gay-friendly units (like the Gender Equity Unit on UWC campus) or the Performing Arts Department on this campus, continues to support resistance to the overwhelming homophobia, but are seen to be marginalised within the university. Furthermore, participants suggest that gay men passing as heterosexual at the university further compromise their experience, and are arguably then complicit with hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995) in ensuring that any resistance is compromised.

8.3. Persistence of gender binarisms in gay relationships

The gay men in this study mostly narrate relationship experiences that reveal sexual practices that mimick heteronormativity in that the gender binarisms (masculine/feminine, active/passive,) are rigidly applied. They report that gender stereotypes with regard to decision-making, emotional work and household duties are in operation (this could be regarded as attempting to recreate a normative 'nuclear family' type of relationship or familism) . Sexual practices mostly followed the norm, where one partner assumes the dominant 'active' role while the other is more submissive and this appears to link with power relations or reflects gender binarism in interpersonal relationship. Furthermore, there is an assumption that to perform as masculine brings rewards (as commensurate with heteropatriachal power relations) whereas the feminine-acting partner must play the 'submissive' and accept their normative roles as given. These assumptions buy into the argument that gay relationships and 'marriage' must conform to traditional heterosexual relationships to be acceptable and need to be 'policed' to ensure compliance. Masculine-acting men take on this role, which leads to 'monogamy' or in some cases, infidelity, which is one of the benefits accruing to the partner who is complicit with hegemonic masculinity. Edwards (2005) argued that the development of the gay clone or hyper-masculinity, for gay men, was at the expense of 'the feminine' and this is pre-eminent in the study. Racial and class constructions also influenced how these relationships developed. Some of the participants engaged in cross-cultural relationships, and found that they were 'othered' because of cultural beliefs. Sipho was not allowed to penetrate his isiZulu-speaking partner as, within that cultural milieu, only the masculine-acting man is expected to 'penetrate'. Moreover, his partner was employed and in a position of financial power which articulates how the use of status and class (together with hegemonic masculinity) can lead to the enforcement of power differentials within relationships. Ashraf, as a Muslim gay man, was not allowed to be 'masculine' in all the modes of his relationship, as his Afrikaans-speaking partner wanted to pass as heterosexual with his (mainly white) friends and so performed a masculine identity with them in social interactions. This highlights how the application of gender binarisms in gay relationships can work to confuse and destabilize these relationships.

Utterances and significations (that are demonstrated by the I-Poems) were utilized to maintain these binaries.

8.4. Intersectionality and power in gay male relationships

There was recognition that power differences can impact on and also shape relationships facilitating potential sites of abuse and violence. Therefore, some participants reported abuse in their relationships and showed how this was strongly linked to heteronormative stereotyping. The difference with the relationships that were heteronormative is that participants were 'punished' (physical, psychological and economic abuse) for not performing their role (which was identified or assumed by their partner as feminine-acting) adequately enough. Candice told of how he was physically assaulted for not cooking the 'perfect' meal. Dirk was 'hit without question' by his partner after his fidelity was questioned. These punishments suggest that the perpetrators are not 'fearful' of any response from the regulatory regimes, as they are adhering to the gender binaries where the feminine-acting partner is disempowered. The South African Police Service (SAPS) initially failed to respond to Andile when he wanted to take out a protection order against his abuser. This is commensurate with how 'women' are treated at police stations and magistrates courts when they want to lay a charge. Once more, the authorities are complicit with gender normative practices and hegemonic masculinity in ensuring that gender binaries are applied. Similarly, three participants experienced coercive sex as children, and were reluctant to report their abusers to the SAPS. These 'inactions' articulate how some gay men experience the Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996) which is supposed to protect them. They are vulnerable to exploitation within their relationships and outside of them. This is compounded by internalised homophobia (Meyer, 1995), which impacts on their self-esteem and self-belief. This was experienced by participants, such as Sipho and Candice, who were 'othered' in sexual practices. Sipho relates that he 'should have ensured that the condom had no faeces on it' after engaging in sex. Relationship practices are likely to be compromised when all these dynamics intersect.

From a theoretical perspective, there is concern that queer theory may not recognise 'abuse' within gay relationships, as it does not use normative categories to decide what is good or bad. The theory may regard kinky sex for example, as practicing alternative 'sexualities' within relationships. As highlighted, some of the participants 'essentialised' their relationships which buy into heteronormative categories or binarisms. There is a need for educating of gay men around what is a queer relationship.

8.5. Emergence of resistant and transgressive narratives

As they unpacked their stories, it became apparent that not all the participants constructed their identities and their relationships within a heteronormative framework. It also became apparent that, embedded in their descriptions of how they came to recognise their sexual desires, were utterances and significations that spoke not only of resistance and transgression of gender and heterosexual norms, but also of experiences of empowerment in their sexuality and identity.

That these stories were tentative reflected the subordination that gay men experience within heteronormative and heterosexist societies. However, it appears that for some participants, once they had revealed their sexual orientation, they were emboldened to subvert or challenge power relations in different settings. As Butler (1997) explains, resistance to heteronormativity does not necessarily mean that it will be sustained, due to the 'instability' of gender categories. Justin, for example, switched from performing as a 'passive' (where he was 'othered' for performing as 'feminine') to engaging in penetration with his next partner. However, as he explained, he would like to experience being penetrated in the future (which is a subversion of heterosexual gender norms), but is not sure when he will 'allow it' as he has recognised the benefits of a normative masculine performance within gender power relations.

