AN ETHICAL ANALYSIS OF A CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY OF RECONSTRUCTION IN AFRICA AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO EPISTEMIC MASCULINE VIOLENCE (IN SOUTH AFRICA)

by

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submitted in accordance with the requirements for the
degree of

MASTER OF THEOLOGY

in the subject

THEOLOGICAL ETHICS

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

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(FEBRUARY 2024)

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I declare that the above dissertation is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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ABSTRACT

Physical violence from masculinist power in South Africa continues to be an obstacle to growth and progress. In the second quarter of the 2023 financial year, approximately 6945 people were murdered in South Africa. This is important to note because most citizens in South Africa affiliate with Christianity. While many reasons have been provided for the cause of gender violence such as African cultures and traditions which perpetuate patriarchy, I argue that the cause of such violence is epistemic. Using violence caused by masculinist power as an example, I challenge the social constructionist approach that is state driven and African traditionalist discourse about masculinities in South Africa by attempting to expose how they contribute to epistemic violence. Recognising the importance of Christianity and African Culture in South Africa, I engage the work of three Christian reconstruction theologians to determine which of the models attached to their work disrupt epistemic 'masculine' violence. Christian reconstruction theology is important because it recognises culture and Christianity as sources of reconstruction. The three theologians whose works are engaged are Mugambi who advocates for the reinvention of Africa; Ka Mana who advocates for an African axiological ethic; and Villa-Vicencio who advocates for mutual inclusivity. It is the argument of this dissertation that an Africanist axiological ethic advocated for by Ka Mana, is the only model of the three engaged, capable of disrupting epistemic 'masculine' violence in South Africa.

KEYWORDS

Epistemic Violence, Epistemic “Masculine Violence”, Masculinities, Reconstruction Theology, Constitution, South Africa, African Indigenous Cultures, Charles Villa- Vicencio, Ka Mana, Jesse Mugambi.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express a word of thanks to my Supervisor and Co-Supervisor Professor Tshepo Lephakga and Professor Cobus Van Wyngaard. I want to express my gratitude for all the support you provided during my studies. I appreciate your patience. I want to thank you for travelling this journey with me. Your mentorship is deeply appreciated and will be passed unto others. I would have failed if I do not acknowledge the individual who introduced me to Theology and Ethics. I want to acknowledge and express a word of gratitude to Dr Adrian Platts from Helderberg College of Higher Education. If it was not for his introduction to Theology and Ethics, I would not have continued with my studies in Theology. His classes certainly stimulated deep conversations that I am still grateful for today.

I cannot forget my friends Sihe Khumalo, Silakhe Singata and Obakeng Africa who travelled this journey with me while they were busy with their studies. They have been my pillars of strength in tough times during my studies. They are the ones who listened to me even when they didn't have time to do so.

Last but definitely not least, I want to express my deep appreciation for my mother Dinah Mdokwana-September and my brother Lwazi Mdokwana for their unwavering support during my undergraduate studies and post-graduate studies. I cannot forget my other siblings and relatives like Bongani Mdokwana, Nandipha Khumalo, Songezo Msulwa Xolani Mdokwana and others who have immensely contributed to my development. I would choose them over and over again. It is my sincere hope that this this dissertation will inspire someone in some way and contribute to discourse in Theological Ethics.

Contents

CHAPTER ONE

Masculinist Violence, Epistemic Violence and Christian Theology of Reconstruction

1.1 Introduction

Western Christian Theology is a theological discourse that often intersects with power, race and gender in a way that negatively affects people.[1] Its intersections with colonialism and African cultures in Africa has often marginalised women, the LGBTQI+ community and African heterosexual men as well. This marginalisation has often been expressed through the subordination of women to lower roles than men and demonising the sexualities of those who are not heterosexual[2]. These intersections have also marginalised African men by creating moral frameworks that are not critical of the violent nature of these intersections themselves. The sources of such marginalisation as forces to be reckoned with – sources with the power to use the combined force of physical and epistemic violence – continue to influence and shape the lives of people it marginalises. Being cognisant of this, I attempt to fulfil two tasks. The first task is to draw attention to the relationship between physical and epistemic violence from a masculinist perspective in South Africa. The second task is to analyse and assess how Christian Theology of Reconstruction in Africa disrupts epistemic 'masculine' violence in South Africa[3]. This is done with the view that epistemic 'masculine' violence contributes to physical violence enacted from masculine power.

[1] I refer to the rise of theological discourses on race and gender such African Theology, Black Theology, African Womanist Theology and Queer Theology that often grapple with issues of race, sex and gender.

[2] https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/south-africa/2019-07-23-pupils-offered-counselling-after-pastor-says-gaypeople-are-going-to-hell/.

[3] The 'masculine' is placed in inverted commas to recognise that epistemic violence is not just a masculine activity but encompasses or could encompass more than that. This research study will discuss epistemic violence as a masculine activity.

1.2 Problem Statement

Physical violence from masculine power in South Africa has necessitated a call for an investigation into its relationship with Christian Theology of Reconstruction in Africa. It is the argument of this dissertation that Christian Theology of Reconstruction potentially contributes to or disrupts epistemic 'masculine' oppression and subjugation. Epistemic violence can be defined as the distortion of epistemic paradigms people draw from to know and understand who they are[4]. We discuss the notion of epistemic violence from a masculine perspective and recognise how the distortion of epistemic paradigms can lead to physical violence, discrimination, and marginalisation.[5] This dissertation is deeply critical of and acknowledges the role that colonialism and indigenous cultures play in masculine formation. The central concern of this dissertation therefore is to expose how Christian Theology of reconstruction in Africa can disrupt or contribute to epistemic 'masculine' violence in South Africa. This is exposed using three theological reconstructive paradigms drawn from the work of three reconstruction theologians in Africa.

1.3 Background to the Problem Statement

Physical violence in South Africa victimises everyone, including heterosexual men. According to the South African Minister of Police, approximately 6945 people were murdered in South Africa between July and September 2023. 881 of the people murdered where women and 293 people where children (South African Police Service, 2023). It is important to note that 14401 cases of assault as a result of gender-based violence were reported and 10 516 cases of rape were reported between July and September 2023 (South African Police Service, 2023). What problematises the issue of crime even further is the very omission of providing a statistical report on crime that takes place as a result of gender violence amongst heterosexual men and those who identify as men in the LGBTQI+ community. This is in light of the fact that the South African Police service provides a statistical report on gender violence perpetrated against women. The above statistics expose the depth and the nature in which crime is masculinised in South Africa as a result of such an omission. While it is no hidden fact that a lot of men perpetrate serious crimes, something which is a grave concern, the complexities of crime and

[4] See the work of Kristie Dotson, Thomas Teo, Gyatri Spivak. We discuss the notion of epistemic violence and epistemic 'masculine' violence in much detail in the next chapter.

[5] Masculine power refers violence enacted from institutional and physical power of males.

masculinised crimes in particular are often taken for granted. I argue that the omission is the result of the epistemic insensitivity of the state to the cultural and racial formation of manhood in South Africa. The nature and the depth of the masculine in crime is problematised by the intersections of colonialism, race, and cultural appropriation of manhood. The masculine in crime is also problematised by socio-economic factors such as class, wealth, and poverty. Ratele (2013) exposes the very problem of violence amongst men in South African townships. Ratele (2013) also notes that while black men are victims of violence as a result of colonial and racial oppression, what should also be noted is the power privilege they share with men who are oppressors in enacting violence and discrimination against others.

It is important to note that violence in South Africa is enacted within a complex set of interrelated relationships between the public and the private sphere. It is argued that violence in South Africa can be described using the Ecological Model in Public Health and Violence Prevention (Ward, et al., 2012). According to this model, violence in South Africa takes place in micro-systems, exo-systems, and macro systems (Ward, et al., 2012). Violence in micro-systems is exercised in families through intimate violence and in schools through bullying and peer groups in society (Ward, et al., 2012). Violence in exo-systems takes place in relation to others in community such as our neighbourhoods. It also refers to secondary victimisation in health care and policing services which would refer to victim discrimination and expressing a bias in favour of the perpetrators of violence (Ward, et al., 2012).

Violence and crimes in macro-systems are linked to socio-economic challenges such as inequality and unemployment which is dominant in poverty-stricken areas (Ward, et al., 2012). Macro-systems also refer to the way in which government policies and programs are formulated in relation to society and how they are implemented (Ward, et al., 2012). What is important to note therefore is how social institutions and structures in society epistemically enable violence considering these three different models. Another important factor is how violence epistemically shapes social institutions. It is within the context of prevalent physical violence in South Africa that Christian Theology of Reconstruction in Africa and its possible contribution to epistemic ‘masculine’ formation becomes a subject for discussion. This discourse is considered important in light of a society that values Afrocentrism and Constitutionalism.

1.4 Thesis Statement/Hypothesis

Christian Theology of Reconstruction in Africa can epistemically contribute to and possibly disrupt epistemic ‘masculine' violence in South Africa. It is the argument of this research study that the solution to this problem is the questioning of discourses that attempt to rid Africa of the colonial Christian enterprise by relying on African cosmologies, ontologies, epistemologies in the process of rebuilding Africa (Mugambi,1995). Another paradigm which should be questioned is a form of reconstruction that attempts to rebuild South Africa and rid the country of violence by fostering the notion of mutual inclusivity through human rights discourse and constitutionalism (Villa-Vicencio, 1992). Central to this study is the questioning of the presuppositions which undergirds the foundation of our theological beliefs and beliefs that form the basis for ethical decision making in Christian Theology of Reconstruction.

1.5 Research Question

How does Christian Theology of Reconstruction in Africa epistemically enable, contribute, or disrupt the perpetuation of epistemic ‘masculine’ violence in South Africa?

1.6 Value of the Research Study

This study contributes to the discipline of Theological Ethics by broadening the discourse of Christian Theology of Reconstruction and how we can understand its relationship with epistemic violence and masculinities. This research study aims to expose the role social interpretations of the body contribute to ethical decision-making in the South African context. Far from just making decisions, this research study also aims to expose how a Christian theology of reconstruction contributes to gender discourse and gender formation and how this influences our understanding of gender epistemically.

1.7 Aims and Objectives of the Study

This study aims to provide solutions, probing how masculinities are epistemically formed and how Christian Theology of Reconstruction in Africa can contribute to this discourse. This study attempts to provide conceptual clarity on how Christian Theology of Reconstruction can contribute to or disrupt epistemic ‘masculine’ violence in South Africa.

1.8 Methodology

The research philosophy that will be utilised for the research study is the qualitative research methodology. What this means is that this research discourse is not an empirical study and is entirely based on literature that has been produced in the form of dissertations, theses, journal publications, news articles and reports. I made use of the Critical Discourse
Analysis method in the collection of literature and interpretation of data for this dissertation. Critical Discourse Analysis, originally birthed from Discourse Analysis is primarily concerned with the examination not only of discourse, that is, academic discourse but the social context from which discourse occurs (Hijilem,2022:229-244). According to Hijilem (2022:235), Critical Discourse Analysis not only examines findings that are produced in discourse but examines issues with the intentions of exposing things that are often taken for granted particularly as they relate to power, domination, and ideology. It must be important to note that this is the case in so far as the construction of identities and social relationships within a certain socio-political context is concerned. It is with this view in mind that my theoretical framework relies on "epistemic violence" of the "masculine" in South Africa in order to expose the manner in which the changing socio-political contexts dating from colonial South Africa violently constructs the "masculine" in the present context. These epistemically violent constructions are even noted within commonly used theoretical frameworks in Masculinities studies. This will be discussed in the following chapter. I attempts to expose such epistemic "masculine" constructions and their relationship to direct and physical violence in South Africa.

Recognising that this discourse is focused on Christian Reconstruction Theology in Africa, Critical Discourse Analysis assisted me to examine whether the theological discourse on reconstruction in Africa not only epistemically takes for granted the plight of African men, women and the LGBTQI+ but in turn epistemically recognises them authentically in their vision for a new society. Literature collected on masculinities is therefore primarily centred on masculinities research and its interpretations in (South) Africa. What is important to note is that the intersections of constitutionalism and the recognition of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and discourse in South Africa led me to identify three primary interlocutors for this discourse on Christian Theology of Reconstruction in Africa.

It must be noted that according to me, although these theologies arise in three different
African countries during three different times and socio-political contexts, these theologies combined can be used to describe the problematic nature of the relationship between utopian

constitutionalism and African Indigenous Identity with respect to epistemic ‘masculine ’violence in a post-apartheid South Africa. It is important to note that I do not exist outside of the context in which research takes place, and therefore no data will be manipulated or controlled to produce certain outcomes. Growing up in a South African township, a space where we constantly witness physical violence and discrimination, it becomes important to deal with this research study in utmost sensitivity.

It is also important to note that this research engages an author in Africa who has published in French. This specifically refers to Kangudie known as Ka Mana. Google Translate Services was utilised to translate the books of Ka Mana, the Central African Theologian to engage his work. Google Translate services is a commonly used system of translation that has evolved from its inception to become more accurate over the years (Aiken, 2019). These services have improved so much that by 2015-2016, the accuracy from French to English translation was 83% (Wu et al,2016). Aiken (2019:255-260) argues that the overall accuracy of Google Translation Services has since improved to by 34% using the languages that were available on the platform. Aiken (2019) in an updated study placed the translations range of French to English at 95% while placing the translation of Spanish to English at 98%. Recognising the vast differences of languages, these auto translation services such as Google Translate made the writings of Kangudie accessible. Broadly speaking, their accuracy allows for fruitful dialogue in African Theological discourse as the language gap is to a great extent bridged. Recognising the similar struggles of Africa such as colonialism and the desire for reconstruction and indigenisation when rebuilding Africa, these auto-translations allow us to engage ideas in Africa, share struggles and engage by bridging the language gap. What must also be recognised however is that despite the fact that Google translate has a high accuracy rate, it is not perfect. It is important to recognise that in certain instances, certain words and meanings can be lost in translation as no language has the ability to adequately capture the expressions of another language. The work of Kangudie is engaged while being cognisant of this limitation.

1.9 Literature Review

This study makes use of Critical Discourse Analysis method when engaging the notion of epistemic ‘masculine’ violence. This research study will comprise of primary and secondary sources. The secondary sources set the theoretical framework which comprises of discourse on

epistemic violence while primary sources will be directly related to masculinities or masculinities research in South Africa.

1.9.1 Racial and Sexualised Violence in South Africa

Violence in South African township schools is a common phenomenon. Forms of violence in South African public high schools in the townships range from bullying, corporal punishment, sexual harassment and many others (Ncontsa& Shumba, 2013:1-15). According to Ncontsa and Sumba, the most dominant perpetrators of violence in South African high schools are old school boys and Amakrwala (Ncontsa& Shumba, 2013:6-8)[6]. Ncontsa also suggests that the victims of violence in high schools are younger groups such as Grade 8 learners and girls (Ncontsa, 2013:6-8). This has led to a number of negative consequences such as the loss of concentration, poor academic performance, depression and many others (Ncontsa, 2013:7-8). Ncontsa and Shumba's reference to 'Amakrwala' exposes how a self-understanding of manhood by those who graduated from initiation school directly inflicted violence and discrimination. What must be noted is that the cultural practice of initiation for the Xhosa community is not linear. It has evolved and it has been shaped by various socio-political factors. This is something I give attention to in the next chapter.

Ncontsa and Shumba (2013:1-15) attributes school violence to socio-economic factors such as poverty, unemployment, violence in the community, ill-discipline, and many others. Ncontsa and Shumba's discussion is important because it will help us to understand how violence shapes society in the context of a South Africa where the majority of the population is Christian. Evident in Ncontsa's study is the intersection of violence within the microsystems, macro-systems, and exo-systems of the ecological model of public health and violence prevention.

In his attempt to understand violence in South Africa and taking note of its various forms such as gender-based violence, political and public violence, Van de Merwe (2013:65-83) suggests that violence in South Africa has often been used as a way of communicating something within our socio-political context in two ways. Van de Merwe (2013:68 -72) argues that the first form of communication is subordination while the second is resistance. He does so, not forgetting how some of these forms of communication where inherited from apartheid South Africa where black people were violently oppressed by the state and had to use violence to resist oppression: communicating their displeasure with subordination (Van der Merwe,2013:68-72). Van de

[6] 'Amakrwala' refer to men who graduated from initation school in the Xhosa culture.

Merwe (2013:74) suggests that violence through protests and other forms have been utilised to communicate displeasure of injustice on the basis that it works, and not whether it is justified.

Violence communicated with the intent to subordinate is clearly illustrated by a case study used by Gordons (2018) who exposes violence perpetrated towards the LGBTQIA+ in a post-apartheid South Africa. Gordons (2018:68-74) attempted to assess the experience of lesbian women in a post-apartheid South Africa. Phelisa is the name of one of the lesbians who was attacked for defending her girlfriend after denying particular sexual advances men made towards her (Gordons, 2018:70-71). Gordons (2018:70) in her research suggests that the two reasons both of them were attacked was because they were sexually unavailable, and they were too masculine. This implies women ought to be sexually available when heterosexual men make advances, and secondly, being masculine is the responsibility of heterosexual men. Phelisa suffered secondary victimisation at the police station where she reported this particular case, and consequently this case against the perpetrators was withdrawn without her being notified of the development of the case (Gordons, 2018:70-72).

Violence in South Africa has a face and a body, and this essentially is the face and body of a black man. Statistics above indicated that violence in South Africa is mostly perpetrated by men. Dube (2016:72-90) raises the critical issue of the over signification of black masculinities in a post-apartheid South Africa. In engaging the work of masculinities in South Africa, Dube (2016:72-90) suggests that attempts to understand violence in South Africa has led many discourses to focus on black masculinities in rural areas while not focusing on white masculinities. This focus has to a great extent criminalised black masculinities by

linking challenges of violence to the patriarchal duties of men in the African indigenous life (Dube, 2016:72-90). The problem that Dube raises is important, considering the fact that socio-political conditions and how they influence masculine formation has not received sufficient attention in South Africa.

Dube also raises the concern that the role of white masculinities and its relationship to socioeconomic inequality in townships, have not received attention. This brutal reality is revealed by Langa, Kristen, & Kiguwa (2018) who expose how an absent black man was on trial in the case of Oscar Pistorius who murdered his girlfriend Reeva Steenkamp. A strong disabled athlete who owned guns, something all too common for many white males, an element that formed part of their masculinities even in an apartheid South Africa, pinned his crime on an absent black man (Langa, Kristen, & Kiguwa, 2018). This is important to consider in the

context of colonial structures that victimised black men and violently removed black people from their land. The very same structures discriminated against them on the basis of race and criminalised them in a post-apartheid South Africa.

The Oscar Pistorius case draws our attention to the black male problem and the socioeconomic inequalities in South Africa, such a spatial injustice. Because space is so important, and something that is part of the headship of men in African culture, Pistorius who owned a house in an upmarket complex protected by walls and security symbolically criminalised black people. This is substantiated by Khalie et al (Khalie, Roman, & Davids, 2020) who argues that the popular trend of living in complexes has exposed the necessity for protection and safety from violence that was initiated by colonialism and this attempts to criminalize black people. According to de Beer (2016), masculine violence is a crucial aspect of investigation as spatial development continues to remain untransformed, contributing to the social fractures of the country.

