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Kopano Ratele

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# Masculinities without Tradition

KOPANO RATELE\*

**ABSTRACT** *'The fear of being perceived as gay, as not a real man, keeps men exaggerating all the traditional rules of masculinity, including sexual predation with women'. This view on men's sexual (Following feminists such as Tamale [2011. African Sexualities: A Reader. Nairobi: Pambazuka Press] that thinking on 'sexuality without looking at gender is like cooking pepper soup with pepper', meaning that they are mutually imbricated with and shape one another, unless I wish to stress a point or indicate otherwise, whenever sexuality and associated concepts are used here it is meant gendered sexuality) and gender practices in relation to 'the traditional' expressed by Kimmel is shared with other leading scholars on masculinities. Yet, in situating queer sexualities against 'the traditional' or outside tradition, studies on masculinities have engendered a paradox which needs untangling in any serious attempt to unsettle traditionalist positions that clash with claims for the recognition of sexual equality. The main purpose of this article is to offer a different reading of the relation between masculinities and 'the traditional'. Arguing that it is at the moment that the word 'critical' or its equivalents is uttered that a tradition leaks through, the article offers a critique of anti-'traditional masculinity' critiques which reinforce the homogenisation and retribalisation of African (While acknowledging the complexity accompanying the use of the terms in South Africa, as well as recognising their ideology-ladenness, in this article African and black are used interchangeably and refer to those historically defined as Bantu.) tradition and culture. At the same time, the article examines and seeks to undo some of the arguments of patriarchal hetero-masculinist traditionalism resistant to the recognition of desires and rights of women and men who are attracted to others of the same sex through foregrounding claims for equality for queer attraction and recognition.*

## Introduction

Numerous scholars have pointed out the dependence of masculine domination on traditional ideology, rules or norms. Carrigan, Connell, and Lee (1985, 593) argued in their influential article that outside of force, masculine dominance relies not on technical grounds but on 'traditional ideology'. This view on the

association of dominant masculinity with traditional ideology, norms or rules is shared with many other researchers of men and masculinities. For example, in the USA, Levant et al. (2003) found a higher degree of endorsement of 'traditional masculinity ideology' to be associated with the inability of individuals to put emotions into words. According to Dewing and Foster (2007, 45), a majority of subjects in their study of a group of South African men and their bodies, 'drew on traditional ideas of masculinity and positioned such masculinity as no longer appropriate'.

In his well-anthologised piece on masculinity as homophobia, Kimmel (1994) appeared to be working the same ground. Says Kimmel (1994, 133): 'the fear of being perceived as gay, as not a real man, keeps men exaggerating all the traditional rules of masculinity'. Kimmel was, to be sure, desirous of going beyond the idea of manhood as something given to boy-children with their male bodies. Whilst he refers to traditions of manhood in American history, his main concern is to show the complex socialised fear that men live with, the feeling of being unmasked that they do not measure up, they are not real men, sissies, emotional, homosexuals; in that sense referring to the social-psychological aspects in addition to the socio-economic aspects of masculinity. His aim was to offer 'a new theoretical model of American manhood'. Similar to the aim of Kimmel, Carrigan et al., and others within critical or constructionist masculinity studies<sup>1</sup> who examine how men are socially positioned, the goal of presenting a way to understand the multiplicity of masculinities in South African is a beacon for this paper.

Nonetheless, Kimmel and other critical scholars of masculinities have created a problem for progressive work on especially men in places where the discourse of tradition is positively centralised in attempts to challenge the effects of unequal economic and cultural globalisation, places outside of the USA and rich West. In effectively situating homosexualities and other non-conforming sexual practices in opposition to 'the traditional' or outside of tradition, many studies of masculinity have engendered an impasse which needs careful negotiation in any serious attempt to unsettle views of tradition that clash with claims for the recognition of sexual equality in post-colonial societies. In opposing non-heterosexual practices and queer desires to 'the traditional' by accepting the discursive expulsion from tradition of women and men whose sexual objects are non-normative (including those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, queer, and intersexed subjects), critical scholars of men and gender activists unwittingly boost patriarchal heterosexual masculine dominance. The opposition of queer to 'the traditional', that is to say, inadvertently reinforces the view of only some prevalent practices—what people do, rather what many possibly could do were they not fearful—as belonging to tradition.

The major purpose of this article is to offer a different reading of the relation between masculinities and 'the traditional' by re-examining the deployment of the concept of 'traditional masculinity' in scholarly enquiry and socio-political activism. It also aims to show that it is when tradition and associated concepts are invoked in studies of men and masculinity, but also when the word 'critical'

or its equivalents is uttered in discussions of ‘traditional masculinity’, that unreflective assumptions about tradition leak out. Here, though, traditions at their most basic are thought to be inherited stories which we live by; discursive constructions handed down from one generation to the next and used to represent the world and ourselves. In respect of scholarship, tradition, conveyed in various vocabularies, is always a fundamental even though unexamined problem in all scholarly enquiry—not only in studies of masculinities—in that disciplines are never unconcerned with the transmission of culture (Phillips and Schochet 2004). All traditions are ultimately involved in a project of naturalising strangers, turning them into ‘believers’ (Ratele 2007). Conceived as ‘a means of raising essential questions about the ways in which we pass on the life of cultures—questions that necessarily include issues of authority as well as invention, practice as well as interpretation’ (Phillips 2004, 25), a better idea of how tradition infuses masculinities can only help towards understanding cultural conditions that sustain or challenge men’s sexual dominance.

The centrality of the problematic of tradition notwithstanding, the need of tradition to be addressed is rarely if ever fully taken up in scholarship on men’s sexualities. However, insofar as it is impossible to exist outside of a tradition (even multiple traditions at once), the issue to be addressed in analysing men’s practices is the inventory of the self-identified tradition and to make a case of one tradition as less or better suited than another for a more enabling sexuality and gender dispensations rather than be dismissive out of hand. This article tests some of the trusses underpinning academic and lay accounts on ‘traditional masculinity’ by posing the question: why are some masculinities thought to be less or more traditional than others? The article foregrounds claims for recognition and equality for lesbian and gay desires and practices in order to show the injudicious use of the notion of ‘traditional masculinity’, especially but certainly not only by critical scholars of sexuality and gender. Such uncritical use of the notion of ‘the traditional’ may hinder more rapid progress in undoing the domination of patriarchal heterosexual men over women and queers.<sup>2</sup> By examining the disruption of ruling ideas of manhood by non-conforming sexuality and gender practices, focusing on what it means to powerful black men when some men of the race do not desire women and some women prefer other women, the article illustrates why it is productive to think of all forms of and claims around sexuality and gender, in particular forms such as gay masculinity, lesbian masculinity and other non-normative sexualities, as never outside of tradition.

The next section of the article presents a thumbnail sketch and certainly not an exhaustive analysis of how tradition and ‘the traditional’ have been conceived in contemporary South African socio-political life. Following on this is a two-fold critical engagement: first, with a patriarchal hetero-masculinist traditionalism<sup>3</sup> resistant to the recognition of desires and rights of women and men who are attracted to others of the same sex; and second, against anti-‘traditional’ critiques which reinforce the homogenisation, congealment, and retribalisation of African tradition and culture by traditionalists.