Some participants experienced resistance in 'coming out' to their families where conservative religious beliefs (as a regulatory doctrine) were dominant. For example, Clinton used a galvanizing narrative to 'confront' his parents' homophobia ('I am not

going to live a closeted life anymore') which was signifying resistance to heteronormativity. Others signified their attraction to other boys through subverting heteronorms. These include 'touching boys in church' (Suleiman) or 'kissing boys at school' (Sipho). Moreover, participants spoke of how their poetry or social popularity ('doing drag shows') empowered them to resist dominant norms in their communities.

There is contestation whether the university is more open to resistant or transgressive narratives. Suleiman argued that he could 'flaunt' his sexuality quite openly and that he was supported by women (who are subordinated within hegemonic masculinity), while key informants, Jacques and Michael, suggested that there was more acceptance of lecturers who construct a gay identity, particularly if they were prominent in the media. Role models, such as Zackie Achmat and Edwin Cameron, have fought for the rights of minorities, but it is questionable whether institutions of higher education, are 'spaces' where queer men and women feel able to revel in their 'otherness'.

There were further examples where participants resisted heteronormativity. This occurred where participants were confused about normative roles or where the social impacted on the psychological (Jagger, 2008). Ashraf's partner came from an Afrikaner, white community that was non-accepting of his gay identity, which meant that he was forced to pass as a heterosexual with his friends in social interactions while performing as a 'bottom' in sexual practices. Andile and his Rwandan partner constructed a non-normative performance in their sexual practices (where penetration was 'taboo') which allowed for some sharing of power and a reformulation of the psychic and the social.

Others deconstructed the binaries of masculine/feminine in their relationships, through engaging in flexible constructions where roles were subverted (Charles 'negotiated' roles in sexual practices) or transgressed (Jacques and his partner did not 'recognise' roles). Even though it appears that high status, class and racial privilege may contribute to facilitating a challenge to fixed meanings of sexuality and gender, there were examples (Harold, Suleiman) where less privileged queer men were able to interrogate normative boundaries in their relationships. Harold argued for the rights of 'bottoms' and suggested

that 'men cry for what he has to give'. As a feminine-acting gay man he is challenging his stereotyping within gender categories, by suggesting that he has equal power within his relationships and that masculine-acting men 'show emotion' (which is arguably a 'feminine' trait) when they engage in sexual practices with him. Similarly, Suleiman spoke of 'allowing men to penetrate him', which is interrogating how sexual practices can be an act of negotiation where penetration is allowed or disallowed. These are examples of what Plummer (2005) refers to as 'fluidity and changeability' that is possible ar resistance to hegemonic forms of masculinity, but these men continue to the marginalised within a homophobic and heterosexist society.

8.6. Implications for policy and practice

It is clear that homophobia and 'othering' of gay boys and men is experienced at school, in the home, in their communities and at university where hegemonic forms of masculinity as tied to heterosexuality and stereotypical versions of masculinity remain predominant. This persists despite the promulgation of progressive laws that are aimed to protect gay men and women from such oppression. It is apparent, from these narratives, that gay men are fearful of reporting 'hate speech', 'bullying' and 'coercive sex' to the SAPS, despite the legal recognition that gay men must be not be discriminated against in the Constitution. In their communities, parents and friends were also identified by the participants as being complicit with hegemonic masculinity, in that they 'outed' them because their bodies and practices did not conform to gender norms. In reflecting on their university experience, participants' spoke of extreme homophobic responses from their peers. These regulatory 'enforcers' of compulsory heterosexuality and hegemonic masculinity should be challenged at all levels of society. For example, life-skills that embrace diversity within sexualities should be taught at schools. These studies should deconstruct the binaries of masculine/feminine so that masculine constructions are not valued above 'feminine' constructions. Moreover, 'feminine' embodiment of young men must be interrogated as 'normal' within multiple constructions of bodies. In the communities, parents must be taught that 'othering' of their children because of their embodiment and significations is against the law and could lead to prosecution. These

could be included in seminars on parenting skills training. The Government and NGO sector should be approached to fund these projects as part of their response to homophobia within communities. Furthermore, 'male' parents should be taught how to model alternative masculinity to their sons, where the binaries of masculine/feminine are fluid and changeable. At universities, homophobia must be eradicated through different strategies. Inter-disciplinary gender studies should be promoted at faculty level. Campaigns against homophobia should be implemented in residences, particularly where working-class African and Muslim men predominate. 'Queer' groups should be encouraged, with the focus on alternative sexualities (and heterosexual men and women should be allowed to participate). Men and women who engage in homophobic 'hate speech' on the campuses should be disciplined and, if necessary, expelled. Gay-friendly units such as the Gender Equity Unit should be moved to a more central position within the university, so that more 'open' spaces are created for gay men and women. The Performing Arts Department should consider performing at least one 'queer' play every year. There should be a section in the Library promoting queer literature.