What is evident therefore is that direct physical violence can take place because the one physically violated is believed to lack epistemic credibility by those who have power. This is most notable in Gordons (2018) who exposed the homophobic violence experienced by lesbian women. Gordon's study exposes the intersections of power, epistemic privilege of males and power's relationship to physical violence as experienced by these lesbian women. Van de Merwe's discourse on violence as communicating resistance or enforcing oppression can be extended to epistemic violence. An example of physical violence as a form of epistemic violence is at best recognised by the fact that these women were attacked simply because they resisted the romantic advances of heterosexual men. In this sense, physical violence and the use of masculine power expressed the displeasure of the unresponsiveness of these lesbian women to the romantic advances of heterosexual men. Physical violence therefore attempted to epistemically and ontologically distort the way these women came to know themselves. The secondary victimisation they experience at the police station attests to this. An example of physical violence as resistance of epistemic violence can be noted in Waetjen's discussion on the formation of Inkatha Freedom Party as a political party with the aim of restoring the dignity of Zulu men in the face of colonial oppression. According to Waetjen (2004), while Zulu men were forced to work in the mines that were far away from their homesteads, they had no rights as humans in the mining towns they worked in. They were also not paid enough to take care of their families. Central to the problem of epistemic violence in this case is how Zulu men struggled to maintain their masculine epistemic agency as a result of colonial oppression that

took cultural notions of the 'masculine' for granted. The idea of not being a "citizen" in mining towns and the failure to sufficiently provide for their families was the primary foundation upon which such epistemic violence was enacted against their masculinity. Waetjen (2004) notes that this led to a Zulu materialist masculinity. Colonialism and apartheid were not just physical forms of violence: they epistemically altered and restructured the way people came to know who they are.

1.9.2 Intersections of Christianity, Indigenous Cultures and Violence in South Africa

What is of great significance to our discourse on violence is that the majority of South Africans are not only religious but are Christians. The 2013 General Household Survey conducted by Statistics South Africa revealed that 84% of South Africans are Christians (Schoeman, 2017:3). In previous years, a study conducted by Lugo and Cooperman indicated that 89% of the population claimed to have been raised Christian (Schoeman, 2017:3). The core purpose of our study is to discover and understand how Christian Theology of Reconstruction contributes to or disrupts masculine violence in South Africa epistemologically.

Attempts to understand masculinities in South Africa has been an ongoing project within this new democratic dispensation considering the prevalence of gender violence and gender discrimination. Langa (2020) provides us with an empirical study of young boys who live in a township of Alexandra that is marked by unemployment, poverty, overcrowding and violence. In this study, Langa (2020:33-48) records the experiences of these young boys in the attempt to understand how these young boys perceive manhood in their immediate sociopolitical context. Many of the young boys at the time grew up without their fathers and some grew up with emotionally distant fathers (Langa, 2020:49-60). This exposed them to several challenges such as peer pressure and the failure to cope with school work, among other things (Langa,2020: 49-60). These had significant impact on some of their experiences and challenged their expectations of what they believed manhood was about. Langa in this study exposes the views that some of the young boys had about women and gay boys (Langa, 2020: 95-120). For some of the boys, having many girlfriends was not a problem. This is critical to point out considering the way women are perceived in a country that is very violent. These boys also suggested that being gay was against God and it was wrong (Langa, 2020: 95-120). This exposed the role that faith traditions and religions play in the way people perceive and think of others around them. Langa does not provide an in-depth view of how Christianity shaped the views of these boys and what they theologically leaned on to formulate their beliefs about men.

This is one aspect this dissertation intends to assess. This is important because some gay boys who formed part of Langa's study experienced severe discrimination from their peers and teachers at school (Langa, 2020).

Adding to the discourse on masculinities in South Africa, Waetjen (2004) provides us with a clear description of Zulu masculinities in South Africa. Her assessment of it begins in a colonial South Africa that exiled Zulu men to the mines after the discovery of minerals in South Africa. According to Waetjen (2004:30-50), this particular act violently enforced through colonial laws, destabilised the families of these men as head of their homes and also left them with an identity crisis because their citizenship was in the homesteads.[7] In an attempt to salvage their identities, imagining the ideal situation as the precolonial homestead where a man is the head of the house, Inkatha Freedom Party became a political home of men away from their homes (Waetjen, 2004:57-62). While men had to fight for their identity as head of the homes, a political strategy to resist colonial oppression, women politically were mothers, taking care of the poor, feeding, and socializing the children and were more subject to Christian religion and the aspects it advocated for it than men where (Waetjen,2004:6368). Waetjen does not enter into an in-depth theological analysis and theological engagement about the problematic nature of subordination of women in the cultural sphere. In the context of the Christian religion, subtly perceived as feminine in colonial South Africa by the masculinities as postulated by Waetjen, it becomes a necessity to investigate African Christianity and its relationship to subordination, patriarchy, and violence in a post-apartheid South Africa. Hadebe (2010:53-55) who conducted a research study in post-apartheid South Africa, found out that while the Zulu people of the Mgungundlovu district were against violence, Zulu men found displeasure with changes introduced by the Constitution of South Africa that afforded women equal status to that of men. This weakened the power of men and also discriminated against men (Hadebe, 2010:51-55). Despite taking Christianity seriously in the home, research participants who reside in the Mgungundlovu district in South Africa suggested that a women needed to know her place in the home and her duties (Hadebe,
2010:48-50). Investigating the relationship between a Christian Theology of Reconstruction in Africa and masculine construction is important in light of the sustained effects of the harm caused by colonialism in South Africa and certain cultural practices.

[7] Citizenship refers to the fact that they had no rights when they lived in the mining compounds and were governed by homestead laws.

The intersections of indigenous cultures, Christianity and colonialism in South Africa expose the extent to which people's reality can potentially be epistemically altered. This epistemic alteration is exposed by the subordination of women to the "Christian" feminine and the uselessness of men who are not able to provide for their families (Mavungu et al, 2013) and 'gayness' as a sin. This we discuss at length in the next chapter.

1.9.3 Primary Sources

The social constructionist approach to masculinities is a common theoretical framework utilised in masculinities studies not only in Europe and the United States of America but also in South Africa. This approach comprises of a theoretical approach that endorses the idea that gender is a social construct. A notable number of proponents in the West who endorse this idea are scholars like Buchbinder (2013), Bennet and Thompson (2017), and Connell (2005) although this list is not exhaustive. They challenge the idea that masculinity is entirely biological. The social constructionist approach to masculinities endorses the idea that masculinities are produced by social contexts. Morrel (2001) in South Africa also endorses the idea that masculinities is a social construct. Morrel for instance attempts to show this by arguing that the new South African democratic dispensation necessitated a change for the way in which people view their manhood in a changing society (Morrel, 2001). Morrel's (2001) work expresses the idea that a change in masculinities did take place post-1994. Xaba (in Morrel, 2001) for instance discusses the notion of struggle and post struggle masculinities in South Africa. Cock (in Morrel, 2001) also discusses how the gun has been closely associated to how people understand their masculinities in apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa. He argues that socially constructed masculinities around a gun have shifted in apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa (Cock, 2001). Walker (2005) inadvertently endorses this approach by arguing that the gender violence in a post-apartheid South Africa is caused by the failure of traditional indigenous masculinities to come to terms with the ideals endorsed by the new democratic dispensation.

The social constructionist approach has been challenged by those like Mfecane (2020) who call for an Africanist and decolonial approach to gender studies that takes the realities of African world view into account when conducting research. Mfecane (2020) challenges the notion of social constructionism in masculinities by asserting that the social constructionist and socio-biological approach used in the West are not consistent with the way masculinities are understood in the African society. Mfecane (2018) argues that it is primarily the failure to

consider these aspects that has made it difficult to deal with challenges such as gender-based violence in South Africa.

It is by recognising these discourses that the challenge which this dissertation seeks to address is twofold. The first challenge is the idea that gender is a social construct without addressing the socio-political factors which form the basis upon which masculinities are socially constructed. It is the argument of this dissertation that the failure to address sociopolitical factors which form the foundation of socially constructed masculinities is what contributes to epistemic 'masculine' violence. This I argue is insufficiently addressed by those who embrace the social constructionist approach to gender studies. This epistemic violence from social constructionism is further problematised by Mfecane's concern about the failure to recognise African worldview as a key aspect of research in gender and masculinities studies. There is a distortion of the epistemic agency of African epistemic frameworks in as far as the social constructionist approach to masculinities is concerned. The second challenge which the dissertation seeks to address is the insufficient discourses on the use of African world view as an alternative to social constructionism. While Mfecane (2020) makes this call for the recognition of African realities, he also acknowledges a level of discrimination meted out against gay men when it comes to the Xhosa initiation rite of passage for men. What is insufficiently addressed is the patriarchal nature of indigenous beliefs, attitudes, values and how they contribute to epistemic violence.

Appealing to theological discourse, I make use of Christian Theology of Reconstruction in Africa to engage the notion of epistemic 'masculine' violence in South Africa. I make use of this particular strand of Christian Theology in Africa because it appeals to reconstruction and rebuilding Africa after the devastating effects of colonialism. As I shall discuss in the subsequent chapters, the strands of Christian Theology of Reconstruction in Africa engaged in this dissertation have similar reconstruction methods and ideas aimed at rebuilding Africa. They call for analysis, self-critical reflection, collective rebuilding, interdisciplinary discourse, and interreligious dialogue. They all acknowledge culture and community as a critical component of reconstructive theological discourse. It is this precise recognition of reconstruction as a desire for a changed community that stimulates this discourse. It is the fact that epistemic violence takes place within community which prompted me to analyse and assess which forms of reconstruction theologies contributes to or disrupts epistemic 'masculine' violence. I make use of three reconstruction theologies deduced from the work of three reconstruction theologians in Africa. The first reconstruction theologian is Jesse

Mugambi (1995; 2003) who advances the idea of the reinvention of Africa as a theological reconstructive model. The second theologian is Charles Villa-Vicencio (1992) who makes use of the idea of mutual inclusivity as a theological reconstructive model. The third theologian is Kangudie known as Ka Mana (2000a; 2000b; 2001; 2002) who advances the idea of an axiological African ethic as a theological reconstructive model.

This discourse is given attention in light of the fact that there are intersections of Christianity, African indigenous cultures, colonialism, and the post-apartheid South African state, as we shall see in various academic engagements considered in subsequent chapters. Vellem (2010) for instance contends that African Initiated Churches for instance was a protest model for black theology of liberation in South Africa. We can however also note the patriarchy and masculine violence in the process of Africanisation in the African Initiated Churches as noted by Molobi (2008). Molobi argued that the patriarchal nature of African Initiated Churches exposed women to gender violence and discrimination (2008). The incorporation of African traditional religions and Christianity is also noted in Hadebe (2010). His empirical research study explores masculine perspective on women's rights and gender equality in a post-apartheid South Africa in the Zulu community (Hadebe, 2010). He exposes the fact that Christian faith is an integral part of the African life in the Zulu indigenous culture (Hadebe, 2010). What must also be noted is the promotion and the recognition of Indigenous Knowledge Systems by the South African state which endorses critical reflection of African epistemologies. I note therefore that culture requires a critical analysis from a Christian Reconstruction Theology perspective to see how it disrupts or potentially contributes to epistemic 'masculine' violence. This discourse is engaged recognising the intersections of Christianity, African culture, colonialism, and a constitutional democracy of a post-apartheid South Africa. This dissertation recognises that community and cultural formation are crucial aspects of the intersections of African indigenous life and the South African constitutional dispensation.

1.9.4 Secondary Sources

It is important for us to turn our attention to the sources from which the theoretical framework for this dissertation is drawn. Spivak (1985), an Indian scholar, defines and develops the idea of 'epistemic violence'. In her well-known essay entitled "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Spivak exposes the way in which marginalised people such as women in the global south are violated

by being epistemically co-opted into the epistemological paradigms of people that are epistemically privileged.

Kristie Dotson (2014) develops the idea of epistemic violence by showing how epistemic violence can take place on at least three levels. Dotson's three levels of epistemic violence are categorised into reducible and irreducible forms. The reducible forms of epistemic violence is rooted in and influenced by socio-political contexts. This discourse on epistemic violence influenced by sociopolitical contexts refers to the formation of epistemically privileged communities that create epistemic underprivileged sites in which people are violated through co-optation or isolation. Dotson's levels of epistemic violence will assist us to understand how people are epistemically violated in research from a masculinist perspective in a South African context.

Thomas Teo (2014) also discusses the idea of epistemic violence in psychological studies. Teo (2014) explores the idea of epistemic violence in scientific research by exposing the complexity of data analysis and data interpretation. For Teo (2014), data interpretation should not always be assumed as innocent because such interpretation makes use of language from a particular socio-political context. Teo (2014) draws our attention to the ways in which theories and hypothesis play a role in epistemic formation of the 'disadvantaged other". Teo's concern on epistemic violence assists us to explore the ways in which data interpretation in

research has played a significant role in epistemically forming the marginalised 'other' within the South African context. I make use of these sources and their discourses on epistemic violence to expose what is called epistemic 'masculine' violence and how this form of 'masculine' violence occurs in South Africa.

1.10 Outline of the Research Project

In this chapter, I attempted to expose the problem of physical violence and discrimination in South Africa in a country where most citizens are Christians. I argued that there is a relationship between physical violence and epistemic violence. I also argue that the latter causes the former. I called for the need to critically analyse a Christian Theology of Reconstruction in Africa to assess whether it can disrupt epistemic 'masculine' violence and if so, to what extent it can do so. I did this by making use of the work of three Christian reconstruction theologians in Africa. This is a task I pursue in the chapters to follow:

Chapter Two, I not only discuss but show how epistemic 'masculine' violence has been enabled not only in research discourse on masculinities in South Africa but socio-politically as well. In this chapter, I argue that epistemic 'masculine' violence has deformed the way heterosexual men, heterosexual women and the LGBTQI+ have come to view themselves. This epistemic deformation the I argue has a direct relationship with physical gender violence, sexual violence and discrimination in South Africa as described in this chapter. I draw on a broad range of discourses on masculinities primarily centred in South Africa to clearly expose the nature of epistemic 'masculine 'violence in South Africa.

Chapter Three will extensively analyse and discuss the different discourses of African Christian Theology of Reconstruction of scholars like Mugambi (1995), Ka Mana (2000), and Villa Vicencio (1992) as it relates to culture and epistemic 'masculine' violence in South Africa

Chapter Four will discuss how Christian Theology of Reconstruction in Africa potentially disrupts or contributes to epistemic 'masculine' violence in South Africa. In this chapter, I argue that that the epistemic irreducibility of an African axiological ethic from Ka Mana's theology is capable of disrupting epistemic 'masculine violence'.

Chapter Five will provide the un-concluding remarks for the discourse of reconstruction and epistemic 'masculine' violence.

CHAPTER TWO

Masculinities, Epistemic Violence and Epistemic 'Masculine' Violence

2. Introduction

Violence continues to be a significant problem in South Africa. As exposed by research studies in masculinities in South Africa, masculinist violence is enacted by males within the context of the domestic and socio-political relations in South Africa. It is important to consider that the concept *masculinities* has been a contentious term and has been defined and understood differently by people from different geo-political contexts in the world. Masculinities from a socio-biological perspective has been defined and understood as a way of being for men from the basis of their biological make up which is different from women. From a socio-biological context, the biology of men influences and shapes the nature of their social relationships in society. Gender discourse from a socio-biological context was prevalent in the West during the 1700-1900s. In the mid-1900s to the 2000s, a different academic discourse on gender ensued in the West. In the latter, many believed that gender was a social construct. Masculinities was therefore understood as a product of social relations, shaped by discourses and institutions from certain socio-political contexts. These western frameworks of gender, particularly masculinities, have greatly influenced the way in which research on masculinities has been conducted in South Africa. Not only have these frameworks greatly influenced how research is conducted, they have also left an indelible mark on how men view themselves in a post-apartheid South Africa.

It is important to consider that while research in masculinities studies primarily centred social constructionism and socio-biological studies, the rise of decolonial scholarship in the global South however has significantly deepened the discourses on gender. They have sought to prove how gender constructs such as those of the West are not simply innocent abstract but are racialised and sexualised concepts. These concepts have been used and continue to be used in ways that legitimize violence through subjugation and domination of the subaltern which are: African heterosexual, queer, trans-men and women and non-binary individuals in
South Africa. Studies on coloniality have exposed the intricacies of colonial violence through the coloniality of power, knowledge, and being in the socio-political contexts of the South

(Maldonado-Torres, 2016). Colonial violence in this case has been enacted in epistemes, metaphysics, aesthetics, and ethics in the south (Maldonado-Torres, 2016). Maria Lugones (2016) with her *Coloniality of Gender* deepens the conversation about the intersections of coloniality, gender, and socio-political contexts by exposing the nature of "epistemic" violence and its implications in the South.

The purpose of this chapter is to show how epistemic violence in South Africa has been enabled through gender, particularly the "masculine". The central argument of the chapter is that epistemic 'masculine' violence has a significant impact on how violence discourse in South Africa is framed and deeply problematises discourse on violence as, has been argued by Mfecane (2020) and Ratele (2021).

It is important to note that in this research dissertation, epistemic 'masculine' violence refers to a masculinist form of knowledge production that is dominant, violent and that subjugates. Before we proceed with a critical discourse on epistemic 'masculine' violence in South Africa, it is important to provide a discussion of the term "Epistemic Violence" using Spivak (1985), Dotson (2014) and Teo (2014). Secondly, I will provide a definition for what is termed epistemic 'masculine' violence and the different ways in which such epistemic violence can be enabled. Thirdly, within the South African context, I argue that it has been enabled through a state social reconstructionist approach and cultural indigenous approach. As an extension to Mfecane's un-comfortability with social reconstructionist approach in masculinities studies, I argue that the state sponsored epistemic 'masculine violence influences masculinity discourse in South Africa.

2.1 Epistemic violence: A Theoretical Overview

Epistemic violence is a term that refers to the inferiorisation of the "other" or the marginalised in the process of knowledge production. Marginalisation takes place in such a way that truths and realities about the marginalised who becomes the object of investigation have distorted realities and epistemic systems (Teo 2014), (Dotson 2014), and (Spivak 1985). For this particular study, the intention is to show how the epistemic distortion of the other, that is, epistemic violence contributes to physical masculine violence in South Africa. For the purpose of this particular study, I focus on three particular scholars who have engaged the subject of epistemic violence. These scholars were chosen because of the complementarity of their engagements on epistemic violence. Their writings reflect a concern for the social position of

the knower and how their positions affect not only the output of their discourses but how it epistemically alters the reality of the other through distorted representation. These scholars are Kristie Dotson (2014), Thomas Teo (2014), and Gyatri Spivak (1985). All three scholars challenge not only the inferiorisation of the 'other' in knowledge production but also attempt to expose the volatile nature of universal truth in the process of "othering" in different ways.