### Legislating tradition in modern South Africa

Post-apartheid politics and legislation seeking to redress the historical denigration of African traditions by racist political and legal structures reveal that affirming these traditions, while avoiding a return to the historical scene of colonial and apartheid trauma, is an exercise fraught with ironies and contradictions. The attempt to restore pre-apartheid African traditions, necessitated by the destruction of black cultural life and wounding by white male supremacist ideology, is marked by the fantasy of a precolonial, non-conflictual and homogenous Africa. As such, in a culturally heterogeneous postcolonial Africa, efforts to return to old traditions usually carry a high likelihood to retraumatise many who identify with those very traditions. In her investigation into the related concept of African Renaissance, which has also been used to reassert 'pre-colonial putatively traditional African culture that was overlooked and devalued by colonialism', Distiller said, 'invoking the lost past as a means for redressing the trauma of colonisation, reproduces the traumatising structures—as Fanon said it would' (Distiller 2006, 54). Whereas one of the purposes of the legislation is to offer recognition to these traditions in accordance with Section 211 of the Constitution (Republic of South Africa [RSA] 1996), the laws on 'the traditional' effectively retribalise the lives of a significant number of black people because they are troubled by at least two dilemmas with one effect. The first is the dilemma of recognising what you may not want to recognise. The second has to do with traditional leaders compelled to negotiate for accommodation, and some power, with political leaders. The effect is to coercively retribalise a mass of Africans in rural South Africa, and reinforce a tribalistic, racialised, heterosexist masculinity (and femininity).

#### *Post-apartheid recognition dilemma*

This dilemma emerges from the lawmakers' misrecognition of the interests of some of those who seek recognition in the name of tradition; from the fact that, though the assertion of tradition is to have black cultural practices recognised within the context of a hegemonic culture of whiteness, the goal is to transform the very lives of those who seek affirmation in that name. In this paradox, the new legislators (and traditional leaders) become incapable of avoiding the recognition of some of the very categories of identification, recognised by colonial and apartheid law. The categories include tribes.<sup>4</sup> 'Tribe', according to the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework (TLGF) Act of 2003, 'means a tribe that was established or recognised under legislation in force before the commencement of this Act' (RSA 2003, 8). What was 'in force before' were numerous apartheid laws on natives, on tribal administration and on homelands, such as the Population Registration Act of 1950, Bantu Authorities Act of 1951, Native Administration Amendment Act of 1956, Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act of 1959, and the Bantu Homelands Constitution Act of 1971.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, the post-apartheid legislators admit the legitimacy of the conceptual frameworks of identities of apartheid even while seeking to disavow that regime. They also ignore the

understanding that ‘tribe’ is an ideological vehicle inspired by colonial rule, as Mafeje (1971)<sup>6</sup> has shown. One reading of this restoration of tribal authority and authentication of ‘tribes’ is that this notion of ‘traditional’ is not incompatible with modern, democratic, post-apartheid structures.

One of the ways employed to try to get out of this dilemma—of giving recognition of the very things recognised by colonialism and apartheid—is to largely leave unarticulated what tradition is. However, to make any sense of the purport of the law, the legislators need to define some concepts. ‘Traditional leader’ and ‘traditional leadership’<sup>7</sup> are some of the concepts that need to be defined in the TLGF Act. The Act also defines a ‘traditional community’ as one ‘recognised as such in terms of section 2’. Chapter 2.2 of the Act states that ‘A community may be recognised as a traditional community if it—(a) is subject to a system of traditional leadership in terms of that community’s customs; and (b) observes a system of customary law (RSA 2003, 8). Again illustrating how constitutionalism is not necessarily at odds with the ‘traditional’, the law further states that,

- (2) (a) The Premier of a province may, by notice in the *Provincial Gazette*, in accordance with provincial legislation and after consultation with the provincial house of traditional leaders in the province, the community concerned, and, if applicable, the king or queen under whose authority that community would fall, recognise a community envisaged in subsection (1) as a traditional community.<sup>8</sup>
- (3) A traditional community must transform and adapt customary law and customs relevant to the application of this Act so as to comply with the relevant principles contained in the Bill of Rights in the Constitution, in particular by
  - (a) preventing unfair discrimination;
  - (b) promoting equality; and
  - (c) seeking to progressively advance gender representation in the succession to traditional leadership positions. (RSA 2003, 8)

In short, ‘the traditional’ can be accommodated in this society but must comply with the constitution. Here, then, we come upon the second dilemma: that regarding the uneasy accommodation and power of traditional leadership within the political leadership dispensation.

#### *Accommodation of traditional leadership within a modern political system*

Seeing that the historically inferiorised traditions are being incorporated into the post-apartheid foundational law framework (an Enlightenment-informed human rights culture), the quest for recognition is ultimately an exercise in seeking accommodation with the new political powers. Hence it is an elected political office bearer, a premier, within the current political dispensation who has the ultimate authority to offer the required recognition to a community to be regarded as traditional. Along similar lines, it is the president who can recognise a person as a king or queen. It is possible that these uneasy hierarchies between hereditary leadership and elected leaders—such as where the king’s subject can also be the



king's president—must be particularly troubling for some of the 'traditionalist' actors. Additionally, in negotiating for some power with the new post-apartheid political authorities traditional leaders in particular are compelled to negotiate with modernity. It is via constitutionally mandated democratic processes that traditions and customs can be asserted. Just as 'the traditional' is found by legislators to be not out-of-place in a modern society, and vice versa, the modern powers can be engaged and approached whenever it suits traditional leaders.

Other tradition-related legislation, a particular example being the Traditional Courts Bill (TCB), is similarly troubled by the same dilemmas. The TCB, for instance, which has been reintroduced in the National Council of Provinces for debate (and had it not been for serious criticism from civil society and the courts would have taken effect in 2008), also uses the definition of 'traditional' contained in the above-mentioned law. Besides definitions of amongst others 'traditional justice system' and 'traditional council',<sup>9</sup> the Bill defines a traditional court as 'a court established as part of the traditional justice system, which

- (a) functions in terms of customary law and custom; and
- (b) is presided over by a king, queen, senior traditional leader, headman, headwoman or a member of a royal family who has been designated as a presiding officer of a traditional court by the Minister in terms of section 4,<sup>10</sup> and which includes a forum of community elders who meet to resolve any dispute which has arisen . . . . (RSA 2011, 4)

### *Reauthenticating tribal life, reinforcing heterosexist tribalistic masculinity*

In spite of Section 3 of the TLGF Act which seeks to, for instance, 'promote equality' (RSA 2003, 8) and 'preserve traditions, customs and cultural practices that promote nation-building in line with constitutional values' (RSA 2011, 4), the upshot of the post-apartheid laws on tradition is to produce fertile conditions for the retribalisation of a significant population of rurally located Africans. Tribal authority is reanimated. Tribes are given the stamp of authenticity. The democratic aspirations of millions of blacks in rural areas to be free and full South African citizens are curtailed. These laws on tradition reinstitute one of the cornerstones of apartheid encapsulated in laws such as the Group Areas and Population Registration Acts.<sup>11</sup> Among other purposes, these laws were intended to break up Africans into tribes and force them to live amongst their own kind in homelands or in designated sections in township (see Gordon and Spiegel 1993). Through tacitly recognising the area of jurisdiction of the laws as that which overlap apartheid laws on homelands, these post-apartheid laws on tradition thus remap on black bodies, in the former Bantu homelands, the tribalistic masculine authoritarianism so useful to the policy of segregation and tribal politics (see Wotshela 2004). Hence, the legislators restore ethnocentric and clannish identities as reproduced under the previous order.