Participants articulated relationship practices that mostly reflected heteronormativity, where gender binarisms were rigidly applied and, in some instances, led to punishments or abuse – particularly of feminine-acting men. As outlined, masculine-performing gay men assume dominance, as they are either passing as heterosexuals or are complicit with hegemonic masculinity, thus compensating or obfuscating their non-normative sexual desires and practices. Cultural beliefs and material and other forms of social difference also contribute to 'othering' of the 'feminine' partner in sexual practices. There is a need to address relationship practices of gay men at different modes of the relationship. There is no need for gay men to imitate heterosexual relationship practices, as these relationships appear to marginalise the feminine-acting partner. On the other hand, relationship practices that resisted heteronorms were more equal. These relationship practices were posited as flexible, negotiated, reciprocal, etc. Queer relationships need to be embraced, where gender categories are interrogated. Penetration as the only signification for intimacy between gay men should be deconstructed. Participants questioned the fidelity of their partners, and were reluctant to explore non-exclusive

relationships. Queer relationships would allow exploration of other modes of relationship that could allow for options that may not fit with heteronorms but are viable options for positive and equitable relationships. It is also important that non-normative models of relationships are made available at popular levels so that the heterosexual, binaristic mode of relationship is not inscribed as the only option. Narratives of those that practice non-gender normative relationships, that subscribe to fluidity in roles and identities, are relatively invisibilised and could be valuable in shifting and complexifying popular notions of relationship and intimacy.

Also importantly, gay men should be protected by legislation (Republic of South Africa, 1998) when they are 'abused' (as children) and in their relationships. Child abusers are covered by the Children's Act (2005) and there should be campaigns at schools to encourage young children to report abuse. (In this regard, there should be particular focus on supporting boys at risk to disclose instances of abuse.) The SAPS needs to train its officers to ensure that perpetrators of abuse in gay relationships are arrested and charged, or that those gay men who apply for a protection order are given the same amount of support as given to abused women. If this is not forthcoming, gay men should be educated to report the police officer/s in question to the Independent Complaints Directorate. Gay-friendly organisations, like the Triangle project, should be encouraged to offer more courses/seminars on 'gay rights' to educate gay men on their rights within the law. The notion of 'coming out' needs to be contested within these seminars. There should be further education on how internalised homophobia can be destructive of gay relationships.

8.7. Critical reflection of the research process and recommendations for further research

What have I learnt from undertaking this PhD research? First of all, I was ill-prepared to take on this kind of research. I began the research with the intention of exploring power and abuse in gay relationships. However, I soon realized that my own theoretical location, which reflected an essentialist belief system, had not fully integrated social

constructionism as a theoretical framework. Furthermore, while I had utilized hegemonic masculinity as a theoretical framework in my Masters thesis, I had a limited understanding of this concept and the larger implications of post-structural and queer thinking. The challenge was to revisit my data and to integrate these theories into my analysis. This meant having to 'undo' my own preconceptions about constructing a gay identity and experiencing gay relationships. This was a lengthy and onerous undertaking, as 'essentialist' utterances and significations were imbedded in my psyche. I had to examine every sentence in the analysis for any sign of the essentialist paradigm. Through this process, I started to understand how I had been disempowered as a gay person through 'essentializing' my gay identity. Once I had personally identified with social constructionism and queer theory (through appropriate speech acts), I was able to interrogate my findings more thoroughly. The 'fit' between my subjective position and the topic was corrected in time so that the research could be completed. On reflection, I can understand now why I thought I was engaging in participant observation, as it felt as though I was observing myself as a participant in the process.

If I were to give advice to PhD students engaging in similar research, I would suggest that they incorporate a mixed method approach. I think the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods would allow for participants who were not comfortable responding to in-depth interviews to interrogate the issue. The implementation of focus groups would also encourage gay couples to share and interact with each other in a group setting, which would allow for the exploration of power dynamics. Video recordings, with ethical clearance, could identify particular utterances and significations that gay men utilize in their constructions of their relationships. I would consider variables such as age, race, class and language when choosing a cohort. When analysing the data, I would revisit the listening guide and try to explore ways of using the I-Poems more effectively. As Rachel Chadwick (2007) identified, there is a need to explore variations of the I-Poems to enhance the analysis. These need to be linked more succinctly to the contrapuntal voices, which were muted in my analysis.

From my investigation, I would like to suggest some areas that could be researched in the future. These are the following:

- How are gay men experiencing marriage in South Africa? Do these relationships conform to heteronormativity or are there queer marriages developing?
- Is homophobia evident at other universities in South Africa? What strategies are being utilized to overcome this scourge?
- What are the markers for a queer relationship? Are there any particular models of these relationships that can be sourced for developing queer relationships in South Africa?
- Is penetration regarded as the only marker for intimacy in gay relationships in South Africa? If not, what other performances constitute intimacy and how valued are they in gay relationships?
- Are gay men who were abused as children likely to become abused as adults or abusers of adults in their relationships in South Africa? How prevalent is abuse of masculine-acting men?
- To what extent do protection orders serve the interests of gay men in South Africa? Are there positive stories of gay men who have sought protection from the courts?

Similar studies to this research could be undertaken in other centres of South Africa. Furthermore, more queer studies should be encouraged within the LGBTI network, in order to advance the relationships and practices of marginalised sexualities.

In conclusion, at the beginning of this research, I motivated that South African gay men's stories need to be told as these men have been 'belittled and undermined'. Secondly, I suggested that 'black' men need to speak about their experiences. While these narratives spoke of homophobia and rejection, they also spoke of resistance and subversion. To quote Peter Robinson (2008, p. 180) in his recent study in Australia, "such freedom to express affective relations openly and without fear is a comparatively new experience for

gay men and represents real social advancement". It is to be hoped that 'real social advancement' will come out of this thesis.