The first scholar who coined the term "epistemic violence" is Spivak (1985) who defined the concept of epistemic violence as the propulsion to speak for the other, in this case the marginalised, in such a way that the propulsion to speak for the other is considered a critical component of knowledge. Such speaking becomes a critical part of knowledge production for the subaltern. For Spivak, those who have epistemic privilege to speak co-opt others (the marginalised) into their epistemological system that alters the reality and ways of knowing for the marginalised because of their lower status (Spivak, 1985). Knowledge production for Spivak is not innocent but is deeply tied to the intersections of materialism, structures, race, gender, and sex in the representation and the inferiorisation of the marginalised other. Epistemic privilege is established by the relationships which govern different socio-political contexts with those whom power favours, having the ability to speak on behalf of the other and misrepresenting the other. Representation of the other can be noted at least in three instances for Spivak. The first is in Spivak's criticism of Michael Foucault who in some way writes objectively about the "other", the subaltern (Spivak, 1988-271-313). Spivak suggests that Foucault's ability to do so is because of his social position and epistemic privilege he enjoys (Spivak,1988:271-313). Secondly, Spivak also criticises the Indian subaltern group for universalizing the experience of the subaltern which in case silences the very differences of marginalised groups themselves (Spivak, 1988). Thirdly, using the example of the Indian "Sati Practice" which occasioned the death of a widow after her husband died exposes the nature of colonial 'othering' of Indian women. In this instance, Spivak makes mention of how colonialists abolished the *Sati* practice, suggesting that they saved Indian women from the barbarism of Indian men while they were in fact legitimizing and cementing their colonial rule (Spivak, 1988:271-313). In this case, Indian women never got an opportunity to speak, or voice their concern (Spivak,1988:271-313). For Spivak, the poor and 'illiterate' are never heard because of their socio-political immobility (Spivak, 1988). They are always mis-represented by those who have the epistemic power to represent (Spivak, 1988: 271-313).

It must be noted that an example of epistemic violence as spoken of by Spivak can be noted within the South African context. We draw this particular discourse in relation to Black consciousness in South Africa and the criticism it has received for being androcentric. Magaziner (2010:32-39) clearly exposes how SASO's formation was largely influenced by the black man's struggle. Engaging the work of different activists, Magaziner clearly exposes the struggles of black women who were part of this movement as a result of blackness being synonymous with black manhood in black consciousness movements (Magaziner, 2010:32-39). Xhinti (2021:9) argues that the inadequacies of black theology when it comes to the struggle of women can at best be traced to the androcentric language of black consciousness – its interlocutor. The concern of this particular research discourse is the co-optation of the struggles of black queer people, heterosexual women, and trans-individuals into the struggle of black heterosexual men. This co-optation leaves room for the struggles of black queer people and heterosexual women to be framed into the struggles of the black heterosexual man in such a way that it dislocates their realities and how they know themselves.

Dotson who pays close attention to the social position of the one who commits epistemic violence extends this discourse and problematises the notion even further. Dotson (2014), using Bartuneck and Moch's (1994) three orders of change in organisational development exposes two classifications of epistemic oppression: *reducible epistemic violence* and *irreducible epistemic violence.* She classifies three orders of epistemic oppression in these two categories. The first two orders of epistemic violence are classified under reducible epistemic oppression (Dotson, 2014). Reducible epistemic oppression according to Dotson is epistemic oppression as a result of socio-political and economic factors (Dotson, 2014). In this sense, we refer to epistemic power afforded to those in superior positions in a particular socio-political context. Recognising Spivaks's concern with representation of the marginalised, it is safe to classify Spivak's discourse on epistemic violence under Dotson's reducible epistemic oppression.

The first order of epistemic oppression which is reducible according to Dotson is the inefficient agency of knowers within a set of epistemic resources (Dotson,2014). In this case, this refers to the negative prejudices, attitudes, and habits that those in socially privileged positions have about the marginalised that puts into question the epistemic agency of the marginalised (Dotson, 2014). This form of epistemic violence can be noted in scientific racism. Saint-Aubin (2005:23-39) exposes how racist scientific discourse of the 17th,18th, and the 19th century was used to inferiorise white women, and to barbarize black men and black women. Saint-Aubin (2005:23-39) asserts that similar to white women, it was believed that black men had small

craniums and small skulls which led to the belief that black men were inferior to white men. This led to the idea that black men and women needed to be policed for their own safety (Saint-Aubin, 2005:23-39). In this case, it is quite clear that the epistemic agency of black men, black women, and white women was compromised in this case. They were not considered epistemically credible sources.

This is similar to the case noted by Spivak about the barbarisation of Indian men for the Sati ritual that denied Indian women an opportunity to speak for themselves. In accordance with the first order of organisational development of Bartuneck & Moch (1994), according to Dotson (2014:115-138), the only way this form of epistemic violence addresses its inefficiency is to simply reform but not to question its epistemic premise that contributes to epistemic violence[8]. It continues to hold dear to some of its founding epistemic principles. What is important for this research discourse is the social location where these principles are established and how they are universalised and modified to fit different contexts. This we shall address below as we discuss masculinities as a social construct. It is primarily this approach I argue that enables and contributes to epistemic 'masculine' violence in South Africa.

Dotson's second order of reducible epistemic violence is the insufficient epistemic collective experiences of the marginalised community that leads such a community to use the language of the epistemically privileged (Dotson, 2014:115-138). The language of the epistemically privileged is used by marginalised communities in order to express themselves and write about themselves. For Dotson, what makes it difficult for marginalised communities to break away from such epistemological systems is their epistemic resilience of such privileged communities that is protected by history and their socio-political contexts. In accordance with the second order of organisational development according to Bartuneck & Moch (1994), according to Dotson (2014:115-138), the marginalised community can shift the discourse but will not alter too much since it makes use of the epistemic resources of the privileged to

[8] Bartuneck and Moch's first order of organisational change refers to the belief that that when there is a challenge, that does not mean that the blue print of a company's policy may be wrong. It is because of this that only a change of approach would be necessary in solving a particular problem.

discuss its own realities.[9] In the case of such epistemic violence, what shall become evident is a variation of social constructionist discourse on masculinities in South Africa and hetero-binarism in describing same-sex relationships. This we shall discuss below.

The third order of epistemic oppression which is irreducible brings into question the epistemological resilience of any epistemological system (Dotson, 2014:115-138). For Dotson (2014:115-138), this is an extremely difficult form of epistemic violence as the very epistemological systems we have, in any context, require some form of epistemological resilience for it to be credible. In this instance, a change to such epistemic violence requires that we let go of the entire epistemological system, which is quite impossible as it is its very resilience that assist us to make sense of the world. For Dotson then, the problem is not the inevitable nature of irreducible epistemic oppression, the problem is the persistence of the irreducibility of such an epistemic system. It is by precisely using this form of violence that we critically discuss the epistemic 'masculine' violence and a Christian Theology of Reconstruction in Africa.

Teo (2014) draws the conversation on epistemological violence into discourse about research methods. Teo (2014:593-596) who is concerned with epistemological violence questions the relationship between scientific data and the theoretical interpretations of such data that is taken for granted in scientific discourse. For Teo (2014:593-596) theoretical interpretations arise from a particular social political context which informs it. According to Teo "Discussions impart meaning to data and make results understandable for the authors themselves, peers, an audience, or a readership" (2014:594).

Teo (2014:593-596) raises this discussion by problematizing the relationship between theory formation and the formulation of hypothesis in scientific discourse. For Teo (2014:594), data does not impart meaning rather the very opposite is true. Data gathered for a research study is made sense of by interpretation and meaning from a particular socio-political context (Teo, 2014:594). This essentially problematises the relationship between knowledge production through the use of theories in the form of hypothesis because interpretation of data is derived from an a-priori language that is not determined by the data. What makes this important in light of racism of early scientific discourses as exposed by Saint-Aubin (2005) is perhaps the implications of the interpretations of western scientific discourse of black male bodies in the

[9] The second order of Bartuneck and Mochi's organisational change refers to alterations being made to the blueprint of company policy in order for it to become accommodative.

context of colonialism and slavery and how they contributed towards the manifestation of colonialism. This also exposes at least two forms of epistemic violence pointed out by Teo in psychological discourses. The one relevant to this study is external reconstruction which seeks to provide the reasons why researchers pursue studies (Teo, 2014:593). In light of this particular problem, the critical question that arises from the external reconstructionist position outlined by Teo is the epistemic ground that create violent research interests for the benefits of the epistemically privileged. It is perhaps in this very same way that scientific research in the 17th, 18th and 19th century legitimised racial oppression experienced by people in the South as argued by Saint-Aubin (2005).

The second problem we have highlighted above already is the quality of the interpretation of data in psychological studies (Teo, 2014). The critical challenge here is the socio-political context that informs the very standards of assessment for the quality of interpretation of data (Teo, 2014). Recognising the impact of a colonial hermeneutic on the assessment of the quality of interpretation of data in research to determine its validity best exposes the ways in which colonial forms of knowledge production can be kept unchecked and in turn reproduced. What is clearly discernible is the similarity between Dotson's first order of epistemic violence and the question of credibility standards raised by Teo (2014). It is most notable that even for Teo, epistemic privilege of research discourse is enabled and protected by power in a given socio-political context. This form of violence can be classified under Dotson's reducible epistemic violence. It is at this point that I shall define and describe the different forms of epistemic 'masculine' violence. This will assist us to expose how this form of violence takes place in South Africa.

2.2 Forms of Epistemic 'Masculine' Violence

There are various forms of epistemic 'masculine' violence which I shall now give attention. These descriptions are fundamentally premised on the theoretical framework I made use of in the previous section. It is very important to note that I shall start off by providing a general definition of the term before describing the different forms. Epistemic 'masculine' violence can be defined as epistemic violence produced from the "masculine" with the intent to dominate, subjugate and to epistemologically alter the reality of others through violence, co-optation, and representation.

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One can note in Spivak that epistemic violence is not simply racist but can be gendered and classist (Spivak, 1985). For the purpose of this research discourse, we will not only expose the racist side of epistemic violence but the sexist and gendered side as well particularly in as far as women and the LGBTQI+ community are concerned in South Africa. "Masculinities" has been understood differently by different societies and have shaped people differently. Masculinity has been understood as essentialist, social constructionist and what I will call Africanist for the purpose of this research discourse and this we shall discuss below.

2.2.1 Essentialist 'Masculine' Epistemic Violence

Essentialist masculinities can be defined as masculinities associated with intrinsic predispositions of what is known as male. Essentialist masculinities can be understood as a form of masculinity that is biological and therefore requires the social sphere of life to be organised in a way that will accommodate such. Intrinsic dispositions of the masculine can refer to the sexual organ, hormones, and any particular biological difference of the "Male" to the 'Female'. These essentialist dispositions play an active role in the organisation of the social life of a particular society. Essential masculinists for instance would advocate for men to be more involved in tasks related to physical strength than women, because of their biological make up. According to Holmes, "Nineteenth century scientists argued that the smaller size of women's brains compared to men's meant that women were 'naturally' intellectually inferior" (Holmes, 2007:29). This was translated to the social roles in society. This discourse has not been one that has been linear. Dowling (1995) for instance expresses his disagreement with the absolute acceptance of socio-biological roles while at the same time arguing that some socio-biological roles are inevitable, and that socialisation as social function cannot be ignored and dismissed as a reality.

Mwamwenda's study on gender stereotypes in junior secondary schools in Mthatha, Eastern Cape exposes the nature and the probable impact of gender socialisation on learners in that area (Mwamwenda, 2013).While nothing in the study refers to essentialism as discussed by Holmes, the study exposes how social interactions such as good performance in mathematics and science, sports, fixing things, are tasks where it was believed boys performed better according to gender stereotypes (Mwamwenda, 2013:61-62). This should be taken into account considering the fact that in the very same study, participants considered social interactions such as cooking, reading, talking as tasks girls are believed to perform better (Mwamwenda,2013:61-62).

What is of particular interest to this study is the epistemic violence from an essentialist masculinist position that enables the inferiorisation of the feminine, queer and those that do not conform to the epistemic tenets of essentialist masculinities.

2.2.2 Racist Essentialist Epistemic Violence of the 'Masculine'

'Masculine' epistemic violence from a racist essentialist position is one that classifies manhood according to race. This type of epistemic violence is clearly exposed by scientific racism. Saint-Aubin (2005:33) for instance notes the work of Dr S. Talbo who suggested that the "negro man" developed sexually faster than they developed mentally. Socially, the argument would follow that black men would need to be policed Saint-Aubin (2005). Saint Aubin (2005:33) at best exposes the gravity of this claim by exposing the relationship between gendered colonial domination and science in the legitimation of colonial oppression. Recognising the work of the 19th century scientist Josiah C. Nott, who acknowledged

"Niggerology" as a scientific endeavour suitably justified for American racial politics of the 19th century, Saint-Aubin (2005:33) attributes the socially rejected interracial marriages between white women and black men to Nott's scientific observation about such relationships as legitimation for racism. It is important to note that because of colonialism and scientific racism, white men had the right and the power over black women's bodies (Saintburn,2005:30). Here we note the way in which science is used to epistemically alter the realities of both black men and black women.

2.2.3 Gendered Masculinist Essentialist 'Epistemic' Violence

Epistemic 'masculine' violence is not about race but is gendered too. Gendered essentialist epistemic 'masculine' violence is the inferiorisation of women, gays, lesbians, bisexuals, intersexuals using essentialist patriarchal hierarchy to categorise individuals into the colonial power binaries of the masculine and the feminine. This is translated into the social roles of the strong and the weak, what *ought to be* and what *ought not to be* from an essentialist perspective and perspectives of gender. Langa (2020) in his study on black masculinities of young boys in the township of Alexandria revealed the perception young heterosexual boys had about gay boys. These perceptions of gay masculinities by the young boys, who formed part of Langa's study, range from "unmanliness" to their "disturbance of gender relations" (Langa,2020:100-109). What is significant to note is the exclusion and violence experienced by gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transgenders and intersexuals as the result of their sexual orientation. One of the

boys in Langa's study who identified as gay expressed the bullying and the harassment he experienced from other boys, with no support from school teachers (Langa,2020:102). The boy noted his struggle with depression and thoughts of suicide (Langa,2020:102). Langa also notes how these young boys policed masculinity because gay masculinity was seen as a threat to hetero-masculinity (Langa, 2020:100-119). Essentialist masculinist position was justified in different ways including the use of Christian religion and social gender relations.

2.2.4 Social Construction and Epistemic 'Masculine' Violence

Masculinities has not only been defined as a biological construct as noted in the essentialist approach, but a growing number of scholars have defined masculinities as a social construct. For instance, Bennet and Thompson defines masculinities as a "body of socially constructed ideas and beliefs about what it means to be a man and against which men are appraised within the community" (Bennet & Thompson, 2017:47). For Bennet and Thompson (2017), two critical sources of masculinities are one's own ideological appropriations of masculinities and those internalised from social institutions around us. For Buchbinder (2013:24-63), masculinities are constructed from the information read from the male body such as posture, gestures, and stereotypes. The differences within these account for the different levels of intensities of masculinity (Buchbinder, 2013:24-63). One of Langa's central findings about his study of masculinities in the community of Alexandria is that masculine conceptions evolve (Langa, 2020). The boys at the time who formed part of the study evolved from some of their thoughts about manhood at a later stage (Langa, 2020). Langa also affirms that the study challenged the universal notion of violent masculinities because of certain circumstances in his study (Langa, 2020).

The difference between masculinities as socio-biological and social constructionism is that masculinity is ideological and contextual. Morrel in South Africa notes that "Masculinities are fluid and should not be considered as belonging in a fixed way to any one group of men" (Morrel, 2001:7). It must be important to note that Morell situates this particular thought within the context of power dynamics shared by men categorised under Connell's categories of masculinity which are hegemonic masculinities, complicit masculinities, marginalised masculinities, and subordinate masculinities. Hegemonic masculinities would refer to dominant masculinity (Connell, 2005:61-87). Complicit masculinities would refer to masculinities which are complicit with the hegemonic power of masculinity although they might not agree with it (Connell,2005:76-81). Subordinated masculinities refer to masculinities

that are subordinated while marginalised masculinities refer to masculinities that are oppressed (Connell, 2005:76-81). According to Morrel(2001:7), particular fluid socio-ideological constructs of masculinity determine the power dynamics of masculinities and how that particular power is shared and evolves. This would mean that which is considered hegemonic does not always stay hegemonic but can sometimes shift to subordinated, complicit or marginalised masculinities (Morrel, 2001:7). Evident in Morell's work is the role materialistic conditions play in the construction of masculinities in a post-apartheid South Africa (Morell, 2001). We shall now proceed to show how epistemic 'masculine' violence is enacted through the intersections of sexism and racism within the South African context.

2.3 Epistemic 'Masculine' Violence in South Africa: A Social Constructionist Masculinity

It is the argument of this research dissertation that epistemic 'masculine' violence in South Africa is enacted by social constructionist fundamentalism that prefers reform over questioning its own epistemic premise. As we shall see later, this social constructionist fundamentalism is state driven. Similar to what Dotson notes as the first order of epistemic oppression, what has been evident in research studies on masculinities is the acceptance of social constructionist position from an epistemically privileged position. Epistemic violence from this epistemic privileged position, I argue, is one that has uncritically accepted social constructionism and in turn ignored discourse on masculinities and African indigenous cultures. Mfecane (2018:1-15) questions the acceptance of such an approach in masculinities studies by arguing that this has deeply problematised discourse on gender violence by ignoring African cosmology and culture in masculinities research discourses.

Advancing the social constructionist approach, Cock (2001:43-47) exposes the way in which masculinity was constructed through weapons such as guns in the context of an apartheid South Africa. For Cock (2001:43-47), the gun shifted from being a weapon of liberation for black South Africans to being a weapon of survival. Similarly for whites, this changed from being a weapon of attack to being a weapon of defence (Cock, 2001:43-47). For Cock (2001:43-47), the key important factor with regards to gun violence is its role in masculine socialisation in which the gun becomes a determining factor of how manhood is understood. This is at best explained by the discourse on "black masculinities on trial" in the case of Oscar Pistorius who murdered his girlfriend Reeva Steenkamp (Langa, Kirsten et al,2018).

Another example of the socially constructed masculinities can be noted in Xaba (2001:105-124) concerning “struggle masculinities” and “post struggle masculinities” in South Africa. Xaba (2001:105-124) recognises how a post-apartheid masculinity which required education, land and conformed to the Constitution of South Africa, was in a tension with ‘struggle’ masculinities. Struggle masculinities referred to a form of masculinity that was formed by the liberation struggle in South Africa for the purpose of liberation. According to Xaba (2001:105-124), the main purpose of such masculinities was liberation not education. In the shift from struggle masculinities to post struggle masculinities, many men who were part of the liberation struggle fell by the wayside because they did not have education and the means to earn a living in this new democratic dispensation (Xaba 2001:105-124).

Struggle masculinity, which was conversant with the gun and fighting for liberation was characterised by unemployment and constitutional delinquency in this new Constitutional Republic with a new set of laws (Xaba, 2001:105-124). What problematised this social constructionist shift introduced by the Constitution of South Africa as noted by Xaba (2001:105-124) was the understanding of a man as the provider in African traditional contexts who now had to have qualifications to gain employment. This turned African masculinity governed by a particular African epistemic framework into the masculine which could not take care of their family and failed to meet the standard criteria of being a man.

Mavungu and others (2013) studied the reasons for fatherlessness in Johannesburg and noted that one of the reasons why some fathers were absent in their children's lives was because their unemployment made them look like failures in the eyes of the mother of the child and her family. One of the responses captured by Mavungu and others (2013) of a son to a father is “He will tell you, maybe you see him, and you call him, and he says, they say that you are useless and you don’t have anything, you don’t do anything for me” (Mavungu et al,2013:28).