An effect of this retribalisation is that the post-apartheid lawmakers unwittingly affirm what might be called racialised, tribalistic masculinity and (hetero)sexism among blacks in rural areas. In retribalising black life, all black men are made out

to be—not to put too fine a point on it—rampant, warrior-like heterosexuals, and all African women as willing, submissive sexual objects of the men of the tribe.

In the past, someone whose traditions were recognised under law might say, on the basis of nothing more than the sign of tradition, that there were no men or women attracted to those of the same sex. Indeed, earlier this year, Zulu monarch king Goodwill Zwelithini was reported to have called people with same-sex desires ‘rotten’ (Mdletshe 2012). According to *The Times*, he said:

Traditionally, there were no people who engaged in same sex relationships. There was nothing like that and if you do it, you must know that you are rotten. I don’t care how you feel about it. If you do it, you must know that it is wrong and you are rotten. Same sex is not acceptable (*Mail & Guardian*, January 23, 2012).

The king was provoked to speak of homosexuality and its place in/out of tradition during the 133rd commemoration of the Battle of Isandlwana at Nquthu in northern KwaZulu-Natal. Besides the assumption that warriors can never be queer, what tribesman can come out if the king has said such sexual desires are rotten? The Zulu royal household, however, ‘denied<sup>12</sup> that the king condemned gay relationships, saying his speech wasn’t translated properly’ (*Mail & Guardian*, January 23, 2012). A spokesperson said:

The king had said that in the past men would go for months in battles to fight the enemy without their wives, and that they did not harass each other sexually. He said nowadays you even have men who rape other men. The king said this was a clear sign of moral decay and he said he condemned those involved, no matter who they were (*Mail & Guardian*, January 23, 2012).

At times it would appear that the lawmakers succeed in clearing the paradox of post-apartheid rulers imposing ideologies of tribes and tribalism on Africans by allowing that tradition is what a community says it is. However, this evasive strategy leaves the question of the substance of and contestations within tradition unresolved precisely because apparently these issues are not as vital to the political leaders as the uses of the ‘traditional’ to political power, and in turn, the uses of the political power for traditional leaders. As such, the old authoritarian ideology that produced and characterised many of the traditions in question is reasserted in law. In addition to the retribalising effect of the law, the assumption here appears to be that the observance and practice of custom is unchanging, standardised and uncontested and that tradition is eternal, uniform, and harmonious.

It may be that the authors of the laws on traditional leadership and governance as well as of traditional courts were in fact trying to leave what tradition and custom mean less restrictive in light of an anxiety that any definition will exclude some aspects of tradition and custom. Even then, the problem created is that they have enabled the powerful voices such as those of headmen, chiefs, and kings to define what is tradition and what is not. They have also given to these figures the primary right to speak on behalf of tradition as well as appoint who can and cannot lay claim to tradition. Even then, it is apparent when considering sexuality and gender that any custom that gets authorised or conversely is



ejected from the ambit of the traditional is never uncontested. Customary sexual and gender practices cannot be understood outside of the political contestation that constitute custom, tradition, community, and ‘tribe’ themselves outside of who has the power of decision making, about who sits in the ‘*eBandla*’, ‘*Huvo*’, ‘*inKantolo yeNdabuko*’ or whatever ‘the forum of community elders’ is called in the language of that community (RSA 2011, 4). Because all women and ‘out’ gay men are usually unrepresented in the forum of traditional community leaders, the likelihood that heterosexual patriarchal masculinity will be forced to enlarge the meaning of tradition is low. Of course, heterosexual men can and do form alliances across gender and sexual divisions. Hence, it becomes important to seek to mobilise some of the men in ‘*eBandla*’ to be conscious of the problems of restrictive tribalistic and traditionalist discourses of gender and sexual traditions.

### ‘Non-traditional’ desires

‘Non-traditional desires’ is used to refer to non-conforming desires, practices, identities, relationships, as well as bodies such as what are often called girlyboys, pretty boys, tomboys and intersexed babies, but also instances when a male child wants a pink (anything) or a female child wants to play stick-fighting with boys. In light of the last section on the troubled attempts by the post-apartheid political dispensation to recognise the traditional leadership and justice system regimes, the first question now is how desires become ‘non-traditional’; the second is how to read into and reconcile with the prevalent narrative of tradition these non-conforming, ‘non-traditional’, unAfrican sexual desires.

Sexuality, and specifically non-normative sexuality, is not, to be sure, a side issue within cultural and political life. While feminist and, more generally gender, work within Africa mostly tended to focus on easily recognisable political-economic issues, since the late 1960s US and Western European feminist scholarship and activism has convincingly argued for an appreciation of the politics of sexuality (Millet 1969); of ‘sexuality [as] the set of effects produced in bodies, behaviours, and social relations by a certain deployment deriving from a complex political technology’ (Foucault 1978, 127); and as ‘always political’ (Rubin 2007, 150). Arguably, the significance of gender power in political and economic relations appears to be largely, though not unreservedly appreciated here as in the post-industrial Western economies, one piece of evidence being the existence of organs of the state dedicated to women’s and gender interests as well as other similar vehicles in the wider society. However, there remains a need for interventions around the politics and psychological dynamics of sexuality in accounts of African traditions. As intimated by the convulsions regarding unAfrican desires, sexuality is an ubiquitous and potentially disruptive—and not necessarily (pro)creative—force in culture-making; disruptive in the sense of interrupting the traditionalism that characterises culture. Even then, cultures unfailingly employ sexuality to define themselves, draw borders, and define custom. Furthermore, in contemporary social relations, sexuality indeed is,

central to the way we talk of ourselves, how we come to give meaning to our lives ... a vital element of how individuals, with great help from the media and science, constitute their identities and relations (not merely sexual ones) and how culture constructs itself ... What names people call themselves (bisexual or straight), what kind of sex persons have, and the kinds of sexual relationships they establish, becomes the source of other identities that get formed/rejected, and how people imagine the cultural. (Ratele 2005, 38–39)

Since, as was said, ‘the traditional’ is at home in contemporary South Africa and modern powers are engaged whenever is deemed necessary by traditional leaders, it has become necessary for traditionalists to directly address questions of sexualities, to seek to regulate sexualities more overtly, as exemplified by the views of chief Phatekile Holomisa. Head of the Congress of Traditional Leaders and a member of parliament of the African National Congress (ANC), Holomisa is reported to have said that ‘homosexuality was a condition that occurred when a certain cultural rituals have not been performed’ (*City Press*, May 6, 2012, 5). Holomisa also said that the National House of Traditional Leaders ‘wants to remove a clause from the Constitution which protects people on the grounds of sexual orientation’ (*City Press*, May 6, 2012, 5). The ANC issued a press statement distancing itself from these views (Motshekga 2012).