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UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE
Private Bag X17 Bellville 7535 South Africa Telegraph:
UNIBELL Telex: 526661 Email: wgs@uwc.ac.za

WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES

I, Neil Henderson, a PhD candidate in the *Women's and Gender Studies Department* in the Faculty of Arts at UWC, under the supervision of Dr Tammy Shefer and Dr Vivienne Bozalek, am conducting a research study with gay men at UWC and the Cape Metropole. The aim of the study is to explore power and abuse in gay male relationships in the Cape Metropole. This research project is part of the faculty project on Culture, Language and Identity supported by **VLIRR** (A Belgium Inter-University Research Initiative).

The motivation for doing this study is from my belief that gay men's stories need to be told, as their life histories have notably been downplayed and undermined over the centuries. There has been little research exploring dynamics of power and abuse in gay male relationships, and even less so in the South African context.

I……………………………………………………………………………………

Agree to participate in life history interviews conducted by Neil Henderson. I understand that:
- Everything that will be discussed in the life history interviews will be confidential. An audio-tape of the interview will be destroyed at the completion of the research. I can ask that notes be taken of the interview instead of an audio-tape.
- My name will be changed and other aspects 'altered' to ensure anonymity. I will be allowed to read the transcripts to ensure compliance
- I can withdraw my participation whenever I want to and that no punishment will be forthcoming
- I can request a copy of the final thesis
- I will be supported and counselled if 'harmed' by the experience.
- Participation is voluntary and no payment will be given in return.

Signature of participant:……………………………………….Date:………………..
Signature of researcher:…………………………………………..Date:………………..

Place:

APPENDIX B

SEMI-STRUCTURED QUESTIONNAIRE

Demographics

1) Where were you born? How old are you?
2) Which school did you attend?
3) What religious denomination do you belong to if any?
4) What is your home language?

Section 1 (first experiences of being gay)

5) When did you start realising that you were gay? Tell me about it…
6) Were there any negative experiences at school? If yes, can you talk about them?
7) Were you bullied at school? If yes, can you share some experiences?
8) When did you start thinking sexually about boys? Did you meet anybody at school?

Section 2 (coming out)

9) What was your experience of coming out to your family?
10) Was it a positive experience? Did your family support you?
11) Did religious or cultural beliefs impact on coming out? If yes, can you explain?
12) How did you come out to your friends? How did they respond?
13) How did you meet other gay men?
14) What about sites on the Internet?

Section 3(a) (UWC and Cape Metropole)

15) How does it feel to be out at UWC (or in the Cape Metropole)?

16) Is it acceptable for gay men to be out at UWC (or in the Cape Metropole)? How do other cultures respond to you?

17) Are you able to be out to lecturers? Explain…

18) Have you ever experienced homophobia at UWC (or in the Cape Metropole)? If yes, explain

19) Are there any erotic oases or secret places to meet? Have you met anyone in toilets or other places (or bars, restaurants, clubs, gyms in the Cape Metropole)?

20) Is there any support for gay students at UWC? If yes, explain…

Section 4 (relationships)

21) Tell me about your relationships?

22) How many long-term relationships have you had so far?

23) Describe the relationship? How did you meet?

24) Is it completely monogamous?

25) How is it in terms of roles?

26) Do you negotiate about roles?

27) What about your status or education, how does that affect your relationship?

28) What about sexual roles? Are you the top or the bottom? Is it negotiated?

29) How do you deal with going out with your partner? Are there any rules?

30) Have you thought of having an open relationship?

31) Does culture impact on your relationship? What about language or political beliefs? What about inter-racial relationships?

32) Has there been any abuse in your relationships? If yes, could you explain

33) Have you been put down, like in verbal abuse?

34) Any economic abuse, withholding money?

35) Have threats been made to you? Any other abuses?

36) You haven't taken out a protection order against anyone?

Section 5 (gay marriage, children)

37) Where do you see your relationship in five years time?

38) Would you like to get married if it is allowed? What about adopting children? What is a healthy gay relationship according to you?

39) How do you feel about the legal changes? Are you willing to go to court for your   rights?

40) Any other comments…

APPENDIX C (one example of a narrative analysis using the listening guide)

<u>I-poem and contrapuntal voices of Justin[38]</u>

I was born…
I stayed in… and my parents got divorced and we moved down to Cape Town
I went to high school called
…when we came down to Cape Town
I went to
I studied there standard nine and matric
…and
I matriculated in 1996
I finished school
…since then
I have done computer science and
I am working for a…at the moment
I[39] am a Muslim
…so
I go to mosque
…not as regularly as
I am supposed to
…for the most important parts
I do actually attend mosque
I speak Afrikaans with my mother
…with every other family member
I speak English

(Coming out?)
I think it was when
I was twenty-one
I always new that I had got problems with…not problems
…but
<u>I [40]started to look at guys that used to play soccer</u>
<u>I started looking at guys…at their legs and their abs</u>
<u>I started to notice them in a different way</u>
<u>I thought no…something is not right here</u>
<u>I had a girl-friend at the time actually and she brought me to a club called Angels</u>
<u>…and</u>
<u>I had my first sexual…not sexual…ja my first sexual experience with a guy</u>
<u>…the first time that</u>

---

[38] Justin is a psuedonym
[39] Italics is the distressed and vulnerable voice that fears rejection from his culture
[40] Bold and underlined is a resistant voice to the heteronorm

I kissed a guy was at Angels and it was about eight years ago
I started going on my own
…and
I started dating guys
I just matured and
I am more comfortable with myself being gay right now