According to Mavungu’s study, the feelings of failure generated by fatherhood in South Africa was also generated by the matrilineal family of the child. Commenting on being a failure, one of the interview participants noted the following: “Who says it? It’s the grandmother and the grandfather and everybody else including the mother of the child and her brothers and sisters” (Mavungu et al, 2013:28).

What should be important to note is how African masculinities are deeply tied to the idea of providence. What is important to note is that it is the common expectation of a father to be a provider according to African families. Langa also exposes this when the participants of his

study expressed their disappointment with absent fathers who could not provide for them financially and emotionally (Langa, 2020:49-60). At the centre of the social constructionist masculine discourse in South Africa is that it is not simply a research discourse, but a discourse institutionalised by the South African state that failed to consider the epistemic diversity of South Africa. This led to the epistemic co-optation of African epistemes into reforms required by a South African constitutional masculinity.

2.3.1 Epistemic Masculine Violence enacted by the South African State

Social constructionist approach to masculinities has exposed epistemic violence enabled by the South African state. According to Walker (2005:225-238), the prevalence of violence in South Africa finds its course in the new post-apartheid constitutional sexuality which destabilises patriarchal gender roles of a traditionalist era for African men. According to Walker, the prevalence of this violence is birthed by a crisis in traditional masculinities in South Africa which are not open to gender transformation (Walker, 2005:225-238).

Based on the interviews that she had with young men in the township of Alexandria in Johannesburg, she concludes that the drastic change in how gender was and is understood in a pre-apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa deserves attention in as far as gender violence is concerned (Walker, 2005). It should be important to note that although she raises some of the intersections of masculinist violence with poverty, she does not explicitly discuss the intersections of colonialism, constitutionalism, and masculinist violence in South Africa. The use of the constitutional sexuality as the foundational premise for studying masculinities in South Africa stems from epistemic privilege that devalues African cultures.

In order to explore this much further, I will now make use of the Xhosa initiation rite of passage for manhood as an example. This particular practice has often been questioned in light of the spike of deaths, sexual violence, and alcoholism associated with it[10]. Ntombana (2009:73-84) attributes the deterioration of this particular practice to the changes that were introduced to this particular practice. One of the most notable changes is the fact that in earlier years an initiate would spend six months in initiation school providing sufficient time for teaching. In a post-apartheid South Africa, it must be important to note that this particular practice changed from six-month practice into a three-four week period (Ntombana, 2009:73-84). What should also

[10] It must be stated that the use of such an example does not mean the justification of a hetero-patriarchal discourse often attached to the practice.

be important to notice is that this particular practice has become more individualised, and a cultural rite of passage not associated with socio-political significance in as social-political context. A three-four week period becomes suitable for someone who is employed to return to work and to adhere to the employment laws of South Africa according to the Basic Conditions of Employment Act[11].Other reasons noted by Ntombana is the abuse of alcohol in the current nature of the practice (Ntombana, 2009:73-84). The three-weeks to four-weeks also makes it easier for young men from initiation school to return to high school in order to prevent them from losing out on schoolwork as expected by Customary Initiation Act of 2021 which governs initiation schools. As a social cultural practice, the new constitutional dispensation has not taken into account the richness and the depth of this particular rite of passage that has had to undergo significant changes from the enactment of colonialism to the current democratic dispensation in South Africa. In this case, it is how the government policies and state laws even in the new South African democratic dispensation fail to recognise the epistemic authenticity of such a cultural rite of passage.

This has contributed to a lack of teaching time in initiation schools (Ntombana, 2009:73-84). It is important to point out that while violence practiced by those who come from initiation school should be taken very seriously and given the necessary attention, nothing is often said about violence perpetuated by the state against cultural rites of passage through laws for example such as the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, as in this particular case. Central to this is how the South African state has altered the realities about the nature of this rite of passage by failing to accept the epistemic authenticity of a cultural rite of a particular people. I argue that if such a particular cultural rite of passage was accepted as a legitimate school of learning, epistemically it must be recognised. I note that all though this is the case, such an idea requires critical engagement in a post-apartheid South Africa that is sensitive to gender and sexual discourse. This does not simply mean legalizing initiation schools as a form of acknowledgment as done in South Africa rather it means accepting such schools as sites of masculine education and formation that can be equal and parallel to forms of learning in South Africa.

[11] The acts are added as a reference in the reference list including the Customary Initiation Act of 2021

Ammann and Staudacher (2021) in their discussions about masculinities in Africa suggest that Africa has the most homogenised singular "masculinity" with negative connotations. Decoteau (2013:139-159) expresses her displeasure with the homogenisation of African masculinities as represented by Walker. Her displeasure stems from the fact that gender, as she notes, has been a critical part of politics that have been sexualised in a post-apartheid South Africa (Decoteau, 2013:139-159). Gender and sex are not pure concepts but rather central mechanisms of a post-apartheid South Africa where South Africans constantly need to define and negotiate who they are in the context of neoliberalism in a postcolonial context (Decateou, 2013:139-159). She argues that a post-colonialist South African context masks the ever-present realities of the colonial legacies of racism in a post-apartheid South Africa. The example she uses in this case is a constitution that advances racial and gender equality yet failing tremendously to undo the colonial legacies of racial, economic, and exploitation in the mines and the mining towns in South Africa (Decoteau, 2013:139-159).

In order to expose Decoteau's concerns, a classic example of this can be made using the story of Diliza, a worker at a platinum mine who was laid off a year or two after being diagnosed with asbestosis (Ledwaba, 2018). Diliza was struggling to make ends meet after being retrenched (Ledwaba, 2018). Campbell (2001:275-286) in her research study of HIV transmission in mining towns discovered that men working in the mines were not afraid of being infected with HIV and AIDS because of the exploitation they experienced. The pressures of looking after their families made sex the only pleasurable thing in life (Campbell, 2001:275-286). In the context of HIV and AIDS, it was their pleasure yet at the very same time that which caused them to be sick.

What must be important to note is the serious problem of centring these arguments of violence on African traditional ideologies of gender while ignoring the sociopolitical structures and institutions such as the constitution that play a critical role in masculine formation in South Africa. Recognising what other scholars have termed the crisis of masculinities in a post-apartheid South Africa, Dube (2016:72-90) points out the challenge of the over-signification of black masculinities in research in light of prevalent violence in South
Africa. Dube (2016:72-90) for instance notes that much research on masculinities in South Africa is focused on the black men in South Africa while little attention has been paid on white masculinities in a post-apartheid South Africa. Commenting on the over-signification of the black in masculinities studies in South Africa which paints the black person as violent, Dube (2016:85) notes the following:

> "Moreover, and importantly so, the impetus for change does not lie solely on the shoulders of black men who now have to bear the burden of the patriarchal dividend by themselves as studies that focus on the archetypal violent black man of the constitutional post-apartheid era would lead us to believe. That is, white South African men cannot be left to stand by and watch the country go to waste while waiting to play the saviour role after the fact. The culpability of men in the violence that is gripping the country is not only a result of black men's anger, but the anger and threatened sense of belonging of all men in a context that has challenged and changed not only the racial order but the gender order as well" (Dube 2016)

The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (2016:8) for instance note that the root causes of gender-based violence in South Africa are practices such as *iLobolo*, *Ukuthwala*, Circumcision, Female Genital Mutilation, and the Sharia Law. The root causes of gender-based violence in this case seemed to refer to those of African descent and their practices. While slightly noting the commercialisation of practices such as *iLobolo*, this study does not discuss the issues of mediatory institutions in light of the African life, neither does it factor in the role that colonialism through coloniality plays in the perpetuation of gender violence. Zenani (1992) for instance note that in the Xhosa culture, when a woman was abused, she had the right to return to her home. In this case, the husband who was abusive would have to negotiate with the family of the wife for forgiveness upon which he had to pay a price in the form of cows to redeem himself from the disrespect which he has brought upon himself. It must be important to note that this might not have been an overall general practice for all women that were abused in the past. What must also be significant to note is that while this is the case, the epistemic privilege enjoyed by hetero-patriarchal structure in African cultures and the violence attached to it even in this case cannot be ignored. We will now turn our attention to this form of epistemic violence enacted within African culture and its intersections with modernity.

2.3.2 Epistemic 'Masculine' Violence from Masculine Epistemic Privilege

Epistemic 'masculine' violence is not just a racist discourse but is gendered. This I wish to expose in the very African context that is hetero-patriarchal. The nature of such epistemic violence expressed through masculine epistemic privilege is exposed by Molobi (2008) who raises the issue of the heteropatriarchal structure of African Initiated Churches. Molobi (2008) for instance notes that heteropatriarchal structure of the African Initiated Churches exposed women to domestic violence because church practices where largely centred around the headship of men in these churches. Vellem brings African Initiated Churches into conversation

with black theology in his discourse on prophetic theology (Vellem, 2010:1-6). He recognises African initiated churches as a protest model for Black Theology of Liberation in South Africa (Vellem,2010:1-6). His identification of African Initiated Churches as a prophetic protest model for Black Theology without paying due recognition to the intricacies of gender discrimination and gender violence as noted in Molobi exposes the level of epistemic violence that Spivak addresses. The critical question with regards to the epistemic co-optation of heterosexual women and the LGBTQI+ into heteropatriarchal gender binaries is an important question. What we can ask is, to what extent has this denied ways of being for women, the LGBTQI+ community and further contributed to the public violence that they are always subjected to in a post-apartheid South Africa?

Kretzschmar and Ralphs's study exposes the danger of such epistemic 'masculine' violence. Kretzschmar and Ralphs (2003:177-179) conducted a study that revealed that women in the Roman Catholic Church Diocese in Johannesburg had a distorted image of God and a distorted image of themselves as a result of hetero-patriarchy within the Roman Catholic Church. According to Kretzschmar and Ralphs (2003:177-179) these women had "internalised a patriarchal concept of God". These produced feelings of inferiority and therefore cemented the lack of commitment of women's resistance to patriarchy in the Roman Catholic Church. An example of this is the discomfort women had about the idea of having a female pastor (Kretzschmar & Ralphs, 2003). Central to the discourse of gendered epistemic violence in this case is how the marginalised 'other' formed distorted images about themselves because they were not epistemically credible sources as women. This distortion is problematised further by the tropes of modernity and traditionalism in South Africa.

2.4 Tropes of Modernity and Traditionalism: Epistemic Privilege of African Traditional Heterosexual Masculinities

Epistemic violence cannot be separated from the tropes of modernity and traditionalism. For Decoteau (2013:139-159), at the centre of sexual violence and gender disparity in South Africa is the intersections of the tropes of modernity and traditionalism which are at play in the South African society. This for him is well expressed in the presidency of Thabo Mbeki, who questioned the antiretrovirals as treatment of HIV and AIDS being in favour of African centred epistemologies and bioethics (Decoteau, 2013:139-159). This was done while President Mbeki conformed to western economic reforms and also introduced gender equality reforms in the

structure of the African National Congress in recognition of the spirit of the constitution (Decoteau, 2013:139-159).

For Decoteau (2013:139-159), this has also been present in the presidency of Jacob Zuma, the president who resonated with poor and those who had no formal education. The former president Jacob Zuma who used his Zulu masculinity to defend himself when he was accused of raping a woman infected with HIV while he was the chair of the HIV council and deputy president of the country. The defence was that as a Zulu man, a woman who was enticing or flirting could not be left just like that (Decoteau,2013:139-159). He protected himself by taking a shower after his sexual encounter with the late Khwezi who was HIV-positive (Deacoteau,2013:139-159). This is important to consider because HIV treatment which was considered western by the Mbeki Administration became much more accessible during the presidency of Jacob Zuma (Decoteu,2013). Decoteau's tropes of "modernity and traditionalism" should be important to note in light of Xaba's discourse on struggle masculinities and post-struggle masculinities in South Africa in as far as liberation and education is concerned.

The intersections of the tropes of modernity and traditionalism is also evident within a constitution that protects the LGBTQIA+ community yet at the same time one can remember the words of the former president noting that "When I was growing up, Ungqingili could not stand in front of me".[12] Central to the issue of masculinities depicted as violence is the struggle for liberation in the context of a government that masks itself as independent with a liberal constitution without addressing violence, exploitation, and sexualised politics (Decoteau, 2013). Another example of this is exposed by Epprecht (2008:34-131) who exposed how the denial of the existence of same-sex human beings, broadly in Africa, contributed to the perpetuation of the HIV virus in the LGBTQI+ community. For Eppercht, although HIV and AIDS was prevalent among members of the same-sex community in
America when the virus first appeared, in Africa it was believed to have appeared among heterosexual men painted by colonialists as polygamists who were sexually perverse (Epprecht, 2008). HIV treatment plans in South Africa reflected the very imagination of HIV being prevalent among heterosexual men. Treatment plans became available for heterosexual men while the possibility of the prevalence of the virus in the LGBTQI+ plus community was left without being addressed because same-sex relations was believed not to be something that was

[12] This was term used by former President Zuma to describe gay people:
https://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/zuma-provokes-ire-of-homosexuals-295239

fairly common in Africa (Epprecht, 2008). It is precisely this particular form of epistemic violence perpetrated against the ontologies of same sex identifying individuals, one which denied their very existence, that promoted the prevalence of HIV in the LGBTQI+ plus community as noted by Epprecht (2008). The central issue at hand is the discourse on gender equality promoted by constitutionalism of South Africa in a society that clings unto traditional ideologies of gender within the African society. It must be noted that these traditional ideologies being adhered to favour the African heterosexual male. What must be important to note is that this research study does not attempt to justify the toxicity of patriarchy; rather, this paper acknowledges how racism, colonial capitalism, and its intersections with African traditional ideologies of gender play a critical role in the enablement of epistemic 'masculine' violence and direct physical violence.

This is also exposed by Xaba (2001:105-126) who recognises the contestations between struggle masculinities and post-struggle masculinities in South Africa. In Xaba's account, struggle masculinities were focused on the liberation, forsaking academic endeavours and being part of the armed struggle for the plight of freedom. Constitutional masculinity which is a post-struggle masculinity however focused on education as a means of employment and therefore marginalised men who had no income and no degree or qualification (Xaba, 2001:105-126). Understanding the relationship between being the provider of your family as a man of the house and employment played a critical role in fulfilling a masculine normative ethos for African men. Men who challenged constitutional masculinity by participating in certain violent action in order to express their displeasure with the democratic transition that has marginalised them were considered to be delinquents that were to be rooted out in communities (Xaba, 2001:105-127). At the core of the problem is the intersections of patriarchy embedded in African traditional ideologies and its intersections with colonial capitalism that continues to be a problem for gender relations in South Africa. Central to the problem of constitutional masculinities is that they take for granted the impact of land dispossession, poverty, unemployment, and their relationship in how masculine identity is perceived and constructed in the African context.

2.5 The Call for African-Centred Decolonial Masculinities

The social constructionist approach to masculinities has received criticism from those like Mfecane (2018) who calls for the recognition of the epistemic authenticity of the African world in dealing with gender-based violence. According to Mfecane (2018), masculinity as a social construct and as a biological construct in these western notions of masculinity expresses a visual ontology of masculinities. This visual ontology as described by Mfecane (2018, 291-305) is primarily based on the acts of men which defines manhood. For Mfecane (2018,291-305), this ignores the impact of African cosmology and the construction of masculinities in Africa. Making use of South African television shows such *Utatakho* and *Khumbule'khaya*, Mfecane (2018, 291-305) attempts to expose the intersections of the understanding of the self in relation to the ancestors and their contribution to the social welfare of the family in as far as the masculine and the feminine is concerned in the context of parental absence. For Mfecane (2018), the failure to recognise this central importance of African cosmology in the African life is the primary reason why certain gender-based violence interventions have failed in South Africa. Mfecane's claim about the failure to recognise the importance of ancestors in the lives of the African community is at best exposed by Mekoa (2019:99-104) who exposes the role that ancestors play in the moral lives of Africans.

Life in Africa is premised on a set of interconnected relationships between the living and the dead. For Mekoa (2019:99-104), ancestors play a critical role in the social welfare of the family, and advocate for family responsibility and healthy marriages. It is at best to critically engage even this version of Mekoa (2019:99-104) that does not critically engage the relationship of ancestors in the context of same-sex marriages where there is no procreation or where pro-creation could either take place in the form of artificial insemination. This is noted in light of the fact that the failure to procreate means people cannot become ancestors (Mekoa,2019). Central to the interventions of the gender-based violence and sexual violence problem in South Africa is the recognition of African cosmology as a central part of the African life for Mfecane (2018).

The central critique that Mfecane (2020:1-15) offers against both this Eurocentric theoretical framework of masculinity is that it does not consider indigenous epistemologies. He utilises Xhosa rite of passage for men called *Ulwaluko* to show that masculinities in the Xhosa culture is identified through a physical mark of circumcision performed according to the Xhosa customs (Mfecane,2020:1-15). It must be noted that this is different from the essentialist

approach of masculinity in that even if you are born with a penis, that does not warrant any form of manhood. You must follow the right of passage within the culture related to manhood for you to be respected and socially accepted as a man in society. This is also different from the idea of masculinities as a social construct as argued by Mfecane (2020) in that although people can develop certain ideas about masculinity in the Xhosa culture, they have a particular communal base. This base is the physical mark that comes with circumcision in the Xhosa culture (Mfecane,2020). It must be noted that again in this instance, Mfecane (2020:1-15) does however note how gay men are often treated with discomfort but are not exempted from this rite of passage.

One key issue that Mfecane (2020) raises is the epistemic production of manhood in research in using these Eurocentric theoretical frameworks of masculinity which construct men in Africa. This epistemic production of manhood through Eurocentric frameworks has made it extremely difficult to adequately deal with issues of gender-based violence, to understand African men and masculine violence (Mfecane,2020). According to Mfecane (2020), the holistic nature of the African people in which African cosmology is an ever-present reality is not considered by research discourses committed to gender-based violence in South Africa. The problem with the social constructionist framework of masculinity is its failure to clearly delink itself from the colonial enterprise that attempts to marry social constructionism with constitutionalism in South Africa. What must be important to note is that within the South African context, social constructionism is not only a research endeavour as discussed above but stimulated by the South African State.

The marriage of social constructionism and constitutionalism in a post-apartheid gave birth to a new epistemic framework for some researchers who engaged gender and how even men understood themselves in the new South African democratic dispensation. Walker (2005:225-238) for instance attributes masculine violence in a post-apartheid to the failure of those who struggle to conform to the values of a liberal and democratic society. According to Walker's study, at the core of the problem is the indigenous patriarchal values and norms that struggle to conform to the new democratic dispensation (Walker, 2005:225-238). What must be significant to note however is that the research participants of Walker are all of African descent from one of South Africa's most impoverished townships called Alexandra in Johannesburg.

2.6 Epistemic 'Masculine' Violence: Dotson's Second Order of Epistemic Oppression and the LGBTQI+ in South Africa.

The tropes of traditionalism and modernity also exposes Dotson's second order of epistemic violence. For the purpose of recapitulation, we note that Dotson's second order of epistemic violence has to do with the insufficiency of shared epistemic resources that force the marginalised to utilize the language of the epistemically privileged to define themselves. Langa who conducted a study about township masculinities exposed how gay boys often framed their romantic relationships according to the hetero-gender binary relationships recognised as the masculine and the feminine. According to the interview held by Langa (2020:100-119), upon being asked about sex, the young gay boy noted that he was the "girl" in his relationship. Langa exposed how the heteropatriarchal structure framed his relationship.