The regulation of sexual desire and the practices and relations which desire elicits—what people are encouraged or discouraged from feeling, doing and with whom—which operates always in conjunction with the regulation of gender, thus is a critical set of the pivots around which traditions revolve. All traditions seek to regulate gender and sexuality (Amadiume 2006). Sexual desire is inherent in accounts of tradition, and accounts of tradition are productive of desire (Ratele 2005). Desire does not exist outside of traditional (or legal, or economic, or political) power and its contestation but rather is produced by and productive of it. Being handy in exercises of defining what is traditional and cultural, desire is useful in helping to govern the private lives of members of the culture. Some desires, practices and relations are regarded as precisely non-traditional insofar as they are defined out of—outlawed from—tradition. The cultural repression of some desires is likely because they disturb the psyches of powerful subjects within a tradition—such as a king or chief. More importantly though, some desires are forbidden, because they disrupt the sexual and gender order. Indeed statements about, and violent physical acts, against women and men attracted to persons of the same sex/gender arise from the fact that the heterosexual patriarchal masculine order, which prefers sexual relations between a younger woman who is inducted into sexual life by an older man, is intolerant of practices that upset this entitlement of powerful men (Ratele 2011). ‘A fundamental element of modern hegemonic masculinity’ is, it has been said,

that one sex (women) exists as potential sexual object, while the other sex (men) is negated as a sexual object. It is women, therefore, who provide heterosexual men with sexual validation, whereas men exist as rivals in both sexual and other spheres of life. (Carrigan, Connell, and Lee 1985, 586)

Caceres, Cueto, and Palomino (2007, 159), writing about sexual and reproductive rights policies in Peru, contended that the battle is really about ‘the control of one’s own body’ between the ‘traditional’ (hetero)sexual culture and claims for citizen rights:

A ‘macho’, sexist, and homophobic culture based on the defence of the traditional family unit and a hierarchical gender system, is in conflict with the changes being promoted through new ways of thinking, which seek greater social acceptance of diversity, the rule of a secular state, and the enhancement of citizen rights.

Hence, the powers within a tradition do find ready use of desires to organise the sexual order of which they speak; authorising one set of desires and marginalising another, speaking for a particular practice and against another.

The object and aim<sup>13</sup> (Freud 1905/2011) of our sexual desires is a matter in which others take interest. Those positioned to decide on our behalf can and often enough do go beyond simple curiosity, though, to enact rules, sanctions, or laws proscribing some sexual desire-related practice and preferring others. Though South African law has expanded to include other forms of sexual union, marriage as a union of a man to a woman is one such preferred practice in other countries, and other unions are illegal. This interest in others’ desiring practices is shown by a number of incidents over the years within South African public life. For instance, besides the king of AmaZulu, in 2006 Jacob Zuma was reported to have said ‘When I was growing up an *ungqingili* (gay person) would not have stood in front of me. I would knock him out’. The *Sowetan* newspaper quoted Zuma as saying that same sex marriages were ‘a disgrace to the nation and to God’ (SAPA 2006). Zuma apologised (*Financial Times*, September 28, 2006). This does not need great elaboration: obviously Zuma, then deputy president of South Africa and thus sworn to uphold the nation’s constitution had difficulties with the rights around sexual orientation and civil union. What is more interesting is the apology.

Like the distancing from Holomisa by the ruling party and the denial on behalf of king Zwelithini, Zuma’s apology holds a significant lesson. It signals the catch-22 situation the African political leaders of South Africa find themselves facing in wanting to recognise cultural traditions when they clash with other rights in the constitution; or having to defend the rights contained in the document when they might not quite believe in, for example, the right to sexual orientation and gender equality. The apology by Zuma, the move by the ANC, as well as the king’s spokesman’s correction ought to be read as part of the earlier noted dilemmas around recognition and negotiations about power between traditionalism and constitutionalism. Whilst tradition—more appropriately, traditionalism—is asserted by the various actors, the apologies, denials and distancing that followed the claims arise from the uneasy navigation of the new political terrain by traditionalists. There is a compulsion for traditionalism to abide with the imperatives of the new constitutional dispensation (and thus to deal with modernity in the sense of contemporary South Africa) when traditional leaders may wish to return to an imagined or real sexual dispensation in the past. However, what

should not be lost to us is the self-conscious and reflexive character in the use of tradition in, for instance, Zuma's threatened violence against *ungqingili*, the Zulu king's declaration that 'traditionally, there were no people who engaged in same sex relationships', and in Holomisa's claim that 'homosexuality was a condition that occurred when certain cultural rituals have not been performed'. The speakers are clearly aware that the traditional or cultural rituals they are referring to have to be argued for, in the context of modernity, in the present, and the argument must talk to the claims for rights of sexual orientation as they contest the dominance of traditionalism.

Besides the king and the chief there have been many other politicians, religious figures, and traditional leaders who have made claims in the face contradicting evidence (Gevisser and Cameron 1994; Matebeni 2011; McFadden 2003; Muholi 2007; Reddy 2001; Tamale 2011) to the effect that Africans naturally do not find persons of the same sex/gender erotically desirable. It is crucial to underline here that such non-conforming desires may not always be referred to as lesbian or gay, and there is no political need to press these forbidden desires into these categories. The important point is that 'non-traditional', queer desires exist in Africa and could use cultural and political recognition. On the whole a traditionalist account of Africans' desire appears to be arguing that it is not that there were people in the past in a community defined as traditional (as in the abovementioned laws) who wanted to but were afraid of the cultural sanction to pursue their desires. Rather, the argument is, that there were absolutely no such persons. But to believe that there were not queers in Africa is absurd. This confuses sexual/gender desires with what is commonly done, with (hetero)sexual normativity. What people do sexually is nearly always different from what they can do were they given the chance (Petchesky 2007).