(At school?)
…at school
I was
I didn't look at boys or guys
I **[41]**was an average boy who played soccer, rugby, cricket…hung out with the
boys…teased the girls…everything was normal up until the age of twenty-one
…oh, ja
I had girl-friends
I am still in touch with my last girl-friend, still buddies
…yep
I had sex with girls
I was sexually active as a boy at school…normal…seventeen

(Being Muslim made it difficult?)
I don't think so hey
I think I just suppressed it
…and because
I was exposed to it with my ex-girlfriend
I thought "you no what, let me just explore it"
…she used to go…she had gay friends
…so
I was buddies with them all the time and they came on to me so many times
I was like
"I am straight"
…and we went out for about a year…she came with us to Angels because
I knew what Angels was about
…when
I was still straight
…and
I was like "no I don't want to go there"
…like
I said
I started noticing guys in a different way…what would it like to be with a boy?
I started noticing their body parts and their arse and their legs
…and
I said "let me go and see what happens"
…if

---

[41] Bold refers to the dominant heteronormative 'voice' in his relationships

I can put it mildly…it's just like when you watch these x-rated movies…and you start noticing the guy's genitalia more than the girls
…and
I started getting more turned on by guys

…until that happened
…until
I had my experience with a guy
…but
I am liking this
…when
I kissed a guy
…to be frank
I got hard when I started kissing guys
…that
I am actually turned on by it
…that's why
I came to the conclusion
…that
I must be gay

…no, no
I kept everything a secret
…firstly like you said
I was Muslim and its taboo being gay for a Muslim
…and
I didn't know how to confront my mom about it
…but
I had a guy friend that came over every Friday after work
…she is like "you guys look very intimate"
…but
I told her "it's my buddy"
…and
I said "mommy you are just imagining it"
…but…my aunty she has got a gay hair-dresser
…and she told me
"I know that you are gay"
…when
I used to go to the hair-dresser with her…the cute boys used to come in she noticed my attention was drawn more to them than to the girls
…she told me she knows and
I must not be afraid that she knows that I am gay
…and ja
I was a bit uncomfortable obviously at first…because it's a family member knowing that … I am gay…so obviously it's going to come out now

(Internet or Hot-house?)
I used to have Internet at home
I only started going to hot-house now recently
I mean like in the past two months
I never actually went to it
…a buddy of mine wanted to experience it and
I was like "let's go, what am I to lose?"
…the set-up
I liked the set-up
…because
I actually started watching a TV series called "Queer as Folk"
I love that
I am on season four at the moment
…and
I saw everything
…and
I started learning more about my
…and
I started watching people going to steam rooms and
I enjoyed it actually
I didn't do anything sexual actually
I was in the steam room and sauna…sat in the Jacuzzi a bit
I liked it
I am not going to go there often
…it's extremely risky for me because
I am going to tell you
I am HIV positive
…honestly
I am very open with it…and with all my relationships as well

(Your friends know?)
…they are still shocked…some of them still can't believe it "you are going through a phase"
I am like "Ja, an eight year phase, come now"
I still have them around though
…but
I still have quite a handful of straight friends…they are actually fascinated with the fact that
I am gay
I mean any religion you grow up with the fact that being gay is wrong…but with Islam itself it's forced into you that it's Haraam to actually be gay…there are a lot of gay Moslems but they are too scared to open up because of the stigma

(First sexual experience?)
 …was with this guy that used to visit me all the time at home

…**one day we started kissing and started getting a bit heavy and clothes started to come off**
I was thinking to myself
…what if
I am not going to do this now
I am never going to do it
…he was older…he was twenty-seven and
I was twenty-one
…ja
I just said "do whatever you need to do" and he did it
I enjoyed it actually…it was painful
…it was intercourse…penetration, oral…everything
I mean he was more experienced than what
I am
…he did penetrate me the first…it was painful the first time, oh my God but
I was okay afterwards

(Did he give you HIV?)
…Ja, he was the one
…you know
I was very naïve at the time
I didn't know about anything being gay
I just thought you know you have got to do this so okay fine
I am going to do it
…when
I used to go spend week-ends at his place and there was always tablets all over the place…and he used to tell me "its vitamins"
I am thinking of it…it came in hospital packets…you understand?
…but
I didn't know
I thought "okay fine it was vitamins"
…but now
I am thinking it was some kind of Aids
I didn't know
…we had a relationship for about six or seven months…and in that time all the sex was with no condoms
…he should have…but he didn't though but now
I am paying the price
…because
I have to go through all these emotions now in my life
…as
I am maturing the thought of the HIV is starting to sink in now
I found out about five years ago
I went for
…the company
I worked with they had a blood donor day and

I went and donated blood innocently
…and then they called me back about two days later telling me to come to the centre
…my mom…she knew
I was donating blood…she being a nursing sister knows…if they call you back…there is something wrong
…that is how
I found out
…that time
I had moved on
I had another partner already…a steady partner…we were going out for about a year already when
I found out that
I was HIV positive
…so he had to go for testing…luckily he was the type of guy that actually stood by me…even though
I had HIV…he was more open-minded
I am still
I am not on ARV's yet
I am getting there now because…as you are going to learn of my history there was a lot of drug abuse as well as time went on…that brought my CD4 count down
I have to start the ARV 's in the next month or so…it's a whole lot of anger as well
…when
I found out that
I was HIV positive
I just said you know…that was like a death sentence
…so
I might as well just do it
…but
I was suppressing a lot of feelings over my childhood
I am paying the price now of things that
I did…here is my last chance that
I have in my life
I have been to the drug centre and my sixth week is coming to an end now
…and
I have joined
…and
I am with Triangle project with the HIV group as well
I need to start getting myself in that direction
I might as well as take a gun and shoot myself if
I am going to continue using drugs
…and
I am HIV positive…you understand?
…the first thing that came in my mind is that
I probably have a year left to live
…it is narrowed down to either my ex-girlfriend, the last girl-friend
I had or him