Epistemically, it becomes important to note how this young boy was socialised into the heteropatriarchy of gender binaries of the masculine and the feminine that became oppressive in such a way that he could not express himself outside of this gender binary framework. This is also evident in a study conducted by Lowu (2001:287-296) on weddings that took place in an area called Mkhumbane in KwaZulu-Natal. Evident in Lowu's study is that same-sex marriages in Mkhumbane were structured according to western heterosexual marriages (Lowu, 2001:287-296). Murray and Roscoe (1998) who discussed the existence of same-sex relationships in South African mines also reveals this phenomenon. According to Murray and Roscoe (1998), same-sex relationships in the mines during colonial and apartheid South Africa were structured according to heterosexual relationships. Some relationships where also age based where the younger one would be passive (*Inkotshane*), one tasked to care for the older man (*Ihlabonga*) who was the "masculine" financial provider (Murray & Roscoe, 1998). What is fundamental to note here is how those who are part of the LBTQI+ are epistemically dislocated by using the language of the epistemically privileged to define and describe themselves due to insufficient epistemic resources.

2.3.2 Intersections of Masculinity, Race and Religion: Dotson's Second Order of Epistemic Violence

Epistemic violence can be enacted by a marginalised group of people who stand in a position of epistemic privilege to other marginalised groups. In this case, from a position of marginalisation, the marginalised uses the language of the one who oppresses them to marginalise others. This is a point that is clearly exposed by Spivak's critic of Foucault and the

subaltern groups in India. Owino (2014) critically discusses the concept of evangelical manhood according to Angus Buchan's mighty men conference. The aim of Owino's study was to investigate how evangelical masculinity according to this group re-inscribed patriarchy or how it contributed to gender social transformation.

This particular Christian masculine discourse was premised on evangelical theological foundation which accepts scripture as the primary foundation for the life of faith. This study was conducted in light of the fact that Buchan views about a masculinity in crisis in a post-apartheid South Africa. Key issues in this particular study were the erosion of masculinity and the necessity for the restoration of a Christian masculinity in the wake of the rise of feminism and the loss of power that men experienced in home in business and in politics
(Owino, 2014). What should be critical to note about this particular study and the views of Christian masculinity according to Angus Buchan is that the return to Christian masculinities in a post-apartheid South Africa is not reflective of the engagements of marginalisation and masculinities in South Africa. In other words, political and social violence brought about by colonialism even for black men is masked by a Christian masculinity which is entirely colonial, if it were to be defined according to Angus Buchan.

What is most notable in the intersection of Christianity and colonialism is the power discourse. Nadar (2009) uses Barret and Whitehead's three notions of how masculine power is maintained in order to critique Angus Buchan's Mighty Men's Conference discourse. The first is the use of brute force, the second is relational power or power of positionality, and the third is the discourse of power (Nadar,2009). The first relates to physical violence which rightly could be linked to the manifestations of colonial power. The second could be linked to certain ideological practices which promote gender hierarchy and the third relates to power maintained through discourse and language. For Nadar (2009), the masculine discourse of Angus Buchan's mighty men conference attempts to produce a palatable patriarchy through the use of outdated discourses of masculinity that will discriminate against women.

In agreement with Nadar, this argument stems from racial violence that has been legitimised by both religious discourses. Central to the issue of epistemic 'masculine' violence is power discourse – even for marginalised. This refers to 'African' men who use the language of the oppressor from the social location of being oppressed. Hadebe's (2010) study of Zulu masculinities and its intersections with culture and faith exposes a similar masculine language

used by the Mighty Men's Conference. The discussion about masculinities does not seem to expose colonial Christianity's contribution to the division of masculinities such as hegemonic, subordinate, and marginalised masculinity as categorised by Connell. Hadebe's participants assume a level of purity and innocence in as far as their description of Christianity is concerned. They fail to separate the magnanimous impact of the intersections of colonialism, Christianity, and masculinity in South Africa. One participant for instance noted the following: "We read in scripture that there is a difference between a male and a female. The Word of God will live forever. According to the reading of scripture in the Old Testament a wife is an assistant of a man" (Hadebe, 2010:22).

In light of the role of the constitution for instance, some participants of this study noted that men are constantly losing their power due to these constitutional rights and women empowerment programs (Hadebe, 2010). What should be important to note in Hadebe's study is that while women empowerment programs are found to be deeply problematic in light of masculine power for the participants, what is not given credence is the problematic nature of masculine power itself. It must be noted that masculinity is not homogeneous as noted earlier according to Amman & Stadaucher (2020). The language of masculinism or masculine power does not distinguish between unevenly distributed power shared through class and race as was the case in the apartheid era; yet the same power language is used. This is exposed by the similarity of language utilised by Angus Buchan's Mighty Men Conference and the language used by Hadebe's participants. This is recognised by Ratele (2013:247-268) who asserts that some black men enjoy or have hegemonic power even from the very location of the oppressed. The demonisation of African Culture and African life by colonialists exposes the problematic nature of a homogenised Christian masculinity. In his discussion on missionary and black masculinities, Tonono (2019) cites a policy that was removed by the Methodist Church of South Africa titled "heathen customs and Christian institutions". This was a missionary policy formed to deal with 'non-Christian' households (Tonono, 2019:10). This policy addressed women who were part of polygamous relationships and men who practiced circumcision rights in their culture (Tonono, 2019:10). What is deeply problematic about this particular belief is its disregard for the African conceptions of life. What remains deeply problematic in light of this is the failure to recognise the holistic conception of life within the African context. In this context, Christianity is used to disregard African male traditional circumcision practices noting them as evil. This casts doubt on the epistemic agency of such practices. It epistemically distorts the socio-political impact such a particular rite of passage has on the immediate family and the community. Tonono (2019:10) notes how the bastardisation of African men as sexual

animals because of polygamous relationships was a message of the Christian missionary enterprise.

In this context, it is fair enough to note how scientific racism became a critical tool for the legitimation of the colonial missionary enterprise. The hypersexual African men needed to be saved from their ways through Jesus. This required that they forsake their beliefs in the God of his ancestors and change the ways they viewed their lives. Even though monogamous marriages were considered healthy according to the colonial missionary enterprise, this enterprise does not account for its destabilisation of marriages for African men who worked at the mines and were exploited. Waetjen (2004:59-69) for instance, notes how these men only had rights in their homestead while they had no rights in the mines and mining towns (Waetjen, 2004:59-69). While being paid little money, they had to send money to their families (Waetjen,2004). This dislocated Zulu men in mining compounds (Waetjen, 2004:59-69).

The intersection of colonialism and Christianity has not only put African men at odds with the Christian God but placed him at odds with what Mbiti (1990:81-90) calls the living-dead in African Traditional Religion for those who conform to African Religious Practices. There is a particular dislocation in the moral adherence to African traditional norms caused by extramarital affairs and the transmission of HIV and AIDS due to colonialism. As noted earlier, Campbell (2001) discovers how the only pleasure men enjoyed, who worked in exploitative conditions of the mines, was sex – even if it meant that they would get HIV and AIDS. According to Campbell's study, death was inevitable for these men. Sex was their only ultimate pleasure (2001). Mbiti (1990:81-90) and Mekoa (2019) expose that men with chronic illnesses and who do not die of age cannot become ancestors. In this case, because someone such as Diliza acquired asbestosis as a result of working in the mine, they cannot become an ancestor because they acquired a chronic disease. It is at the very same time that the Christian enterprise which promises human salvation naturalises the horrible sociopolitical conditions of these men by promising them Jesus Christ who saves them from their sins.

In this chapter, we attempted to expose the complexities of masculinist violence and its epistemic formation in South Africa. This was done to show how they problematize the nature of dealing with violence and discrimination in South Africa. Setting the theoretical framework for this discourse, I make use of Spivak, Dotson, and Teo's account of epistemic violence to expose the notion of violence from an epistemic perspective. Their discourse sets the foundation of discussing the notion of epistemic 'masculine' violence which exposes how

epistemic violence can be committed from what is the 'masculine'. I argue that epistemic 'masculine' violence is committed in at least two ways in South Africa. The first way is a social constructionist approach enabled by the state through the constitution which constructs identity without recognising the epistemic diversity of people in South Africa. The second way is the indigenous understanding of masculinities taken from African heritage that have not only destroyed heterosexual men, but women and the LGBTQIA+ through epistemic co-optation that alters the way people view themselves in relation to other and even the divine.

I appreciate the desire for living in an inclusive society although dealing with challenges in such a society has been done from different epistemic premises. Respecting the desire for a society of mutual living without violence, in the next chapter I discuss three strands of a Christian theology of reconstruction to see if any approach could meaningfully contribute to masculine discourse in a way that avoids epistemic violence.

CHAPTER THREE

Christian Theology of Reconstruction in Africa and Epistemic Violence

3. Introduction

Physical violence as a result of masculine power continues to be a significant problem in South Africa. In the previous chapter we have deliberated on its relationship with epistemic violence. The purpose of this chapter attempts to make an analysis of a Christian theology of Reconstruction of Kangudie, known as Ka Mana, Jesse Mugambi, and Charles Villa-Vicencio to ascertain whether such a theology disrupts or promotes epistemic 'masculine' violence in South Africa. Such a discourse finds its interest in what lies at the centre of a Christian Theology of Reconstruction: the desire for reconstruction in Africa from a Christian theological point of view that metaphysically and epistemically resonates with transformation. Such a transformative agenda, against the backdrop of Western Christian theology and its intermingling with the colonial project that has disrupted Africa politically, socially, economically requires a critical analysis in the context of epistemic violence. Understanding the impact of epistemic 'masculine' violence in South Africa, this project attempts to understand how the very sources of a Christian theology of Reconstruction contributes to or disrupts such a violence.

It is important to note that there are several case studies that have been conducted in South Africa that expose the role that culture plays even in the perpetuation and the promotion of sexual and gender discrimination in South Africa. What is critical to note therefore is that since culture is a critical epistemic source in a Christian Theology of Reconstruction of Kangudie, Mugambi and Villa-Vicencio, it becomes critical for us to analyse how the sources within these theological paradigms promote and disrupts epistemic 'masculine' violence. In this chapter, we focus on the limited work of each reconstructionist theologian. For Mugambi, we focus on two books titled *From Liberation to Reconstruction: African Christian theology after the cold war* and *Christian Theology and Social Reconstruction*. While Mugambi has written extensively on this subject of reconstruction, I limit my analysis to these two books because he extensively deals with the subject of Christian theology and reconstruction in them. These two books provide a fair account of his discourse on Reconstruction Theology.

For Villa-Vicencio, I make use of his book titled *A Theology of Reconstruction: Nation building and Human Rights*. This particular book forms the corpus of his work on Reconstruction Theology. Kangudie has also written extensively on the subject of reconstruction, primarily I focus on three books namely, *La nouvelle evangelision*, *Le souffle pharonique de Jesus-Christ* and *Theologie affricaine pour temps de crise*.

This particular selection at best covers three important elements present within discourses on Christian Theology of Reconstruction in each of their writings. These important elements include the role of history and culture in reconstruction, discourse on Christianity and Christian Theology and the importance of community. In this chapter, I will provide a brief introduction of the discourse on Christian theology of Reconstruction using these three figures. Secondly, I will discuss their paradigms in light of epistemic violence and offer an engagement with the various critiques for each theology of reconstruction. Thirdly, I will point out some of the similarities and differences of their approaches.

3.1 Introduction of a Christian Theology of Reconstruction in Africa

Christian Theology of Reconstruction in Africa is a theological discourse on reconstruction introduced by different theologians in different parts of the African continent. While this theology of reconstruction discourse takes place in different parts of the African continent, it is important to emphasise that the conversation was first pioneered by Jesse Mugambi. It should be important to note that the theological discourse on reconstruction did not only take place in different parts of the African continent but took place in different ways and was shaped by the context of the theologians we shall consider for this chapter. The core inspiration of Christian reconstruction theology is the idea of reconstruction after independence from the western colonial regime. Such a theology attempts to address the ruins after colonial violence in African countries.

This particular chapter focuses on three parts of Africa where a Christian theology of reconstruction takes place in three different contexts. The first part of this chapter will turn the attention to the theological reconstructive discourse as introduced by the one who pioneered this conversation from East Africa, Jesse Mugambi. The second part of Africa which this chapter will pay attention to is Central Africa where a Christian theology of reconstruction was introduced by Congolese theologian and philosopher Ka Mana. Lastly, we turn all attention to

the theology of reconstruction discourse in South Africa as discussed by Charles Villa-Vicencio.

Recognising the context and the stark differences of these reconstructive paradigms, it is the contention of this chapter that these theologies share at least three similarities. Firstly, they all pay attention to culture as the primary source of a theology of reconstruction. Secondly, they are all inspired by the biblical texts and believe that reconstruction is a scriptural and theological motif. Thirdly, their methods of reconstruction have similar features. Recognising these similarities, in this chapter, we shall discuss the common features of this form of theology in light of the discourse we had on epistemic 'masculine' violence in the previous chapter. The next chapter will therefore contextualize this discourse and limit it to the South African context.

3.2 Theological Pillars of Jesse Mugambi's African Christian Theology of Reconstruction

Mugambi is a theologian from Kenya in East Africa who has written extensively about reconstruction theology. He is known as the father and pioneer of reconstruction theology. According to Vellem (2007), the notion of "African Theology of Reconstruction" was first introduced by Mugambi at the All-Africa Conference of Churches in the late 90s, although many authors have engaged the notion of reconstruction. This is significant to consider because his official publication in the form of books came after some authors had written on the subject even though he was the first to engage this concept in the form of seminar presentations (Vellem, 2007). In this section I will start by providing a broad overview of Mugambi's Theology of reconstruction using his text of 1995 and 2003. This overview will be explained using several central pillars which underpin his theology. I must categorically state that Mugambi does not discuss his theology of reconstruction in relation to epistemic "masculine" violence. It must be noted however that a portion of his discourse expresses his concern with epistemic violence in Africa. This shall become clearly evident as we discuss the central pillars which guide Mugambi's theology of reconstruction. What draws me to this conversation is precisely these concerns and his interest in communitarian reconstruction.

3.2.1 First Pillar: Reconstruction Theology of African Identity

One of the central themes of Mugambi's theology of reconstruction is the theme of an African reconstructed identity. This is a theme that runs throughout his reconstruction project. In the face of colonialism that has plunged Africa into a socio-political turmoil, Mugambi calls for

the revitalisation of African culture as a starting point for reconstructing Africa. He expresses the idea of the necessity for an African reconstructed identity in different ways. Firstly, he expresses his displeasure with the idea that African culture was viewed as deficient and incompatible with Christianity (Mugambi, 1995:148). Recognising the use of myths in Africa, Mugambi (1995:37) argues that creation and recreation of myths is important for reconstruction and for the survival of the African community. What becomes evident, as I shall discuss below, is the epistemic resilience of African cultures which Mugambi is in favour of, for the sake of reconstruction. This epistemic resilience is not one which is purely traditionalist but one which requires alterations in favour of the society we live in today.

Mugambi extends this idea of an African reconstructed identity to the organisation and planning of human settlements in Africa. Recognising the impact of spatial planning in the form of rural and urban areas and how they are attached to things like employment, Mugambi calls for the creative and distinct incorporation of African culture and religious heritage in urban and spatial planning (Mugambi, 1995:75). This idea of the necessity of the reconstruction of identity is also extended to theology which he believes should embrace African culture and heritage (1995:170-171). He also draws this into conversation with higher education, calling for the incorporation of African cultures and values into the curricula (Mugambi, 1995:150). The notion of epistemic violence shall briefly be discussed below in light of his discussion on higher education.

In his work on reconstruction published in 2003, he supplements his discourse of 1995 by strengthening this theme using Christian biblical theological discourse (Mugambi, 2003). In this work, Mugambi notes the similarities between African cultures and religion in the Old Testament (Mugambi, 2003). He argues that Africans find the bible appealing primarily because of these similarities (2003:119-129).

3.2.2 Second Pillar: Political Necessity for Reconstruction

Mugambi firmly expresses his displeasure with an Africa mired by poverty, corruption, hunger, and injustice. He blames the western forms of governance for failures in Africa. He questions the international organisations such as the International Monetary Fund and World Bank for requiring adjustments in policies and national goals for African countries in order to reduce debt western countries created in Africa (Mugambi,1995:156). He extends this discourse by expressing the negative consequence of the move from multilateral agreements to financial aid from International Non-Governmental Organisations (1995:159). Mugambi argues that this has

provided such organisations with influential political power, power which influences not only government, but churches sponsored by such organisations in Africa (Mugambi, 1995:159). What concerns him is the call of impurity for democratisation and civic education after the Cold War, an agenda driven by western states and institutions that inferiorise Africa epistemically (Mugambi, 2003). This is because this call paints Africa as being uncivilised requiring reforms from western countries. This is significant for him considering that this democracy is called for by a super-structure after the demise of the Soviet Union, an international situation which monopolised western global politics. (Mugambi,2003:157). Mugambi raises this issue in the context of higher education that has glorified western higher education, seeing the western world as the ideal standard (1995:2003).

3.2.3 Third Pillar: Communitarian Reconstruction.

Mugambi's theology of reconstruction appeals to the notion of community. Reconstruction is not an individual's task but is communal. For instance, he extensively discusses the role that the church could play in the reconstructive agenda. He discusses the notion of the Church and economics (Mugambi, 2003:179-195). He also discusses the biblical concept of "the good news", which he believes that there is a necessity to recognise the desire and aspirations of afflicted communities (Mugambi, 1995). These include refugees, disabled women, youth, and others (Mugambi, 2003:176-178). Recognising the different religions, Mugambi recognises the fact that Africa has always understood what it means to live in a pluriverse space where different religious groups could live in the same geographical area without any form of marginalisation and oppression taking place (1995:81). This is discussed in light of the fact that so many European Christian denominations exist today where there is a lot of communal and spiritual fragmentation in Africa (Mugambi,1995:81).

3.2.4 Jesse Mugambi: Justification for Reconstruction and for African Reinvention

One of the first important points to note about Mugambi's African Christian theology of reconstruction, different from that of Kangudie, is that reconstruction is a post-liberation endeavour. Firmly situated in the transition from the colonial dependence on colonial powers to an independent African continent in ruins, the task of reconstruction theology is to creatively rebuild Africa. Reconstruction is not simply an ideological commitment towards the struggles of the people, a questioning of existing oppressive forces, it is an event of creative restoration. African theology of reconstruction is a destination after liberation, theologically pillared on the

Ezra-Nehemiah biblical narrative (Mugambi,1995). Similar to Nehemiah's commitment to rebuild Israel after the devastating effects of the exilic period,

Mugambi's theology of reconstruction reiterates the call for a commitment of rebuilding Africa after the ruins caused by the colonial enterprise (Mugambi, 1995). Reconstruction for Mugambi takes place on at least four levels. The first level is personal reconstruction. Personal reconstruction refers to the change of destructive beliefs, values, and attitudes that compromise the project of regeneration in Africa (Mugambi, 1995:15). The second level of reconstruction is cultural reconstruction. For Mugambi, cultural reconstruction refers to the reconstruction of economics, politics, ethics, and aesthetics (Mugambi,1995:14-15). In this context, the purpose of culture in Mugambi's account is to make life easier for survival. This would refer to the management of resources (economic reconstruction), of social influence (political reconstruction) and ethics (Mugambi,1995:14-15). The third level of reconstruction is religious reconstruction. This level of reconstruction is able to synthesize and recognise the various religious traditions (Mugambi, 1995:16-17). The fourth level of reconstruction is ecclesial reconstruction. In this particular level of reconstruction, people and communities with this inclusive worldview are portrayed and celebrated (Mugambi, 1995:17). This is more of a commitment to unity in the context of indifference.