What studies of sexualities have shown is indeed that sexual desires are variegated. They are internally unstable, historically and socially contingent, as well as being unruly too. However, what cultural or societal order tends to do is prefer and legitimate one or a few configurations over others. In most societies, heterosexuality is preferred and legitimated over other desires. What accompanies the cultural injunctions on non-conforming sexualities is that the desire of men and women for others of the same sex/gender is not infrequently suppressed by law or custom. Sometimes the sexual prohibition is overt and aggressive. At other times the system manages to persuade subjects to control themselves and suppress their own non-conforming desires. Hence, in families and communities where the desires for men and women to express their sexualities differently from the norm are unacceptable, surely such subjects must internalise that, for instance, the way another person of the same sex smells, or smiles or walks 'can never be sexually arousing' (Ratele 2011, 408). It may be that what we are witnessing is how some desires *become* tradition and others are expelled; that we find ourselves in an arena where a local sexual tradition is being made, or perhaps remade. It is possible that in South Africa we are at the moment watching and listening on in a struggle for ascendancy of what will in the future become tradition on sexuality and gender;

witnessing an unfolding answer to the question Foucault saw as the important one, namely:

In a specific type of discourse on sex, in a specific form of extortion of truth, appearing historically and in specific places (around the child's body, apropos of women's sex, in connection with practices restricting births, and so on), what were the most immediate, the most local power relations at work? How did they make possible these kinds of discourses, and conversely, how were these discourses used to support power relations? How was the action of these power relations modified by their very exercise, entailing a strengthening of some terms and a weakening of others, with effects of resistance and counterinvestments, so that there has never existed one type of stable subjugation, given once and for all? How were these power relations linked to one another according to the logic of a great strategy, which in retrospect takes on the aspect of a unitary and voluntarist politics of sex? (Foucault 1978, 97)

In addition to the agitation queer struggles for recognition cause for prevalent discourses of tradition, something else that needs to be highlighted is the apparent distress same-sex desires create for the dominant form of African masculinity. It is not incidental that the actors in the examples offered earlier are men in positions of power. In addition to the disavowal of homosexuality in the past, there is a concurrence of the views of tradition and culture of these powerfully positioned heterosexual men.<sup>14</sup> An interesting aspect of these views is the unspoken wish to declare queer desires to never have existed in traditional communities even while such desires are said to be unacceptable. The notion of queer desires as never having existed before is asserted even in the face of the fact that in South Africa's history, it is known that men who left home for long periods of time to work in the mines took other men as sexual companions (Moodie and Ndatshe 1994; Moodie, Ndatshe, and Sibuyi 1988). Moreover, the notion of queer desires as never having existed before and therefore precluded from tradition is asserted, without any obvious sense of irony, in the face of a history in which other previously prohibited desires, for instance, cross-racial sex and marriage, are now legal. It can then only be that women who desire other women's bodies rather than males', and males who prefer other males rather females, become objects of vertical (structural or symbolic) and horizontal (inter-personal) homophobia and regulatory power because such preferences fundamentally disturb the masculinist traditionalism about sexuality. They also disrupt the tacit agreement of the powerful discourses (within government and within tradition). Gay masculinities and lesbian masculinities (Carrigan, Connell, and Lee 1985; Epprecht 1998; Halberstam 1998; Judge and Sanger 2011), for instance, embody a rebuttal of the traditionalist male privilege to women's bodies but also to the embodiment of masculinity in males that tends to characterise hetero-masculinist patriarchy.

Since in traditionalist thought unattached women are by definition available to all men, and because normal men are naturally supposed to want to have sex with women, where women have no need for men and men do not sexually want women, this can be seen to be a demand for ruling ideas of (hetero)sexual order

to change. This is the moment of crisis for the ruling sexual traditionalism, a moment that extends beyond seeing and noting the existence of heterogeneous forms of sexuality. More importantly, it is a moment in which claims for legal rights of other sexual desires and all that entails—such as benefits for partners, having children, and rewriting texts, for instance—are asserted, something that the traditionalist heterosexual patriarchal masculine order might be unprepared to countenance. The crisis generated by demands to, as it were, make space for women, lesbians, gays and other ‘Others’ of hetero-patriarchy in the ‘*Huvo*’ (forum of community elders) is perhaps the more upsetting to a tradition that is itself seeking recognition from the new political power.

### ‘Traditional masculinity’

Among the foundations of critical studies of men and masculinities (Brod 1987; Connell 1995; Kimmel, Hearn, and Connell 2005; Lindsay and Miescher 2003; Morrell 2001) is the idea that masculinity is not merely biological, a relational, thing outside of time. It is not simply given with men’s bodies, male genes or hormones, or the possession of the penis. Rather than something essential called masculinity that male children come with into the world which unfolds regardless of social circumstance, this body of work has made a persuasive argument that masculinities are constructed out of boys’ and men’s relationship with girls and women as well as with other males in the context of time and space. Instead of an essence inside of, or on, male bodies, just as there are feminine men, masculinity can be performed by and read off females (Halberstam 1998; Judge and Sanger 2011). It is at once embodied, performed, relational and contingent. The point of departure in investigating masculinities is always men’s ‘involvement in the social relations that constitute the gender order’ (Carrigan, Connell, and Lee 1985, 589). This order is a society-wide, systematised patterning of relations between the sexes/genders realised, embodied and routinely reproduced in spaces such as families, schools, sport, workplaces, media and religion and their traditions.

In addition to social realities, though, it is crucial to attend to the psychological elements of masculinities, specifically the powers of desire that can undermine and unsettle heterosexual masculine domination and not only reinforce it (Ratele 2008). It has also been shown that men’s sexual and gender practices, and idea of masculinity, regardless of where you are in the world, are contingent, change over time and are internally unstable. Masculinity is always under construction. For progressive politics, what men do is thus better viewed as unsettled and changeable. Masculinity is, in other words, an incomplete configuration of gender and sexual practices boys and men get to learn, habituate to over time and employ to navigate their given worlds and identify themselves as boys and men to themselves and others (Ratele 2007). Men learn about masculinity by being addressed by others, by comparing themselves with others, and by comparing themselves with an image of themselves at an earlier point in their lives.



Another conclusion from this body of studies is that it is better to talk of masculinity in plural terms, of diverse and different forms of masculinity, ensembles of actions and omissions, moments of identification and misrecognition; hence the notion of masculinities. There is more than one configuration of these practices and omissions in any one culture or any other one site. Finally, rather than expect fixity and seamlessness in men's practices, studies indicate that it is more useful to anticipate contradictions and shifts within masculinities.

Oddly, a largely uncritical view about what 'traditional masculinity' signifies prevails among studies informed by the foundations referred to, specifically of masculinity as an unsettled, labile, and historically contingent construction, a view which is especially prevalent in studies on African men and masculinities. It may be that many of these anti-'traditional masculinity' studies of men are aware of the elusiveness of the concept 'traditional masculinity' but because of this, most decide to steer clear of engaging with it. At other times, some may be simply swayed by the self-explanatory sense of 'traditional masculinity' and fail to see the many problems with it. In the event, what this uncritical view of 'traditional masculinity' produces is precisely the opposite from what is understood about all masculinities. Traditional masculinity is misguidedly taken to be predestined, homogenous, without history, and shorn of psychological processes. Consider a few examples.