I don't know if she is HIV positive
…no
I didn't use needles…it was sexually transmitted
I know that for a fact
…because
I didn't have protective sex with her as well

(First relationship?)
 I used to stay in Wynberg and he used to stay in Mitchell-Plain
…so he would come and spend week-ends with me and
I would spend the week-end with him
…and this was after
I came out
I didn't know
I would go out with him and his friends and he would drop me at home again
…but when
I found out that
I was
…when
I told my mom
…when
I told my aunt to tell my mom
…that is how
I came out to my mom
I started going out week-ends
…he was a player
…if
I can…he had an eye on everything
…it wasn't…like a loving relationship
…it was more like "I have got on my arm and lets go party…show people that I have got somebody in my life"
…he would cheat on me a lot
I knew
I found out that he would cheat me because one of his friends became a good friend of mine
I didn't mind it
…because
I was just out of the closet
I have a boyfriend
I am living the gay life
…so
I didn't care if he is cheating on me
I was very naïve…extremely naïve
I would tell him you know "where were you?"…and he wouldn't deny anything
…it became physical once or twice
…and

I would obviously defend myself and hit him back

I would push him and he would push me…we would end up having sex again…it would become a bit more serious as he would do it more often

…and then he would come from

I don't know where

…and he would come and lay by me

…when

I spend week-ends with him…he would go out wherever he would go…and would come and sleep with me but

I could smell

I mean you could smell another guys body…the odour is not the same…and that is how the relationship ended

I was like "obviously you are not serious about this"

I ended it

…because

I learnt

I started

…in that six months

I learnt more about the gay life

I think maybe that is why

I stayed with him

…at the same time

I learnt also about the gay life…where to got to, what to do, what type of people to hang out with, what is top, what is bottom, what is versatile, places like hot-house

I did a lot of reading of gay books as well

…there was a little shop that was next to Bronx

I used to go in there as well

I just learnt and equipped myself for the gay life…and not what to do

…being in a relationship with him

I knew don't find yourself a man like this…find someone who is loving and caring

…he was a sweet-talker

…he took it for granted that

I would catch him and Justin would just forgive me again

I did for a while

…and then

I realized this is not good

I chose the lifestyle for myself but this type of relationship is not what

I chose to be in

…and that is where

I met my…the ex-boyfriend that

I was with when

I found out that

I was HIV…he was more wholesome…caring, loving

(Next relationship?)

…my first boyfriend was cheating on me with him

I came to know about it but during that time me and him became friends
…then we all went away for one week-end and he (first boyfriend)
I don't know… came with the week-end saying "this is just a buddy of mine and whatever"
…and
I thought no fine
I know already who he is…and the two of us started speaking and we became close and we clicked
…he (first boyfriend) was busy cheating with another boy
…and
I told him (the next relationship) "do you want to see what I mean?"
…and
I took him to the house and there it was…he was busy with another boy
…and
I was like "that is what he is about"…that's when me and that guy started getting close and we started seeing each other
…but while
I was still seeing my first boyfriend
I was seeing him as well
…it was almost as though
I am getting you back type of thing
…and then
I said "this is not working out"
…and then
I left him
…and then
I started having a relationship with the ex (next relationship)
…he was the first guy I went to church with…his parents loved me…they loved me…he was mixed as well…his dad was Italian and his mom was Indian

(In love?)
…he was the first guy that
<u>**I went to church with actually…his parents loved me**</u>
<u>**…head over heels…**</u>
<u>**…when we started…courting**</u>
<u>**I was like already in love with this guy**</u>
<u>**…because he was everything that**</u>
<u>**I ever wanted…it was everything that**</u>
<u>**I was looking for**</u>
<u>**…just making me feel like that**</u>
<u>**I belong somewhere with someone in my heart**</u>
I was the top in the relationship because
…like
I learned of the gay life
I discovered that
I like giving…penetrating…like being a top

…the first guy that
I was with…he was probably the only guy that actually did penetrate me
I have never had a guy since then penetrating me
…because
I don't feel like it anymore
…now recently
I started to get those urges
…but
I am sure
I will get there
I will get there
…it's just the thought of the that first time…oh God the pain
I am single at the moment
I am first going to explore some more now

…**we went out for three years…that was the one relationship that felt stable…and**
we had joint bank accounts…but then the drugs came into the relationship…do you
remember
I told you the drugs game…we experimented with friends…and the drugs
I would have known if he was having sex with someone else
…and make sure that
I am comfortable
I would have noticed the change in him
…so
I don't suspect that he would have…cheated on me at all
I was more the extrovert
I can't go with guys that are flamboyant
I like my boys…it still needs to be a boy
I like to be with boys
I would if he is boy-like
I mean
I know a lot of guys
…it is a physical thing
I can't describe it…it's really just physical
I like the look of a young boy's body…his muscles just starting to develop
…that is why
I like them while they are eighteen
I like young boys

(Anybody come on to his second partner?)
I would do absolutely nothing
I would actually ask my partner "do you want me to get you a drink or something?" and
just allow the two of them to have their own whatever speech
…because
I know he won't do it…that is how much trust we had in each other
…ja, there were rocky times