This nature of Mugambi' s theology of reconstruction is at best expressed in his critique on liberation theology in Africa. Mugambi starts off by questioning the tenets of liberation theology and argues that liberation theology has several compromises for the African continent left in ruins by colonial powers. The first critique Mugambi (1995) offers against liberation theology is its incapacity to recognise the paradigm shift from dependence on colonial powers to independence in Africa. Liberation theology in this context is somewhat problematic for Mugambi because its use of the mosaic exodus narrative about a people always in movement does not adequately portray the African situation (Mugambi, 1995). According to Mugambi, this biblical narrative describes people saved from oppression in Egypt and led in the wilderness to Canaan (Mugambi, 1995:13-15). For Mugambi, the key challenge with this is that this narrative does not best assist people who are situated in the same geographical area. According to Mugambi (1995), an Africa in ruins is not an Africa in movement theologically . Reconstruction is not a possible endeavour in the context of liberation theologies because, for Mugambi, third world theologies are at best held together by ideological commitments informed by different contexts that are compromising to the reconstructive efforts (Mugambi, 1995:1-20). Recognising the use of the exodus narrative as the symbolic foundation for

liberation theology in Africa, Mugambi notes at least four compromises of liberation theology. The first is the historical distance. For Mugambi, the difference in the historical accounts and circumstances of the Israelites and Africa makes it impossible for the exodus narrative to be used as symbolic for liberation theology (Mugambi, 1995:14). Mugambi's second critique is the cultural distance. Mugambi argues that Israel's culture is noticeable to greater lengths in European colonial domination than it is in African culture.
(Mugambi,1995:14). These cultural inconsistencies make it complex for this narrative to address the challenges of a contemporary Africa (Mugambi, 1995:14). The third critique that Mugambi offers against liberation theology is religious heritage. For Mugambi the key challenge is that liberation theology, and messianism within it, is inspired by biblical idioms from the religious heritage of Israel and not from Africa (Mugambi,1995:14). The fourth criticism that Mugambi (1995:14) has of liberation theology is the ideological differences between exodus narrative that does not adequately express the African story.

3.2.5 Mugambi's Theology of Reconstruction and Epistemic Violence

I argue that Mugambi's theology of reconstruction challenges epistemic violence although it fails to do so completely. Mugambi's concern for the impact of epistemic violence is at best expressed by the two problems of primary concern in Africa which he calls internal and external pressures (Mugambi, 1995). External pressures refer to the direct physical violence of the colonial enterprise like land dispossession (Mugambi, 1995). Internal pressures refer to the alteration of social structures and institutions that have altered the way life is understood in Africa (Mugambi, 1995). His discourse on the role of international organisations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund at best exposes the issue of epistemic violence and exemplifies what he describes as "internal pressures". Mugambi (1995:157) accuses these organisations of imposing structural adjustments to policies and national political goals on African countries that are in disarray when they need assistance. For Mugambi, this is despite the fact that the West is at the centre of African problems (Mugambi, 1995:157). According to Mugambi (2003:32), the end of the Cold War ushered in the emphasis of democratisation and civic education for Africa. This was encouraged and imposed by these international organisations (Mugambi, 2003:32). This is something he questions, particularly because it happens after the fall of the Soviet Union which, for him, led to the monopolisation of western global politics. Mugambi' s discourse on the democratisation and civic education as a western globalised project, at best, exposes the impact of epistemic violence. Mugambi tries

to expose how western globalised politics casts doubt and questions the epistemic agency of African ways of life because of their established epistemic privilege. The terms "civic education" and "democratisation" implies that Africa lacks these and also criminalises African ways of living (Mugambi, 2003:32). In light of this dissertation, what is most notable is the role that democratisation and constitutionalism in South Africa has played in perpetuating epistemic violence as discussed in the previous chapter. Mugambi's concern appeals to the post-South African state as well particularly in the way in which constitutional masculinity has been discussed.

It is important to note that Mugambi's description fits Dotson's account of reducible epistemic violence. This form of violence as previously stated, refers to the way in which socio-political violent projects such as colonialism alters social institutions, structures, and cultures of the marginalised through the use of power (Dotson, 2014). What is of keen interest in relation to epistemic violence as discussed in the previous chapter is how these forms of alterations affect the way people come to understand themselves. In this case, I make use of an example such as the Xhosa rite of passage for manhood as discussed in the previous chapter. What is important to understand in relation to Mugambi's discussion on internal pressures is the role colonialism played in restructuring the Xhosa rite of passage over the many years. What is also important is the effects such restructuring has had in society as discussed in the previous chapter.

According to Mugambi "Knowledge is power. Those who control it, control the minds of the people affected by it" (1995:150). What is clearly evident in this case is the relationship between socio-political violence and knowledge production in Mugambi's discourse. Discussing higher education, Mugambi expresses his concern with research outputs produced that are not relevant to the local contexts of Africa, the cost of publications and the idea of sending students to more 'affluent' countries for education (Mugambi, 1995:150). This as noted earlier inferiorises African countries.

3.2.6 Mugambi's Theology of Reconstruction and the Reinvention of Africa

As an alternative to such epistemic violence, Mugambi suggests that a reinvention and recreation of African practices of the past is a sufficient epistemic paradigm to deal with the challenges of Africa (Mugambi,2003:63). Considering the African crises and the use of an African Traditional paradigm as an alternative epistemic system to the colonialist one, Mugambi notes four approaches which can be taken to address the adverse effects of colonialism. The first approach is to adopt an African Traditionalist approach which relies on

African conceptions of being and living and rejects anything that alters this epistemic framework (Mugambi, 1995:78). Mugambi cautions against this approach as he is of the view that failure to adapt to a new environment leads to extinction.

The second approach Mugambi discusses is the "forever changing" approach in which a particular epistemic framework is constantly altered (Mugambi, 1995:78). According to Mugambi, this particular approach is impractical as it is common for someone in crisis to revert to a blueprint of beliefs they had in the past and attempt to engage any change from that blueprint (Mugambi,1995:78). The third approach Mugambi notes is the reformist approach, which makes use of African values of the past and allow the future to reshape these values (Mugambi, 1995:78). The fourth approach is parallelism in which two different epistemic systems can be allowed to mutually co-exist in a particular society (Mugambi, 1995:78). His concern with the last approach is the extent to which co-existence can problematize the epistemic agency of either community because both are valid and equal (Mugambi, 1995:78). For Mugambi, co-existence requires compromise (Mugambi, 1995). It must be important to note that Mugambi favours the third approach. Not only does he state this, but he is consistent in expressing his preference for the third approach – which is reformist. Mugambi's dialogue on renewal, reform, and schism within the church clearly exposes this (Mugambi, 1995). According to Mugambi, the difference between renewal and reform is that while the former has to do with updating an existing structure, the latter requires a change in a particular structure (1995:116).

What is evident is that the use of Mugambi's use of words reflect Dotson's use of Moch and Bartuneck's discourse on organisational change. His use of the word 'renewal' refers to the first order of change discussed in the first chapter. His use of the "reform" refers to the second order of change discussed in the previous chapter. What is very important to state in this regard is that Mugambi also suggests that his particular approach to reconstruction in no way attempts to vindicate the atrocities of ancestors or justify colonialism in any form and avoids both (1995:74).

Mugambi's preference for African reform and reinvention as an epistemic alternative is clearly exposed by the way in which the biblical text is used as one of the primary premises for this Theology of Reconstruction. For Mugambi, the bible is not the only primary theological premise for his theology of reconstruction. Another notable premise includes the culture of people. Mugambi asserts that there exists a dialectical relationship between text (biblical) and context (Mugambi, 2003:167-168). Mugambi consistently criticises the notion of

contextualisation because of the notion of a universal truth it carries that can be shaped according to a particular context. For Mugambi, prioritisation of the one over the other is not helpful at all. If the text is prioritised, it co-opts culture while contexts make the text lose its relevance if it is prioritised. He critiques liberation theology for this reason. According to Mugambi, Liberation Theology relies heavily on the text to justify liberation, and this becomes problematic as is it loses some form of justification without the text (Mugambi,2003:167-168).

What must be important to note then is that this suggests that Mugambi does not argue for the uncritical acceptance of the bible in his theology of reconstruction. His argument could perhaps be supplemented by the fact that when Mugambi discusses the Gospel, he clearly expresses the view that texts in the bible are various responses to the Gospel (Mugambi, 2003:154). His argument is that African communities can respond to the Gospel from their own context without being co-opted into universalist cultural theorisations of the Gospel as promoted by colonial missionaries (Mugambi, 2003:154).

3.2.7 Critique of Mugambi's Theology of Reconstruction

A number of scholars in theology have criticised Mugambi's theology of reconstruction for a number of reasons which I shall now discuss. Farisani (2002) critiques Mugambi's theology of reconstruction for its use of the Ezra-Nehemiah narrative as a model for reconstruction in Africa. Farisani's critique is premised on Mugambi's failure to recognise ideological differences of the returnees (Israelites) and the am-haaretz in the Ezra Nehemiah narrative. For Farisani (2002:112), this fails to expose the extent to which Ezra-Nehemiah reconstruction project is undertaken from an ideologically privileged position to the disadvantage of the marginalised.

In defence of Mugambi, Holter (2018:17-24) suggests that Mugambi's reconstruction project is not premised on an exegetical study or theological studies. Holter (2018:17-24) argues that Mugambi uses critical biblical studies discourse which makes use of texts of affirmation rather than negation. He compares texts of affirmation to the flexible use of myths and symbols not as tools used to expose the truth (Holter, 2018:17-24). Using Geertz's concept of the 'Thick Description', Holter argues that those who critique Mugambi such as Farisani (2003:17-24) miss the way in which Mugambi utilises the biblical text to advance his argument of reconstruction. One of the points in Mugambi's critique of liberation theology supplements Holter's argument, namely, Mugambi's critique of the myths used by liberation theologies –

which are not African centred, as noted above – could be aligned with Holter's argument. Mugambi himself reaffirms the manner in which he uses the text in his discourse on reconstruction and re-affirmation (Mugambi, 2020:151-167). It should be noted that Mugambi's discourse on the dialectical relationship between text and context decentralises the text and allows him to make use of the bible in way both himself and Holter suggests. It must be noted that the bible in his theology of reconstruction is not accepted uncritically.

It must be noted that the line of argument in Farisani's critique cannot be completely dismissed. While Holter suggests that Mugambi's use of the Ezra-Nehemiah text is not exegetical, his use of the text does have theological and ethical implications. Farisani's critique exposes the relationship between text, context, and power. Theologically and ethically, this is of vital importance. It cannot be dismissed because the reinvention of myths and tales for the purpose of reconstruction come with pre-existing theological and epistemic shells. What problematises this issue of epistemic shells further is Mugambi's discourse of reconstruction as a post-liberation event. The problem with pre-existing epistemic and theological shells is that they have a form. This raises the critical issue of the insufficient epistemic resources of such epistemic shells which cannot cater for all human beings. Reconstruction as a post-liberation occurrence raises the issue of the epistemic privilege carried by epistemic shells of reinvention. Epistemic distortion because of reconstruction therefore as a post-liberation process becomes highly plausible. This makes epistemic violence possible.

The second critique which he receives from the black theological discourse in South Africa is the separation of liberation theology and reconstruction theology. According to Maluleke (1994) and Vellem (2007), Mugambi's theology of reconstruction oversimplifies critical issues that are related to liberation and reconstruction.

Vellem (2007) and Maluleke (1994) express their concern with Mugambi's theology of reconstruction and its failure to appreciate Black Theology of Liberation. For Vellem (2007), liberation and reconstruction are inseparable. In his critique of Mugambi's theology of reconstruction, Vellem, asserts the following:

> "Liberative reconstruction is not our original term, but a product of a collective exercise on the continent in response to the proposal of reconstruction. We agree with this designation to include the reconstruction motif as an addendum to the agenda of Black Theology of liberation". (Vellem, 2007:205)

Vellem is critical of Mugambi who defines his reconstruction as an event without recognising the role of coloniality in a "post" independent society. While Mugambi notes that liberation and reconstruction are not mutually exclusive, I must note that reconstruction's posture as event in his theology is problematic. In agreement with Vellem, I question the privilege and posture such a reconstruction theology enjoys in the context of oppression and victimisation. Mugambi in his attempt to explain the "post" in his article titled "From reconstruction to reaffirmation" seems to suggest that the problem of the liberation project is the failure to acknowledge some of the accomplishments (Mugambi, 2020:151-167). Accomplishments refers to moments of progress made by African epistemes in post-colonial states. It is primarily the notion of "progress" that problematises his notion of a theology of reconstruction. The critical question with this in light of epistemic violence is: who is the principal beneficiary of such progress among the various marginalised communities that still continue to fight for their existence? It is at this time when we will consider the reconstruction theology of Kangudie.

3.3 Christian Theology of Reconstruction in Central Africa

Christian theology of reconstruction in Central Africa was introduced by Kangudie, known as Ka Mana, a philosopher, and a theologian from the Democratic Republic of Congo. As an ethics lecturer deeply concerned about the sociopolitical challenges in Africa, Kangudie penned down many books related to the challenges that people in the Democratic Republic of Congo experience (Dedji, 2001). At the centre of Kangudie's theology of reconstruction is the reinvention and the re-thinking of an Africa troubled by corruption, deaths, poverty, sickness, and other catastrophic issues (2000a; 2000b; 2001; 2002; 1999; 1995;). Kangudie was an academic deeply concerned by the effects of colonialism in Africa and its intersections with traditional African political leadership and its destruction of Africa. Leaning on an African Christian theology of reconstruction, Kangudie criticises the western colonial enterprise and its destruction of Africa while also remaining critical to African culture and how it has been a symptom of the death of the "social imagineer" in Africa (Ka Mana,2000). Concerned with an ethics of crisis pervasive in Africa, an ethic that attempts to save Africa from the clutches of colonial violence, Kangudie addresses the danger of this particular disorientation and drift that has befallen the African people.

It must be noted that Kangudie has written extensively on the notion of reconstruction. Dedji for instance notes these earlier writings on reconstruction which include *L'eglise africaine et*

la theologie de reconstruction (1993), *Chrétiens et églises d'afrique* (1999), *Pour le christianisme de la vie et pour l'afrique de l'espoir* (1999).

I make use of later publications that are directly related to the nature of the conversation of this dissertation. The first of these writings include *Theologia africana para tiempo de crisis: cristianism y reconstruccion de Africa* (2000a). In this particular book, Kangudie develops his theology of reconstruction between African indigenisation and colonialism in Africa. In this book, he calls for a theology of reconstruction that is critical of both colonialism and indigenisation. It is the alternative beyond these that stimulates the inseparability and intersection of liberation, indigenisation, and reconstruction in the rebuilding of Africa. As Dedji (2001) correctly asserts, this is the line of thought that is consistent throughout his entire discourse on reconstruction.

The other discourse where he sets his theological foundation for his theology of reconstruction is *Le souffle pharaonique de Jesus-Christ* (2001). In this book, he sets his theological premise by bringing Christianity into engagement with contemporary Egyptology which contains an ethic of African holism. Kangudie is of the firm view that bringing these two into conversation sets the ground for innovatively rebuilding Africa. He crystalises this discourse by presenting a Christological engagement on the power of myths present in such a theological grounding for rebuilding Africa in *Christians and Churches in Africa,*
Envisioning the Future (2002). Another book considered for this dissertation is *La Nouvelle Evangelisation en Afrique* (2000b). In this particular book, he discusses the role that Christianity and the gospel can play in the rebuilding of Africa. It must be mentioned here again that he centralises the intersections of the gospel, indigenisation, and reconstruction by being critical of colonial Christianity and elements of African indigenisation and their intersections which have led to the demise of Africa.

Central therefore to Kangudie's African Christian theology of reconstruction is the possibilities that lie within the culture of Africa with the primary mission of saving all lives in Africa (Ka Mana, 2001). For him, the attempt of reconstructing Africa lies not only in being sceptical of the colonial missionary enterprise of the West but also in cultural identities which have sowed division and brought destruction amongst African people (Ka Mana, 2000). He exposes this by reflecting on the Rwandan genocide that was based on ethnic cleansing which he firmly believes is birthed by the spiritual crises the West has left Africa to bear (Ka Mana,

2000:83-89). It is within the context of such violence, poverty, and economic degradation that Kangudie calls for an African Christian Theology of reconstruction firmly based on African values.

For Kangudie, African Christian Theology of reconstruction is not simply inculturation theology in which ways are devised to implement the abstract nature of an abstract Christianity using African epistemologies and cosmologies. Inculturation refers to African values with a concern for solidarity between God, ancestors, humans, plants, and animals.

The critical aspects to note in this case is the relationship between God, the living, and the dead with mutual consideration for the significance of liberation and reconstruction. According to Ka Mana, the narrative of Jesus Christ mythologically is not alien to African kemitic heritage (Ka Mana, 2002:26-33). Ka Mana goes on to point out that not only is Jesus not only alien, but biblically, axiologically he is a product of Africa (Ka Mana, 2002). For him, the narrative centred around Egypt in the bible strengthens the idea that Jesus Christ is not an alien to Africa (Ka Mana, 2002). Inculturation therefore in this African Chrisian Theology of reconstruction does not refer to a search of identity in normative standards of the past before colonialism.

Acknowledging oppression during the pharaonic time as noted in the exodus narrative, axiologically , Kangudie recognises Egypt theologically as a place of correction and reconstruction using the story of Jesus Christ the flesh of God and the place of his birth. He recognises Jesus Christ as a phenomenon of reconstruction set to correct the oppressive regime starting as early as the exodus narrative (Ka Mana, 2001). His African Christian Theology of reconstruction therefore is a theology of conflict, growth, restoration, and recreation. In the next section, we focus on two pillars which encapsulates Kangudie's theology of reconstruction. These two pillars set the foundation of how he discusses heritage, Christian theology, and how he envisions community.

3.3.1 A Theological Reconstruction Project of Flexibility.

Kangudie's theology of reconstruction is a theology of flexibility. Flexibility exercised within his theological paradigm, as will be observed, is only plausible if one is committed to the African ethic of holism, an ethic deeply committed to the holistic relationships between plants, animals, God, ancestors, and humans. The flexibility within his theology is best exposed by three pillars which form his theology of reconstruction.

The first pillar which his theology of reconstruction is premised on is history. Similar to other reconstruction theologians, history is important for his theology of reconstruction, although he makes use of it in a different way. History in his theology of reconstruction does not refer to the tracing of accurate historical accounts. His use of history focuses primarily on the engagement of myths in history for the creative restoration of Africa. Myth is the important ingredient present in both African history and Christianity (Ka Mana,2001). When engaging the work of Mubabinge, Essome, and Ewane on contemporary Egyptology, Kangudie (2001) acknowledges that historically there are tensions in discourses of contemporary Egyptology and Christianity. The tensions for instance refer to the way in which exodus narrative has been captured differently by contemporary Christian discourses and Egyptological discourses, primarily because of ideological influences (Ka Mana, 2001:10-18) . Whilst he acknowledges this, he explicitly advocates for life giving myths present in both the Christian narrative and African history (Ka Mana, 2000; 2001 ;2002).