In her influential research on 'streamlining' (commonly known as gang-rape) in South Africa, Wood wrote that 'traditionally in Xhosa society, according to urban and rural elders, a married man was entitled to punish his wife with a "slap" or action that did not draw blood or cause visible bruising or injury' (2005, 311). Also from South Africa, Walker reported finding in her study a sample of young men engaged in 'an ongoing struggle between traditional masculinities of the past and the demands of being a "modern man", who is in control, respectable, rational, and responsible—the very expectations embodied in liberal constitutional sexuality' (2005, 233). And in their study of how Finnish carpenters and engineers talk about food and eating as expressions of masculinity, Roosa, Prättälä, and Koski (2001) say 'most of them seemed comfortable with not cooking, the traditional division of labour'. These authors are not, I think, talking about the same thing when using 'tradition' or 'traditional'. They cannot be saying traditions of manhood or traditional norms about gender are the same in South Africa, and Finland. They are also, perhaps inadvertently, treating what goes for traditions of masculinity within these societies as largely undifferentiated and uncontested.

What ties them as well as other researchers of men and masculinities who use the device of 'tradition' together is a careless use of the notion of tradition and superficial engagement with 'traditional masculinity'. Ironically, even though it remains unanalysed, all of tradition in these cases is considered to be simply bad. Even more interesting is the fact that this view mirrors and relays the traditionalist understanding of tradition. The problem with this view of tradition, to be clear, is twofold: (a) it appears to be not fully thought through, avoidant or even conceited as far as 'the traditional' or tradition in men's gender practice is

concerned; and (b) it tends to conflate (masculine) traditionalism and tradition. How then to think of tradition without making it appear as if, for example, all African men are the same; or Xhosa men are identical to Finnish men?

*Re-examining 'traditional masculinity'*

To begin with, it may be true that the keenest arguments for the goodness of 'the traditional' are usually alibi for the perpetuation of hetero-patriarchal masculinist power, especially where such power feels threatened. Nonetheless, the oeuvre of any tradition is made up of many stories. There is range and nuance to women's and men's sexual practices within any tradition. Tradition is rarely ever simple 'unfreedom' (Amadiume 2002, 42). Tradition, as illustrated already, is not always opposed to modernity, surely not in a society like South Africa.

The demand to reveal other hidden stories within tradition is more urgent especially where the main story of tradition may seek to entrench a view of the rights of heterosexual men over women and homosexual men. New nations are vulnerable to claims for 'retraditionalisation' or (as we saw, contrary to an expectation to detribalise) retribalisation. As Joane Nagel argued in her examination of the links between normative masculinity and hegemonic nationalism, nationalists have a tendency 'to be "retraditionalisers" and to embrace tradition as a legitimating basis for nation-building and cultural renewal. These traditions, real or invented, are often patriarchal and point out the tenacious and entrenched nature of masculine privilege ...' (1998, 253 and 254).<sup>15</sup> Recourse to tradition might be a way to defend men's racialist/culturalist power, oppression of women and exclusion of homosexual males, for there is an intimate association between tradition and the dividends of racialised sexual domination. Yet, even though there are hegemonic hetero-masculine voices within traditions, traditions themselves are not exhausted by such dominant voices (Ratele 2005). Resorting to arguments about tradition appears to follow moments when dominant voices within the group feel exposed.

It should be clear then that to interrogate the loose use of 'tradition' and 'traditional masculinity' by critical scholars of men does not entail support for the argument that there is nothing similar between men in different parts of the world. The power that heterosexual men of all races around the world have enjoyed under tradition is seductive and undergirds more localised sexual and gender regimes. That is, there are commonalities, no doubt. However, there are important differences also. Thus a consideration of the traditions of Xhosa men as similar yet internally differentiated, and also both alike and dissimilar to the traditions of other South African men and Finnish men, implies being conscious of the fact that when scholars and activists carelessly situate homosexualities (or any marginalised or prohibited acts and desires) against traditions they are ceding too easily too much terrain to traditionalist positions. If all masculinities are constructed and contingent, while the unarticulated objective of all critical studies of men is to undo essentialist hetero-patriarchal traditionalism, masculinities researchers who deploy the idea of 'traditional masculinity' need to show the

contextual character, internal contestation, and changeability of the 'traditional' to which they refer. Critical students of African masculinities would be aware that one of the goals of many hetero-patriarchal traditionalists is to seek to retribalise those they rule by returning to an imagined past when traditional leaders were powerful. This return to the past works towards suppressing any progressive, disruptive forces. These forces are usually viewed as 'modern', foreign, or 'Westernised'. Therefore, accounts that employ the notion of 'traditional masculinity' without necessary critique, instead of challenging the political essentialism of masculine traditionalism, might be putting a gloss over masculinity which can be useful in claims against sexual and gender rights.

The meaning of 'traditional masculinity' intended by researchers of men may also be confusing because there is more than one meaning of tradition. Two likely meanings implied by 'traditional masculinity' are (a) the transmission of or handing down of a masculine culture, and (b) an age-old and unchanged idea about manhood (see Spiegel and Boonzaier 1988). These derive from two of the main overlapping meanings of tradition: as (a) beliefs, practices, statements, customs, rituals, etc, handed down from generation to generation, usually by oral means; and (b) accepted beliefs, practices, etc, thought to be from time immemorial (Brown 1993). These definitions trigger a number of questions. Among the crucial questions for critical studies of men are: Are all beliefs, etc, transmitted between generations considered tradition (for instance the 'tradition' that women should not wear trousers)?<sup>16</sup> Can one person hand down a tradition; that is, can a mother instructing her son about a custom be adequate? How does one deal with a disagreement between those who are supposed to hand down a tradition? How common should acceptance be for a belief to be considered tradition? How old should a practice be to be considered tradition? And does transmission by other means such as television and film and books count as tradition, which will likely imply receiving foreign and non-traditional beliefs? That is to say, how does a 'traditional community' (see RSA 2003) deal with the influences of another tradition, given the multicultural nature of many societies? I return to some of the questions below.

If by tradition, it is understood what one generation hands down to another, but given that the commonness of traditionally accepted sexual and gender practices is always a matter under question, it is possible that those meant to receive tradition will tend to differ in their beliefs and practices. What girls and boys learn about sexuality from their different parents is usually different at different moments. What is handed down is rarely coherent. Often the lessons are contradictory. The implication is that there always has to be an active making sense—a perpetual interpretation—of tradition. In a multicultural society like South Africa, there are also likely to be influences and borrowings from one tradition to another about men's and women's sexual practices. The subjects of tradition always stand in various positions in relation to the dominant discourse of tradition, which thus does not only mean unreflective acceptance of what the previous generation hands down. They can also resist or remake the tradition transmitted to them. Even though we are always handed beliefs and practices by the previous

generation and in turn we hand down something to the next, we do not receive and hand down the same message. Our different psychological lives, social positions and historical conditions mean we are more likely to betray than to totally inhabit and transmit what we receive from the previous generation. Even though it deserves critique, the idea of ‘the invention of tradition’ (Hobsbawm 1983)<sup>17</sup> is most helpful in considering masculinity. ‘Traditional masculinity’, like tradition, cannot but be characterised by an element of a suitable past, of factitiousness, of adaptation to a novel situation, and of distortion, although this may not necessarily be on a conscious level and occurs within certain constraints (Appadurai 1981). We cannot proceed without filling in the gaps in the body of statements and beliefs we get from our fathers, mothers, and the wider community, since we are pressed by the demands of time and place to adapt what we receive in changed circumstances.