I would use the excuse that we were apart…we were not seeing each other at that time
…no
I didn't have sex
I would chat with other guys
…**the drugs got out of hand…because we were constantly fighting with each
other…and one day it got so bad that he threw me against the mirror
…luckily
I wasn't injured…he was scared though because of my HIV status
I could have gotten hurt
…but after that
I told him it's not going to work out
…it was the whole build-up to that point…because we had gotten so far of actually
pushing each other into mirrors and hurting each other phsyically
I mean
I would fight back yes
…but
I mean pushing him into a mirror is a bit
I mean it was an accident
I don't think he meant to push me into a mirror
I mean we were arguing…and he pushed me a bit too hard
…and
I lost my footing
I fell into the mirror…it was an accident yes
…but
I mean at that point we told each other "look it's not going to work anymore"…next
we could be killing each other…so we decided to let go of the relationship
I mean even after we had broken up
…the drugs had gotten us so bad…we would have to go on to rehab…either he go to
rehab or
I go to rehab
…the drugs consume your life…you have absolutely no control of what your
emotions are…you lose touch with reality completely…for example throwing me
into a mirror
I mean as much as horrific as it seems…to them it would be normal
…and
I just thought
I would rather end it
I mean
I went to go and pick him up for lunch
…we bought a television
I think it was a television…we had bought it at the Warehouse…we were arguing all
the way
I told him "I think we should just end this"
I mean he would look at me differently or
I would look at him differently and we would start shouting at each other
I dropped him back at work…he just banged the door and that was the last**

I saw of him
…literally the last
I saw of him
…he phoned me and told me where to drop the car because we had bought a car together…he was going to sell the car
I think that is what started the argument
…it was in his mother's name
…because at the time
I wasn't financially stable to get
I had just started working…and my name was on the crappy end
I earned more than what he did
I think that is what the problem was
…because
I mean he always strived to be better in everything in every aspect of our lives
…if
I did something he would do something better to prove to me that he can
…there was one point…where he could not get it
I earned a very good salary when I started working
I mean my first job
I was earning close to R9, 000…that was my first job
I had just come out of college and that was the job
I got
…he was a trainer…a top position and he was earning like R6, 500 so that
I think…because he felt that he was better than me in a way…because of his upbringing
…very conservative
I mean that his how most people are brought up
I mean there was a lot of snobbish ways about him because his mother was that way
I don't know how he saw me…he could never see me as probably his equal
…he probably didn't think
 I was on the same level as what he is

(Interests?)
…**he was an ideal boyfriend…we would watch movies…have quiet evenings at home, watch TV, have mutual friends around**
…both of us were doing drugs
…that was
 I think a problem where it started in the first place…we both took up an addiction

(Best thing about the relationship?)
I have got a partner that is standing with me through the HIV
…that
I would have somebody who would look after me when the point comes…or the disease
I have
…if it develops into AIDS

I know someone is there to look after me so that was a focal point in my life at the
time
…because
I needed someone to look after me
I still maintain that if it wasn't for the drugs we would probably still be
together…we would have been married by now…have property on our own
I mean we were living that life already
…like
I told you we had joint bank accounts…we had a flat together

(The boys phase?)
I am so confused
…because
I honestly
I am not going to be modest
…but
I have had a lot of boys
I still have a lot of boys
I don't want to be proud of it but for me to see three or four boys at the same time is
nothing
I like them
I love them
I go to parties, some of them poke me on face-book, and they just go wild
I would have seven or eight friend requests
…every-time
I log on to face-book and its all young boys
…for what
I have got no idea and they would message me
I don't know what it is
…its because
I am giving it off the fact that
I am turning thirty in October
…but
I am still young
I am twenty nine
I am still young by nature
I still party
…the fact that
I still go out and
I party
…and
I don't act my age
…Coloured, white, Moslem, any creed, there is no
I have had them all
I am just looking for a Chinese boy…Chinese and Brazilian
…and then

I have completed my
…it is just the physical, sexual attraction
I never do the same boy twice
I just do him once and then that is it

(Know you status?)
…no they can't
I use like three condoms
…but
I mean
I am very finicky
I take condoms everywhere
I go
I can't go…telling everybody "oh by the way I am HIV positive and I am going to fuck you now"
…no
I have asked myself
I have got plans set in place if the condom should break
…now, yes
I go around sleeping with three or four guys at a time
…because
I am HIV positive…my first priority is to keep them safe
…and
I would do everything in my power
…where
I am feeling every tinkle of having sex
…and
I know exactly how it feels
…because
I have experimented
…and
I concentrate
…and
I know if that condom breaks
I will pull it out immediately
…all my friends are (doing this)
I have a forty year old friend doing this…it is not dependent on age or not dependent on anything
…that is why
I have four or five of them at the same time…because you have different bodies of each and every boy
I love it

(Sex addiction?)
I went to Triangle the other day
I felt to speak to one of these counselors about my HIV

I haven't had any
I haven't had any groups that
I could belong to that has the same as what
I do
…and
I told him exactly how it is like
I am telling you now having four or five guys at a time…and he is like "are you
addicted to sex…are you compensating your drug use for sex?"
…because it is like
I am addicted to sex
I have to go and do research now to see if
I actually am
…oh God that is how
I am
I want something done now
…if
I want something
I want it now
I can't wait…the moment you walk into that door your clothes is off…that is how
I am