He does not refer to specific customs rather the values within African heritage that can play a critical role in stimulating and producing innovative thoughts for Africa. He understands African to being essentially committed to the ethic of dynamic holism (Ka Mana, 2000; 2001; 2002). Bringing African culture and Christianity into engagement, he makes use of engagements in Egyptology and Christianity to expose how Christianity could axiologically be African. Kangudie makes use of the work of Kotto Esome, Biblio Mubabinge, and Ewane who are committed to the axiological value pharaonic history has for the future of Africa (Ka Mana, 2002:12-26).

Recognising the relationship between, the living, the dead, nature, and God, Kangudie uses Egyptian narrative of Osiris, Isis and Horus as narrated by Kotto Esome, Biblio Mubabinge and Range Ewane to signify three essential pillars of such holism: identity, liberation, and reconstruction[13]. Describing the relationship embedded within an African ethic of holism, Egyptology, and the Christian enterprise, this is what Kangudie had to say:

> "But this unity is anchored in a primordial relationship with the land, with the fact that man and society belong to the land as a force for the production of nourishing wealth, this land fertilised by the Nile in a powerful flow of alluvium which have structured a common imagination and secreted a vision

[13] . As Narrated by those like Kotto Engome, Seth, the brother of Egyptian Pharoah Osris plots his death, decapitates the Pharoah Osiris and hides the different parts of his body in twelve different hidden location in order to become Pharoah. Seth becomes a deeply problematic Pharoah. The wife of Pharoah Osris searches for his body parts to give him a dignified funeral. Mythologically, after she finds the body parts hidden in different locations, they conceive a child called Horus. Horus is the child that saves Egypt from the oppressive hand of Seth.

> of the world where recourse to the King as the representative of God to guarantee prosperity through work constitutes the essential spring of the spiritual. The body of Osiris, the body of the country, the body of society and the body of the world make up a fertile entity that fertilises the energy of invention and creativity represented by the body of the woman, Isis, and the body of the future that is the child savior and restorer of unity, Horus. To unite Osiris, to unite the country, to unite society, to unite the creative forces and to unite the destiny of the present, the past and the future, such is the essence of religious action, and spiritual energy" (Ka Mana,2001:30).

It must be important to note that Kangudie links this with the Christian narrative to expose the nature of liberation, identity, reconstruction, and innovation through the person of Jesus Christ in the biblical account of creation, suffering, and salvation. These two stories according to him have a striking resemblance (Ka Mana, 2001:30-31). Making use of Essome who attempted to address the disjuncture of ancestral veneration and colonial monotheistic Christianity, Kangudie argues that these two relate with each other in a dynamic way particularly when it comes to the history of Jesus and Christianity in Egypt (Ka Mana, 2001:26-32). Kangudie recognises that while there are a lot of contestations and contradictions with discourse on Christianity and Egyptology, what is important is the commitment to values concerned with reconstructing Africa in an innovative manner (Ka Mana, 2001).

Stressing the important of myth in the recreation of Africa that is evident in both traditions, he makes a form of parallelism between pharaonic Egyptology and Christianity. In drawing this parallelism, he notes that Isis represent the forces that do not accept immobility (Ka Mana, 2002:29-36). This could be paralleled with resistance and a quest for liberation. Seth represents forces of dislocation (Ka Mana, 2002:29-36). This could be the devil. Osiris represents a picture of Africa in the past (Ka Mana, 2002:29-36) and finally Horus which represents liberation (Ka Mana, 2002:29-36). Forging a Christological account, he argues that Christ and his cross presents a new and unknown perspective which opens to new possibilities (Ka Mana, 2002:29-36). Narratives such as the creation account and salvation account have become critical texts for Kangudie to expose unity, liberation, and innovation in the course of reconstruction (Ka Mana, 2000). These are the type of texts that Kangudie uses to engage on the discourse.

Different to Mugambi who has a bit of a stringent approach towards cultural discourse, Kangudie offers a much more descriptive critique of African culture. The Rwandan genocide set the perfect platform for Kangudie to express his challenge with indigenisation. For instance,

Kangudie noted with concern how many missionaries could exist in Rwanda and the global world, but no one could do anything about the Rwandan genocide. He also notes with concern how Afro ethno-tribalism fuelled the Rwandan genocide (2000b:19-91). In light of indigenisation, Ka Mana suggests that the primary challenge colonialism has left Africa with is the desire to free ourselves from the clutches of colonialism which inevitably led to identity liberation politics (Ka Mana, 2000a:19-91). This was caused by the rise of Africanisation and indigenised African Theology and this he describes as the second phase of Christian theology in Africa. His discourse on the various stages of Christian Theological discourse exposes this. The first stage is a stage which shows the relationship of Christianity with colonial power (Ka Mana, 2000a:19-22). The second stage is the stage of Africanisation that became critical of the marriage of colonialism and the Christian missionary enterprise (Ka Mana, 2000a:22-26). The second stage however saw the marriage of African systems and the colonial missionary enterprise which led to neo-oppressive structures being the problem of contemporary Africa (Ka Mana, 2000a:22-26). The third stage is a stage that attempts to address the neo-colonial phase made up of the mechanics of colonialism and its marriage with African indigenisation (Ka Mana, 2000a:26-27). This is the stage to which he initiates his theology of reconstruction.

Central to Kangudie's concern is Christianity's relationship with the colonial project that has presented itself in a way deeply problematic for the future of Africa. Kangudie's African Christian Theology of Reconstruction lies in his critique of an African theology of identity that renders the project of reconstruction inefficient (Ka Mana, 2000a). One of the most difficult challenges in the crisis of Africa is the destroyed *imaginaire* of the African (Ka Mana, 2000a). This *imaginaire* is defined by the total disorientation and drifting of the African for four centuries because of colonialism. What should be important to note is not just this drift, but it's attempted to seek for identity in the middle of the crisis caused by western colonialism (Ka Mana, 2000a). This is also evident in the four stages of Christian theology in Africa that he outlines.

The second pillar of Kangudie's theology of reconstruction is that it is value-based. In this case, the value determines the legitimacy of reconstruction. Value however in his theology of reconstruction is firmly guarded by the commitment to an African ethic of holism that respects the interconnected relationship of God, ancestor, humans, plants, and animals as present in the Kemitic culture. Again, it must be important to note that the flexibility he endorses sets the ground for the creative tension between liberation, indigenisation, and reconstruction within

his value-based paradigm. It is this tension that allows for contestation, creativity in search for values committed to humanity.

3.3.2 Stimuli for Ka Mana's Theology of Reconstruction

Two main challenges that serve as a stimulus for Kangudie's theology of reconstruction is the problem of colonial power and the desire for an African identity in order to counter colonial power in a counterproductive manner. Kangudie is deeply critical of African identity liberation politics and the intersections of colonialism and Christianity (Ka Mana, 2000). It is most notable that Kangudie's critique of these two issues expresses his concern with the way these two contribute to epistemic violence.

His concern with epistemic violence and the Christian colonial mission is at best expressed by the key themes that exposes what he considers fundamentally problematic with the relationship between Christianity and colonialism. The very first problem he identifies is Christianity's relationship with colonial power. Kangudie asserts that while the Christian message is generally a message meant to uplift the weak, it came with violent and oppressive power that subjugated the vulnerable (Ka Mana, 2000b:94). According to Kangudie, its marriage with colonial power leaves no room for constructive engagement and critique rather it co-opts one into to its narrative (Ka Mana, 2000b:94). What can be noted in what Kangudie addresses here is the role colonial power played in epistemic co-optation similar to Dotson's second order of epistemic violence. In this instance, we can clearly see how physical violence manifests itself in such a way that it becomes epistemically hegemonic. In this instance, the epistemic credibility of the marginalised is questioned by the epistemically privileged.

The second challenge he exposes which is directly linked to the first is how the intersections of Christian message with colonial power monopolises truth. According to Kangudie, "Within such Christianity, deep mechanisms that operate are those of alienation: the loss of ones' own substance in order to adopt without lucidity, the system of being and thought model of the strongest" (Ka Mana, 2000b:97-98). What becomes immediately observable even in this case is how colonial power directly affect the way in which the marginalised come to know themselves. In this instance, Dotson's second order of reducible epistemic violence is most notable in such a discourse. For instance, the idea of the loss of substance clearly exposes the idea of insufficient collective epistemic resources present to assert one's epistemic agency.

The third challenge that Kangudie raises is the duplicity and the mask that the Christian message in Africa carries. For Kangudie the Christian message veils racism and present such evangelism as humanitarian enterprise while even hiding its market driven identity (Ka Mana, 2000b:98-99). This challenge is directly linked with the fourth challenge he exposes which is Christianity's relationship with the capital. According to Kangudie, it is important to understand that Christianity came with the capitalist expansionist movement of trade (Ka Mana, 2000b:100). He notes that this Christian enterprise played a critical role in domesticating and integrating Africans into a capitalist economic system in order to exploit them.

The last three challenges Kangudie exposes are the consequences of the above issues he raises which exposes the nature of epistemic violence in different ways. The fifth challenge is a Christianity of spectacle. Kangudie challenges the idea that Africa can have a different variety of churches and the fact that Christianity can develop and grow without having impact on the socio-political crises within which Africa finds itself (Ka Mana, 2000b:102-106). The sixth challenge he notes is the notion of individual salvation perpetuated by colonial Christian Missions. According to Kangudie, this isolated people from their immediate communities and broke essential bonds that Christianity could have positively contributed to.

The last issue he raises is the division brought about by dogmatic differences where people ideologically align themselves with their denomination (Ka Mana, 2000b:106-108). In this case he not only notes the intersections of colonial Christian missions, but the very dogma even within African indigenous cultures that refuses to focus on issues that will renew Africa. In an attempt to solve these challenges, he presents a theological reconstruction project of flexibility as a solution.

3.3.3 Kangudie's Theology of Reconstruction and Epistemic Violence

The flexibility of Kangudie's theology of reconstruction in some way escapes the first and the second order of epistemic violence. The recognition of different engagements because of its commitment to an African ethic of holism acknowledges the epistemic agency of all. This can be noted in how he discusses the very movement of Christianity within the Greco-Roman world (Ka Mana, 2000a). In his discussion on Christianity, he does not dispel the engagements of Christianity with the Greco-Roman world, nor does he suggest that such a discourse should be rejected. What he attempts to challenge is the idea that Christianity is European discourse without acknowledging how the continent of Africa features a lot in the biblical narrative. As noted earlier, avoiding the tracing of an accurate historical account, mythologically, he argues

that Jesus is a product of Africa. For him, Jesus is the essence of liberation and reconstruction. What is central to his theology of reconstruction is the ability to engage sources that will assist Africa to prosper, recognising the interconnectedness of relationships between God, the Ancestors, plants, humans, and animals. The openness of his theology challenges the notion of reducible epistemic violence.

Although Kangudie's theology of reconstruction is flexible, it must be noted that it also has an epistemologically resilient framework. This makes it fall for the snare of irreducible epistemic violence. The specific use of the African holism framework as a theological premise proves this point. This epistemic resilience can be compared to the resilience of Villa-Vicencio's reconstruction theology that makes use of western discourse on human rights to discuss reconstruction. What must be important to note is that Dotson in some way would excuse Kangudie for this because, according to Dotson, irreducible epistemic violence is not always oppressive as noted in the first chapter. For Dotson, oppression is dependent on the persistence of such an epistemological system.

Recognising Dotson's disclaimer, I argue that the irreducible epistemic violence of Kangudie's theology of reconstruction is an exception. This exception I argue only exists because of its openness to various discourses and being open to engage the epistemic oppression of any system despite its very own resilience. The flexibility and inclusivity of discourse within this paradigm while being epistemically resilient is what allows this paradigm to be the least oppressive. It is precisely the epistemic flexibility and its advocacy of an axiological African ethic that allows it to somewhat escape Dotson's third order of epistemic oppression.

3.3.4 Method of Reconstruction

Three critical tasks in Kangudie's' theology of reconstruction are of critical interest for the discussion of this particular discourse. His theology of reconstruction requires that one has the proper tools of analysis that will assist in exposing the nature and the varied angles of the crisis in Africa. This theology of reconstruction therefore embraces questioning as its starting point inspired by marginalisation and the oppression of people (Ka Mana, 2000). It requires a practical orientation that will allow one to deal with this particular crisis and thirdly it requires critical reflection on innovation (Ka Mana, 2000). The primary critique against this form of reconstruction without dismissing its relevance and its significance is the role that epistemic gender violence plays in the nature of questioning, the practical orientation, and creative structuring that could re-produce violent epistemes.

3.3.5 Critique of Kangudie's Theology of Reconstruction

One of the challenging issues with regards to Kangudie's theology of reconstruction was the difficulty of finding sufficient and accessible scholars who offer a critical appraisal of his work. This challenge could result from the fact that his work is written in French and therefore it becomes difficult to engage Ka Mana's writings particularly in its relevance according to this research project.

Dedji notes that it is difficult to offer a critical appraisal of Ka Mana's work because of the dynamism it possesses which is all inclusive (Dedji, 2001: 268-269). Bringing his discourse into conversation with Senghor's discourse on *Negritude* and *African Values*, Dedji suggests that there are similarities between Senghor and Ka Mana's thought about the destiny of Africa (Dedj, 2000:268-269). According to Dedji (2000:268-269), what problematises Ka Mana's work is the rejection of Negritude. This for him is challenging because it takes for granted the significance of African cultures and the necessity for their epistemological resilience in the rebuilding of Africa (Dedji, 2000:268-269).

Dedji's critical appraisal of Ka Mana is important to consider in light of the possible value of African Cultures. What becomes problematic, similar to the critique offered against Mugambi, is the extent to which such epistemological resilience of African heritage contributes to epistemic violence in South Africa. What could be the main concern is that which legitimises his reconstruction project as African. I argue that his use of myths could be sufficient in maintaining what is African in his discourse. Although this does not survive the snare of epistemological resilience as epistemic violence, Dotson's exception can be applied in this case. This discourse is one we shall clearly expose in the next chapter.

3.4 Theology of Reconstruction according to Charles Villa-Vicencio

Charles Villa-Vicencio is a theologian from South Africa whose theology of reconstruction is firmly premised on human rights discourse and constitutionalism. Villa-Vicencio's theology of reconstruction comprises of several critical components which frames his discourse. The very first component is the context within which theology of reconstruction arises. Villa-Vicencio raises the necessity for context in his theology of reconstruction. Context in his discourse of reconstruction inspires a form of prophetic theology that holds the lawmakers to account. His discourse on social analysis, a theme that runs through his discourse exposes the importance of

being contextual when being a proponent of a Christian theology of reconstruction. His discourse on law-making in Britain and Apartheid South Africa best exposes this. Recognising the toxicity of lawmaking in South African history, his call for a new way of making laws in a new situation exposes the importance of context in his reconstruction theology (Villa-Vicencio,1992:49-71).

According to Vellem (2007), Villa-Vicencio's theology of reconstruction can be located at a time before the 1994 democratic elections in South Africa after the release of Nelson Mandela from prison. Recognising the chain of events that moved from a firmly established apartheid South Africa towards a new democratic dispensation, Villa-Vicencio's theology of reconstruction, like that of Mugambi, is a theology that attempts to make sense of the move from an apartheid South Africa to post-apartheid South Africa, and advocates for a reconstructed society that aspires justice and inclusivity (Villa-Vicencio, 1992). Like Mugambi, Villa-Vicencio was also of the view that liberation theologies such as black theology in South Africa were not sufficient in their form to deal with the new developments that would require nation-building (Villa-Vicencio, 1992:7-8). Central to his theology of reconstruction is how to inclusively rebuild a South Africa that has been mired and destabilised by colonialism. Like Mugambi, Villa-Vicencio makes use of the Ezra-Nehemiah biblical narrative as the foundation of his theology of reconstruction.

History as the basis for reflection in his theology of reconstruction is the second important component which I wish to discuss. Reconstruction for Villa-Vicencio does not take place in a vacuum. Not only the good but the bad of history must also be recognised when participating in this form of theology (Villa-Vicencio,1992:49-71). This is at best exposed by his discourse on the toxicity of law-making in South Africa's past (Villa-Vicencio,1992:49-71). Recognising the ability to make laws, even in the process of reconstruction, his methodology allows for the correction of errors made by lawmaking (Villa-Vicencio, 1992:272-280). Reconstruction for Villa-Vicencio is a never-ending process. This is precisely why he allocates the role of prophetism to the Church in order to call out the errors of lawmaking, particularly as they relate to injustice and oppression. For Villa-Vicencio (1992:254-272), the primary task of the church is not to be the main actors of law-making; rather, the responsibility of the church is to prophetically advocate for value-based laws that are not oppressive.

The third critical component of his theology of reconstruction as we shall see in our discussion below is the notion of positive law-making. Villa-Vicencio draws the discourse of positive law-making from the bible. Making use of the exodus narrative in which the Children of Israel were

saved from Egypt, Villa-Vicencio (1992:113) argues that law-making in the exodus narrative did not serve as a form of negation but as ideals to which people ought to become and live out. In the current context, the best expression for positive lawmaking he advocates for, is constitutionalism (Villa-Vicencio, 1992). Recognising the different forms of law-making which includes value based law-making and legal-positivism, theologically he settles for a form of constitutionalism that is premised on value-based law making (Villa-Vicencio, 1992:231-272). This for him captures the theological notion of positive law making in our current context.

The fourth critical component of Villa-Vicencio's theology of reconstruction is the notion of mutual inclusivity. Mutual inclusivity refers to the notion of living together despite the differences of race, class, sex, gender, and religion. Villa-Vicencio expresses a concern for the role of apartheid in the marginalisation of people on the base of race, gender, and sex (1992: 49-61). Central to what he addresses is the necessity of inclusivity, something that has not been there in the history of South Africa before 1994. Law-making for him is important in undoing exclusivity and marginalisation. His discourse on mutual inclusivity is also exposed by his engagements on interreligious dialogue. Villa-Vicencio expresses the importance of interreligious dialogue as part of the reconstructive ideals in South Africa (Villa-Vicencio, 1992:277).

3.4.1 Theological Grounding for Villa-Vicencio's Reconstruction Paradigm

Villa-Vicencio grounds his theological paradigm on human rights discourse. Assessing the various theological discourses on human rights from various church traditions, he advocates for an ecumenical paradigm (Villa-Vicencio,1995:131-153). Recognising the tension between the rights of the individual and the collective in Western human rights discourse, he grounds his theology on three visions (Villa-Vicencio,1995:164-181). The first vision is the universal vision which is a call for humans to love their neighbour as themselves (Villa-Vicencio,1995:174-177). According to Villa-Vicencio, this responsibility is not only one that requires one to pay attention to the immediate context: it also transcends gender, class, and sex (Villa-Vicencio,1995:174-177). Villa-Vicencio notes that this has practical implications in our society that requires us to critically assess the way we understand things such as responsibility in the world and in our context (Villa- Vicencio,1995:174-177).