It cannot, then, as suggested by the king of the Amazulu and chief Holomisa, only be heterosexual Africans who have traditions, but instead it is sexual traditionalism in contemporary South Africa which continues to favour heterosexuality over other sexualities. Homosexual Africans have traditions, even though traditionalism does not want to have them as part of tradition. However, homosexuals are likely not to feel apart from some of the traditions within the culture in which they were born and raised, something not unknown by some heterosexuals.

This idea of being part of a culture yet partially apart from it, a sense of being torn and having multiple belongings, is of course central in thinking of not only homosexual Africans, but of oppressed sexual identities generally. Homosexual Africans, and perhaps more so those living in communities where legislation such as the TLGF Act and TCB has or would have jurisdiction, are likely to live with this sense of estrangement. An example here is of homosexual boys who want to go to *lebollong* (initiation school in Sesotho). One of the interesting things that this notion—that we are all located with traditions even if those traditions may trouble our claims for recognition—opens up is that older closeted homosexual men may in some parts be more tied to their traditions even though traditionalists may want to exclude them from the council of elders.

### *Beyond uncritical studies of ‘traditional masculinity’*

Studies of masculinity which offer a somewhat sustained examination of ‘traditional masculinity’ are scarce. In contrast to many other studies which deploy the figure of ‘traditional masculinity’ these studies suggest that the meaning of ‘tradition’ or ‘traditional’ needs to be carefully elaborated because it only becomes understandable when used and read in context. This is clearly illustrated by studies which give some attention to what they mean or what they associate with ‘traditional masculinity’. Levant et al. (2003, 92), for instance, reports that US research show that the endorsement of traditional masculinity ideology to be associated with ‘being male, being younger, being single, having lower expectations of educational attainment, having greater church participation, being sexually active, being African American’. Khunou (2006, 160) in the context of South

Africa suggests that traditional notions of masculinity ‘portray men as brave, strong, powerful, intelligent, mature, healthy, heterosexual and uncaring’. She also suggests that for most of her interviewees, traditional masculinity ‘focused primarily on the provider and protector roles’ (Khunou 2006, 160). Dewing and Foster (2007, 45) in contrast focus on the body, physical activity, muscularity, and state that in their study ‘traditionally masculine’ men were described as having ‘bulging muscles’, being ‘quite big’, ‘tough looking’, ‘sporty’, athletic and strong... Ideas around traditional masculinity also often included stereotypical character types which were negatively assessed by the men in this study, and included the ‘man’s man’, ‘captain of the rugby team’, the ‘rugger bugger’ and, in one case, the ‘muscular, hairy-chested six foot four rugby playing Neanderthal’.

In contrast to these studies many researchers on men have tended to take for granted what ‘traditional’ means, and in those cases where traditional masculinity is given more than a cursory exploration it tends to be imprecisely applied. ‘Traditional’ thus can mean the antithesis of modern but also disagreeable; *amaqaba*<sup>18</sup> even when the subjects live in urban spaces; not merely anachronistic but naturally toxic too. What is overlooked by anti-traditionalists is that ‘the traditional’ has a fluid and equivocal character. The similarity of the view of the traditional by anti-traditionalists to that advanced by traditionalists is also strange. Regardless, what critical students of men need to be aware of is that tradition is constituted as it is lived and used, especially in modern political societies (Linnekin 1983). Tradition, as Heerstemann put, is basically

the way society formulates and deals with the basic problems of human existence. In other words, it is the way society comes to terms with the insoluble problem of life and death, including such life and death matters as food and water in a world of scarcity. In this respect, of course it is not different from modernity. Since the fundamental problem of life and death is truly insoluble, it has to be attacked, formulated, and dealt with each time anew under a different aspect. Tradition therefore is and has to be bound up with the ever-shifting present. Hence the irritating flexibility and fluidity of tradition (Heerstemann 1985, 10).

Following the work of Mrinalini Sinha in respect of colonial India, Morrell (1998) advised complicating conceptions of ‘traditional masculinity’ in Southern African studies by recognising it as entangled and not discrete from Westernised masculinity. Similar to masculinities, tradition is a contested, changing and contingent set of discourses, practices, beliefs, etc; ‘traditional masculinity’ is thus a multiple contested condition; and because it has to seek accommodation with ascendant ‘constitutional masculinities’, it is pushed to continually reconstruct itself. It is striking how, for instance, *amakrwala*<sup>19</sup> as a specific form suggested by the concept ‘traditional masculinity’, with their jackets, hats and way of walking and holding the body (see Diko 2012; Mhlahlo 2009; Ndangam 2008), appear to be in an intense negotiation with the past, with ancestors and forefathers (compared with other reputedly ‘non-traditional’ masculinities), even while their masculinity is being remade in and remaking the present.

At the same time, like traditions, a number of ‘traditional masculinities’ can be seen to operate and compete in any society, particularly a multi-ethnic or -cultural society. These forms of masculinity vary in their status and popularity among different groupings (Luyt and Foster 2001). However, contestations between masculinities, negotiations with ancestors, and remakings of subjectivity and community are not restricted to rituals like *ubukrwala*. To a greater or less degree, every man is always in negotiation with his ‘ancestors’, deliberately or unawares. All men are involved in contestation around the pasts of manhood, constantly trying to remake themselves in relation to cultural standards inherited from the past. Therefore to deploy the discourse of tradition with regard to sexuality and gender in contemporary society is already to recognise the entwinement of tradition with modernity. What is often uncritically regarded by critical studies of men as ‘traditional masculinity’ ought to also be considered as an attempt to contest what it means to be a man in the post-colony, since in that moment of contestation, there is an unwilling recognition of the entanglement of African traditional masculinities with a hegemonic, Westernised transnational gender and sexual tradition.

## Conclusion

Rather than summarise the arguments in this article in conclusion, I would like to underscore two points. First, I want to highlight the dilemmas around tradition. While these dilemmas at times may appear to be disconnected from the troubles around sexual and gender rights, they rarely if ever are. The recourse to tradition in law and public life is in fact a way to have customary patriarchal hetero-masculine power recognised, in other words, to legalise and perpetuate the privileges and power of heterosexual men over women and queer men. The ‘strugglers for recognition’—campaigners for sexual rights and claimants of traditions—have thus found themselves on opposing sides. In post-apartheid constitutional democracy, even though the ‘traditional’ is useful to the modern democratic political system, reconciling the rights of women and queer people with the desire of ruling men in government and traditional leadership to retain a particular form of power will prove difficult. I have also sought to show that even though heterosexual masculine voices may be hegemonic within a tradition, no tradition is exhausted by homophobic and sexist patriarchal traditionalism. Resorting to arguments about traditions may in fact signal the insecurity of the hitherto dominant group within traditions. In other words, (homo)sexuality has become (in conjunction with gender politics) the screen for working out the problems of the traditionalist hegemonic model of sexuality and gender (such as the spuriousness of natural binaries), problems brought on by the demands of queer and female subjects for recognition by culture. This point is important in critical engagement with claims for ‘traditional community’ as in thinking carefully about the use of ‘traditional masculinity’.