(2008?)
I think it is
I wouldn't say it is a 2008 thing
…but
I mean
I would say that is how we have evolved
I am going to say something now that
I am going to regret…but some of my friends have been having sex with fourteen
year olds
…to be honest
I haven't touched a fourteen year old
…that is what
I am talking about…everything must be done now, they can't wait until they are
twenty-one…it is getting more and more…younger and younger and younger
I would never have thought of having sex with a fourteen year old

(Virgins?)
…most of them are sometimes
…it is such an effort…you have to and
"I can't take it, take it out"
I suppose in a way
…because
I just want to have sex
…whether
I am the first one you are having it with…it doesn't turn me on

I can't wait
I am probably catching up on a lot of things in life before
I am ready to turn thirty
I am coming to the end of my party years
…and when
I turn thirty
I have this notion that
I must be matured

(Other long-term relationships?)
…no there hasn't
I don't know why
I just don't feel like
I need to be in a relationship
I don't feel that
I need to be with someone at the moment
I am getting tired of it
…ja meet someone who is HIV positive
I would probably be able to relate more
I don't know what it would be like

(Healthy relationships?)
I would probably look for a
I would look for someone that is actually going to stick around
…that
I don't have to worry about where you are or what you be doing if you are not with me…someone
I know that
I can count on
…when
I do need someone to be there for me
I know that person would be there
…if
 I could see that quality in that person

(Is he young?)
I suppose so
I am sorry…if they are caring and they actually love that person then what is age

(Class?)
I need to take you out to dinner parties and cocktails and stuff like that
…so
I can't have someone who is from Bishop Lavis with his two teeth out in front
I don't know what the part is…but someone who dresses smartly, that is clean, that is well groomed and that actually does look after themselves…that someone
I will take

**I won't take someone that likes to wear a cap and 'sloffies' and walks around the
whole day bare feet…**
I like the bare foot look
I am just saying
…you know what
I am talking about

(Gay marriage?)
…ja
I would
…if
I can ask the question right now it would be no, not at this stage of my life
…when
I am thirty-five or when
I am forty
…when
I am really ready to settle down
…if the guy does have the qualities that
I am looking for obviously yes
I will settle down and probably get married to him

(Children?)
I want
I am so broody
I am so broody
…every time
I see babies
I just want to run and pick them up

(Surrogate child?)
I am thinking of that…when
I am emotionally stable and a bit financially stable
I will either adopt myself a child
I have got a lady friend that has offered to be…we have discussed everything already

I don't see any difference between someone who has been living together for two or three
years now being married
**<u>I don't think a marriage would actually strengthen a relationship if there are those
qualities that you have in a relationship</u>**
<u>It is easy to walk away from any relationship but not from a gay marriage</u>
<u>I don't think it would be</u>
<u>I don't</u>
<u>I did…but I was a different person then…right now</u>
<u>I have matured more</u>
<u>I have grown more</u>
<u>I have gone through life more</u>

…and
I have learnt from my mistakes

(Five years time?)
I want to sit on Malibu beach and sip a cocktail
…that's where
I want to sit and have my own beach house
I want to be on Malibu beach sipping a cool-drink for crying out loud
…its just
I want to be on Malibu beach

Analysis of the listening guide relating to the research questions

Question 1: (being gay and coming out) The contrapuntal voice is accepting and becomes more resistant about being gay. This voice enjoys finding out that he is gay after watching boys in the showers while playing sport. He meets boys at clubs and bars and watches gay series on DVD. This is part of his education to the gay world. He is quite happy to have his first partner penetrate him but once he discovers that he is HIV positive the second distressed voice takes over. He still finds happiness in his second relationship, where there is some shared activities and they have similar interests. This partner is willing to support him when he finds out that he is HIV positive. However their relationship begins to crumble when they get involved in the drug scene. This voice is rejected by his Islamic religious faith, and Justin finds it difficult to come out to his mother. Eventually he asks his aunt to tell his mother. His HIV status is also making him vulnerable and this voice is negative about how he is going to cope with HIV particularly with his drug history which has meant his CD4 count is down. Even though he has gone for counseling, this voice is still highly distressed.

Question 2: (heteronormative or resistant) The voice that predominates is the voice that mirrors heteronormativity and his relationships follow that path. In his first relationship, his partner cheats on him and probably infects him with HIV. The cheating leads to physical fights and make-up sex that is synonymous with 'abusive' heterosexual relationships. On the other hand, Justin cheats with his second partner to get back at his first partner. The normative voice continues in his second relationship, however in his sexual practices Justin is resistant and he is switches to be the active partner. Once he and his partner get involved in drugs, it follows a similar pattern to the first relationship and after a physical fight they break up. The other area of conflict is in roles particularly with regard to finances in that he is earning more than his partner who has a better job. Once he has broken up he becomes 'addicted' to sex as he has three or four boys every night. This is reminiscent of the 1970's when gay men were promiscuous and is also similar to how some heterosexual men engage with younger women while married or if single. This voice is looking for a heteronormalising marriage where there are children.

Question 3: (power and abuse) The binaries of heterosexuality/homosexuality are rigid when his partner abuses him by infecting him with HIV without using protection. This

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was in 2000 when there was clear evidence of campaigns that promoted safe sex. There are also further elements of abuse in both of his relationships, where fighting takes place and there is make-up sex and where he is pushed through a mirror. However, he says it was an accident. There is cheating in the first relationship by both parties. There are signs of abuse in Justin having promiscuous sex with young boys and not telling them that he is HIV positive.