Second, contrary to the discourse of the lesbian and gay and other queer Africans’ practices and relations as not part of African traditions and cultures, one



argument suggested here has been that unless there is something indescribably non-human about Africans which would force ‘us’ to treat ‘them’ as a separate species there can be no reason to think that many forms of male and female sexual desires observable around the world—although they may be differently accounted for—could not exist in Africa. However, perhaps the most disquieting challenge that non-conforming, queer Africans pose for masculine traditionalism is that they represent the fact that ‘we’ can be ‘us’ and ‘them’ at once. Queer Africans disturb the ‘traditionalist’ sexual and gender order because they are both part of normative, traditionally acceptable families, part of ‘traditional communities’, as well as having part of their lives disavowed. This sense of multiple belonging that they embody, which is now demanding to be recognised, may be one of the things that most disconcerts traditionalism and needs further examination in critical work on masculinities in relation to tradition.

## Notes

\*Institute for Social and Health Sciences, University of South Africa/Co-director, Medical Research Council-University of South Africa Safety and Peace Promotion Research Unit, South Africa. Email: kopano.ratele@mrc.ac.za

1. Constructionist studies of masculinity in this case includes all studies which view masculinities as constructed while critical studies of masculinity are those that identify as feminist or profeminist.
2. The dividends of patriarchy mainly accrue to heterosexual men as a social group. However, it is false to think the patriarchal system only benefits and is backed by heterosexual men. Gender inequality and homophobia, which characterise the system, are not unknown in most parts of the world, and men and women from many countries can and do spread and support gender and sexual inequality and bias.
3. Traditionalism refers to a set of statements, beliefs, practices, etc., that show an inordinate respect to the authority of tradition, and traditionalists refers to a person who exhibits such beliefs.
4. ‘In South Africa’, Mafeje said, ‘the indigenous population has no word for “tribe”; only for “nation”, “clan”, and “lineage” and, traditionally, people were identified by territory—“Whose [which Chief’s] land do you come from?”’ (1971, 254). The words used to identify groups labelled as tribe under these laws and under colonial and apartheid legislation include *setshaba* (Sesotho), *morafe* (Setswana) and *isizwe* (isiZulu).
5. Compare, for example, the TLGF Act with this excerpt from the Bantu Authorities Act. It states:  
The Governor-General may—with due regard to native law and custom and after consultation with every tribe and community concerned, establish in respect of any native tribe or community, or in respect of any two or more such tribes or communities or one or more such tribes and one or more such communities jointly, a Bantu tribal authority. (Union of South Africa 1951, 1154)
6. ‘In many instances the colonial authorities helped to create the things called “tribes”, in the sense of political communities; this process coincided with and was helped along by the anthropologists’ preoccupation with “tribes”’ (Mafeje 1971, 254).
7. “‘Traditional leader’ means any person who, in terms of customary law of the traditional community concerned, holds a traditional leadership position, and is recognised in terms of this Act”; “‘traditional leadership’ means the customary institutions or structures, or customary systems or procedures of governance, recognised, utilised or practiced by traditional communities’ (RSA 2003, 8).
8. See footnote 3 above.
9. ‘Traditional council’ is said to mean ‘a traditional council which has been recognised and established under Section 3 of the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act, read with the provincial legislation required by the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act’; and ‘traditional justice system’ is defined as ‘a system of law which is based on customary law and customs’ (RSA 2011, 4).
10. Section 4 states among other things that ‘(1) The Minister may, in the prescribed manner, after consultation with the Premier of the province in question, designate a senior traditional leader recognised as such by the Premier, as is contemplated in the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act, as presiding officer of a traditional court for the area of jurisdiction in respect of which such senior traditional leader has jurisdiction. (2) The Minister may, in the prescribed manner, after consultation with the President, designate a king or queen recognised as such by the President, as is contemplated in the Traditional Leadership

- and Governance Framework Act, as the presiding officer of a traditional court for the area or areas of jurisdiction in respect of which such king or queen has jurisdiction’.
11. For instance, according to the Population Registration Act (No 30 of 1950), ‘A native’ was defined as a person who in fact is or is generally accepted as a member of any aboriginal race or *tribe* of Africa. It also stated that ‘every native whose name is included [in the register] shall be classified by the Director according to the *ethnic or other group* to which he belongs’ (Statutes of the Republic of South Africa 1950, 279, *emphasis mine*). (Union of South Africa 1950)
  12. This denial is interesting if it is thought of as an apology of sorts, a disavowed apology, and is given some attention later.
  13. By object it is meant ‘the person from whom the sexual attraction proceeds’ and by aim ‘the act towards which the instinct tends’ (Freud 1905/2011, 135 and 136).
  14. Certainly, it is not only African men (and women) who express fear and loathing of LGBTQI, for politicians in, for example, Latvia, Poland, the USA, China and India, and other parts of the world, have expressed unfavourable sentiment against homosexuality (Human Rights Watch 2002, 2005).
  15. The point about tradition is marginal to her argument about the association of masculinity to nationalism, but is still clear in her conclusion.  
It has always seemed a mystery to me why the men in military and paramilitary institutions—men concerned with manly demeanour and strength of character—often seemed so agitated and afraid of the entry, first of blacks, then (still) of women, and now of homosexuals into military institutions and organisations. This unseemly, sometimes hysterical resistance to a diversity that clearly exists outside military boundaries makes more sense when it is understood that these men are not only defending tradition but are defending a particular racial, gendered and sexual conception of self: a white, male, heterosexual notion of masculine identity loaded with all the burdens and privileges that go along with hegemonic masculinity. Understanding that their reactions reflect not only a defence of male privilege, but also a defence of male culture and identity, makes clearer that there are fundamental issues at stake here for men who are committed to these masculinist and nationalist institutions and lifeways (Nagel 1998, 258–259).
  16. In 2007, several women in the township of Umlazi in Kwazulu Natal were humiliated and a house burned down because some men had declared that as per tradition women were not permitted to wear trousers (*The Mercury*, July 25, 3).
  17. Eric Hobsbawm defined ‘invented tradition’ thus:  
‘Invented tradition’ is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past . . . . The historic past into which the new tradition is inserted need not be lengthy, stretching back into the assumed mists of time. . . . However, insofar as there is such reference to a historic past, the peculiarity of ‘invented’ traditions is that the continuity with it is largely factitious. In short, they are responses to novel situations which take the form of reference to old situations, or which establish their own past by quasi-obligatory repetition. It is the contrast between the constant change and innovation of the modern world and the attempt to structure at least some parts of social life within it as unchanging and invariant, that makes the ‘invention of tradition’ so interesting for historians of the past two centuries (Hobsbawm 1983, 1–2).
  18. *Amaqaba* refers to heathen but also uncivilised (Bank 1999; Manganyi 1974; Msibi 2012).
  19. Xhosa males who are at a certain stage following their initiation, and *ubukrwala* means the stage in which Xhosa males pass following a certain period after their initiation.

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K. RATELE

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K. RATELE

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