The second vision of a theological rights discourse is the ecological vision which call humans to take responsibility of nature similar to the task God gave to Adam and Eve in the creation account of the bible (Villa-Vicencio, 1995:177-180). For Villa-Vicencio, this discourse is

important in the socio-political context of human particularly as it relates to the global rights discourse (Villa-Vicencio, 1995:174-177). He locates its importance in the very tension between individual rights, collective human rights, and their socio-economic implications for health, land, and sanitation (Villa-Vicencio,1995:174-177). The third vision is the inclusive vision(Villa-Vicencio,1995:174-177). In this vision. Villa-Vicencio affirms the human dignity of each human being according to God's creative act and the necessity to live out life free from socio political and economic degradation (Villa-Vicencio, 1995:174-177).

For Villa-Vicencio, it is primarily this theological foundation of human rights that makes theology prophetic in the context of law-making. For Villa-Vicencio(1992:280), while law making is very practical, theology plays a critical role in making sure that human rights do not become absolutised. According to Villa-Vicencio (1992:76-150), the relationship between law-making and theology in our context resembles the post-exodus event in the bible. For him, the process of law-making is a theological response to an event that took place in a particular socio-political context (1992). His preference of value based human rights allows him to settle for constitutionalism which is fertile for theological discourse on human rights (Villa-Vicencio, 1992).

Constitutionalism and Law-Making in Villa-Vicencio's Theology of Reconstruction

It is important to state that Villa-Vicencio situates his theology in the existing tension between individual and collective human rights within western human rights discourse. He makes use of Terry Pinkard's concern of the dangers of imbalance between individual and collective rights to advance his theology of reconstruction (Villa-Vicencio, 1995:82-85). Recognising the intersections between power and rights on the one hand while on the other value and procedure in law-making, he engages Bodin's doctrine of sovereign power. According to Villa-Vicencio, it is primarily this doctrine that recognises the intersections of procedure and value-based rights in law-making that allows for the creation of laws and critical engagement on the creation of laws (Villa-Vicencio, 1992:112).

Villa-Vicencio makes use of the general rights as another premise of engaging law-making that is value based. The first generation of human rights focuses individual rights, the second generation focuses on issues that require mutual living, such as access to water and sanitation, education, and healthcare. Recognising the disjuncture between these generational rights in the South African context, Villa-Vicencio's theology of reconstruction takes seriously the plight of justice, mutual respect, and love in communal living. Villa-Vicencio (1992:154-195) does not

ignore the fact that the struggles of the first worlds which give birth to the generational human rights as envisaged in the Universal Declaration of Human rights is not identical to the human rights struggles faced by African countries. This suggests that human rights discourse of western countries is not free from ideological influences (1992:1-17). Two fundamental concerns that this particular theology of reconstruction aims to address is the relationship between individual freedom and social responsibility. The key points of interest which establishes this particular discourse is the relationship between the law and the human values which establish the law (Villa Vicencio, 1992:152-195). Central to the discourse of individual freedom and social responsibility is a theological anthropology with deep pastoral concerns for self and for the other.

3.4.2 Methodology for Charles Villa-Vicencio's Theology of Reconstruction

In attempting to pursue nation building in the context of inequality, poverty, and injustice, Villa-Vicencio's theology of reconstruction advocates for the following key issues which Villa-Vicencio believes is critical for reconstruction (Villa-Vicencio, 1992:274-280):

1.Analysis

What is crucial in the process of reconstruction for this particular theology is not simply to make pronouncements about certain issues on human rights but to be aware of the ideological components which influence the way we think about human beings. Analysis becomes critical in understanding a particular social challenge or issue before engaging it. For Villa-Vicencio, the key critical points in analysis would require the recognition of context in such an analysis. This eliminates the assumption of a generalised and universalised understanding of issues on human rights. The second critical issue which is important for an analysis in this theology of human nation-building is to be descriptive of the situation in question.

2. Theory

Theory is the second critical issue for Villa-Vicencio's theology of reconstruction. Theory for Villa-Vicencio must not be abstract as this will render it useless in deliberations about issues on justice and inequality. Theory then for Villa-Vicencio must have a praxeological foundation, which can be defined as a theoretical framework grounded in the struggle for justice. It must be informed by the struggles of the people in a particular context.

3. Interdisciplinary

Theology of reconstruction is not simply grounded in the Christian theology but socially engages other disciplines in order to receive enlightenment on issues of struggle. The interdisciplinarity of Villa-Vicencio's theology of reconstruction is at best expressed by the way he uses philosophical discourses on law and human rights in his discourse on reconstruction.

4. Interfaith dialogue

Recognising other faiths, Villa-Vicencio's theology of reconstruction requires that reconstruction becomes a participatory endeavour, in which the inputs of other faiths are recognised.

5. Participatory

This particular theology of reconstruction is not a project of a particular class of people but allows itself to be informed by different people. For Villa-Vicencio, there is a tendency of excluding the voices of those who are oppressed in discourses of reconstruction. His particular theology of reconstruction however recognises the necessity for the inclusion of marginalised people to form part of the reconstruction process. The failure to recognise the voices of those who are marginalised in the reconstruction project renders this particular project undemocratic.

6. Constructive

Villa-Vicencio's theology of reconstruction requires constructive critique on systems currently in existence. This theology is not a theology that simply protests against something that is unjust but is solution seeking. It is a theology that requires the common good of all people and does not shy away from the use of the imaginative in providing solutions to contemporary crises.

7. Open-ended

This particular theology of reconstruction does not assume to know it all. It requires a process of ongoing reflection, re-evaluation, self-critique, and a commitment to the poor. Its open-ended nature allows want to see where one might have gone wrong and allows room for improvement.

8.Corporate

This particular theology of reconstruction is inclusive. It is not simply a theological perusal of other disciplines but allows these corporate disciplines to contribute to the reconstructive project.

It is important to note that for Villa-Vicencio, these tasks are not simply done in a vacuum but at driven by particular theological and ideological commitments. What informs the method for his Christian theology of reconstruction is a theological checklist which comprises of the following (Villa-Vicencio, 1992:238-242):

1. The first is the commitment to the fundamental values encompassed by a Christian understanding of human dignity.
2. The second is the insistence on political and economic democracy. In this instance, individual rights cannot be isolated from second generation rights as presented in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
3. This theology of reconstruction does not propose economic solutions to the problem of society, but it is highly critical of economic policies and contexts which promote injustice and inequality. In this context there is a commitment for the provision of basic necessities for all in the context of capitalist violence and land dispossession.
4. Ecological concerns are a critical priority in the context of environmental degradation and the abuse of natural resources for the advances of human greed.
5. Economic reconstruction which requires revolution and reform of existing structures for the sake of transformation.
6. There must be support for the creation of new economic structures that will promote transformation and reconstruction.
7. There must be a commitment to the implementation of social programs that will mobilize people for the promotion of a reconstructed paradigm.

For Villa-Vicencio, what is of great importance for the Christian Church is that it must have ecclesiological commitments which expresses a theological concern for the poor in the context of market forces and capitalistic pressure (Villa-Vicencio, 1992: 248-251). Providing moral support and challenge the accumulation of wealth that is undemocratic, it must become an advocate for economic redistribution (Villa-Vicencio, 1992: 248-251). As stated previously, according to Villa-Vicencio, this does not require the church to formulate its own economic policies in as far as it's dissatisfaction with the marginalisation of the poor, rather for Villa-Vicencio, the church must be deeply critical of acts that infringe the human dignity of people in a particular society (Villa-Vicencio, 1992: 248-251).

3.4.3 The Critique of Villa-Vicencio's Christian Theology of Reconstruction

It is important to state that Villa-Vicencio's Christian theology of reconstruction in South Africa has faced criticism from a number of authors. Maluleke laments the fact that this Christian theology of reconstruction uses western philosophical-ideological concepts about human rights as the premise for its arguments. For Maluleke (1994:187), this is deeply problematic as it does not consider African discourses on human rights.

Vellem also expresses his concern for the separation of reconstruction theology and liberation theology. As noted earlier, Vellem (2007) points out the inseparability of black theology and reconstruction theology. He finds it quite challenging that Villa-Vicencio could shift liberation theologies to the margins and fail to recognise its importance for reconstruction (Vellem, 2007:143). Another concern that Vellem (2010:547-558) clearly expresses is the desire for an interdisciplinary form of reconstruction without questioning the epistemic premise of the very interdisciplinary sources.

3.4.4 Villa-Vicencio's Theology of Reconstruction and Epistemic Violence

Taking the different critiques into account and in agreement with Maluleke (1994) I argue that Villa-Vicencio's theology of reconstruction epistemically violates the marginalised 'other' through representation. This form of epistemic violence clearly resonates with Spivak's notion of the term. This epistemic violence is exposed in several instances of Villa-Vicencio's reconstruction theology. The first instance is noted in acknowledgment of the fact that western human rights discourse is not free from ideological influence yet using it to encapsulate a universal discourse on human rights for all (Villa-Vicencio,1995:154-195).

His deliberate choice for the use of western human rights as a tool of reconstruction whilst acknowledging its limitation is challenging in light of a continent that is epistemically diverse. Vellem (2007) sharply criticises Villa-Vicencio for engaging the notion of reconstruction without acknowledging Mugambi's prior work on the reconstruction prior to Villa-Vicencio's publication on the concept. Maybe it could be argued that Villa-Vicencio was not aware that Mugambi was working on the notion of reconstruction. The main challenge I wish to point out here, without spending much time on speculation, is the extent to which his theology of reconstruction could legitimize epistemic violence. I wish to point two issues most notable with regards to this discourse. The first is: if Christian theology of reconstruction was a concept that was engaged at the All-African Conference of Churches prior 1994, to what extent was the

epistemic agency of movements such as the AACC recognised and deemed credible. The second issue here is whether the failure to recognise Mugambi's work on reconstruction is premised on the fact that the corpus of his work on reconstruction was published after 1994. The key question then is, what determines if something has epistemic credibility? Is official publication a standard criterion for acknowledging epistemic credibility? What about oral teachings and writings?

Considering the engagement on epistemic violence, I recognise this because Villa-Vicencio clearly states that African Indigenous Theologies lack an authentic African liberative spirituality that is vital for the project of reconstruction (Villa-Vicencio, 1992:43-45). This is while he engages certain discourses presented at the AACC yet fails to recognise Mugambi's work on reconstruction.[14]

The second challenge is the form of parallelism that is notable with his discourse on the theological notion of "loving the neighbour as you love yourself" and his discourse on western human rights on individual and collective rights. Theologically, loving yourself would align with individual rights while loving the other would align with collective rights. The problem is the way in which the biblical text is used and aligned with western human rights discourse. What problematises his choice of situating the discourse on theology and human rights is the failure to recognise epistemic diversity. An example of this is that African societies are foundationally premised on a collective or community ethic. Mothlabi and Munyaka (2009:63-84) for instance discusses the inter-relations of the individual identity and the community identity present in African cultures. According to Mothlabi and Munyaka (2009:63-84) community and individual identity are formed and informed by each other. What must be noted is that even in discourses were tensions could arise between community and individual, community rights are rarely questioned. In the very context of human rights discourse, as Metz suggests, the concept of Ubuntu can assist to deal with the very human rights violations in our present context (Metz, 2011:532-559).

The failure to recognise the very discourse of personhood within the African discourse suggests that Villa-Vicencio's reconstruction theology on human rights epistemically-co-opts the marginalised he speaks of into western discourse on human rights. The critical question that arises in this context is: how his theology of reconstruction would look like if it was

[14] Consider Villa-Vicencio's discourse on Donald Mthimkhulu's engagement related to resistance at the All-African Conference of Churches (Villa-Vicencio, 1992:35)

epistemically premised on the notion Ubuntu, as embraced by the African epistemic communities and how it would differ. The alignment of western discourse on human rights with a theological discourse presents a very distorted image of the God narrative for the African. Secondly, what seems to be another problem in his theology of reconstruction is the attempt to address past injustices without acknowledging that the very marginalised were not only physically violated, rather they were epistemically violated as well. Africans had their own systems of governance in their community-oriented society. Considering that he acknowledges that the premise for his discourse on reconstruction theology is liberal theory, the challenge comes with envisioning mutual inclusivity. The question I ask is, to what extent are African epistemes considered credible? and who will have to compromise their epistemic agency in building this new society?

3.5 Differences of These Reconstructive Theological Paradigms

3.5.1 Contexts

One of the very first differences that could be attributed to the way in which these particular theologies are influenced and shaped are by their contexts. This enables us to set the tone of our discussions on epistemic 'masculine' violence as it relates to the discourse on a theology of reconstruction. Jesse Mugambi's discourse on African Christian theology of reconstruction is birthed after the independence of Kenya in East Africa. What is important to note in this regard is to understand why Mugambi's discourse on the Christian theology of reconstruction is a post-liberative endeavor as discussed earlier. In other words, reconstruction is imagined as that which takes place after the independence of African states from the colonial rule of the West.

The context for Kangudie's Theology of reconstruction is different to that of Jesse Mugambi. This discourse arises out of a troubled Democratic Republic of Congo after independence from the colonial rule of the western regime. In his theology of reconstruction, liberation is not a mere afterthought because of independence, but goes hand in hand with reconstruction. In his theology, he also recognises that the call for indigenisation in as far as it positively contributes to the development of the African continent. According to Ka Mana, if indigenisation, while in the process of reconstructing Africa, is shaped by norms and customs of the past that are toxic and harmful, then such norms and customs must be discarded (Ka Mana,2000b). As noted in his theology of reconstruction, it is precisely the intermingling of indigenous customs and its

marriage with the colonial social institutions which govern the Democratic Republic of Congo that has left the country in ruins. It is precisely why the particular relationship of liberation and reconstruction is very important in the country that has gained independence but continues to suffer irreparable harm from the aftereffects of colonial violence and its intermingling with particular strengths of indigenisation in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The context in which Charles Villa-Vicencio's theology of reconstruction is birthed is during a period in South Africa marked by discourses on transition into a democratic South Africa after the apartheid regime. This is determined by the release of Nelson Mandela in 1990 leading up to the formation of the new constitution in 1994 for the Republic of South Africa. The troublesome relationship between a theology of reconstruction and liberation theology as noted by Vellem must be understood in this particular light.

3.5.2 Similarities within These Theological Reconstructive Paradigms

The first similar feature in these theological reconstructive paradigms is culture. Our interest in this course is the role in which culture has been framed within such a theological reconstructive paradigm that either enables or disrupts epistemic 'masculine' violence. The central concern therefore is how this theology of reconstruction co-opts others in such a way that it epistemically alters the reality about themselves and the way they understand and are viewed in the world.

Important to note is that central to these reconstructive paradigms is the implicit assumption of nationalism within their discourses on culture. For Kangudie and Mugambi, there is a sense of ethno-nationalism in their theological reconstructive paradigms while for Villa-Vicencio on the other hand, there is a sense of constitutional nationalism. For Kangudie, the use of African ethno-nationalism in his theology of reconstruction of Africa does not simply mean the reinvention of ancient norms and customs as a way of reconstructing Africa. It is an ethno-nationalistic culture premised on an African ethic of holism which can be traced from common ancestry in Africa.

For Mugambi however, this African ethno-nationalistic culture requires that we reinvent some norms and customs in the African heritage and that we reintegrate them into an independent African state for the purposes of reconstructing Africa. Mugambi does not let go of liberation completely but is of the firm view that reconstruction is a post-liberation event, and that liberation must be attained first before reconstruction can take place. Villa-Vicencio's theology

of reconstruction is firmly premised on a constitutional nationalistic culture. Here we recognise the importance of inclusion of marginalised societies using the universal declaration of human rights. Culture in his sense can be recognised in how he makes use of constitutionalism and human rights discourse of the West as a premise of arguing for inclusivity of marginalised people. Reconstruction is not firmly premised on common ancestral lineage but is multicultural and legitimated by constitutionalism and law-making.

3.5.3 Similarities in the Method of Christian Theological Reconstruction in Africa

It must be important to note that the method shared by these reconstructive theologians are similar in a number of ways. First, they all advocate for inclusivity. In this particular sense they are against the spiritual hegemony of Christianity as regards to seeking solutions for an Africa that is in crisis. Secondly, all these three theologians call for an interdisciplinary approach to the reconstruction of Africa that will not solely rely on religion but would require that other fields and disciplines be engaged in the process of reconstructing Africa. The question of self-correcting and asking questions is a fundamental part of all three theologians although Kangudie and Villa-Vicencio are more explicit in this sense. Critical to note therefore in all of these methods is that they allow for dialogue as a way of reconstructing. The similar methods of these theologies open up a way to discuss the notion of epistemic 'masculine' violence.

In this chapter, I introduced at least three strands of reconstruction theology in Africa. I make use of reconstruction theology because of the interdisciplinary approach it promotes. It is precisely this interdisciplinary nature of reconstruction theology that affords me the opportunity to engage it in light of epistemic 'masculine' violence. Three different strands of reconstruction theology are engaged in this chapter. I begin by discussing Mugambi's theology of reconstruction whose epistemic blocks for rebuilding Africa lies in African Heritage. According to Mugambi, the reinvention of African customs, values and traditions is a good place to begin rebuilding Africa after the ruins of colonialism (1995). I reflect on the critiques made about Mugambi's theology of reconstruction and argues that while Mugambi's theology of reconstruction challenges epistemic violence, it fails to do so completely.

The second reconstruction theology which receives attention is Kangudie's theology from Central Africa. Using the intersection of an African ethic of holism based on pharaonic heritage and Christian Theology, he advocates for an epistemic premise of African values. Different from Mugambi, he argues epistemically that African values centred on holism should become the first point of reflection and thought production that will assist us to creatively think about

recreating Africa. I reflect on the similarities and the differences of these reconstruction discourse. Advocating for this approach in the next chapter, I draw these three different models of reconstruction into conversation with epistemic 'masculine' violence in South Africa to expose the model that is able to disrupt epistemic 'masculine' violence.

The third reconstruction theology discourse we consider is that of Villa-Vicencio from South Africa. Villa-Vicencio's theology of reconstruction is fundamentally premised on constitutionalism and law-making. Similar to law making in the bible, Villa-Vicencio argues that positive law-making is value based and expresses what people should be (Villa-Vicencio, 1995:113). In recognising the tension that exists between individual rights and collective rights and even law-making, theology plays a prophetic role to law-making and constitutionalism by being committed to love for God, self and for the other. The prophetic role of theology becomes critical considering the rigidity of law-making. It is because of this that his theology promotes self-critical reflection, correction, and analysis of a situation because reconstruction is always an incomplete task. I reflect on the criticism of this theology of reconstruction such as its posture of "post-liberation' which takes for granted discourses of liberation theology. Another criticism this reconstruction theology receives is the utilisation of western discourse to discuss reconstruction.

I argue that this theology of reconstruction epistemically violates the marginalised through representation. In the next chapter, I will contextualize the discourse on Christian African Theological Reconstruction. I will discuss the models drawn from them in light of epistemic 'masculine' violence in South Africa. This will be done to ascertain which model disrupts epistemic 'masculine' violence in South Africa.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. Introduction

We have already determined in the previous chapter that culture is a critical part of the discourse of a Christian theology of reconstruction in Africa. The central purpose of this chapter is to consider the extent which the three models of Christian theology of reconstruction enable or disrupt epistemic 'masculine' violence in South Africa. Our central concern in this chapter is to discuss epistemic 'masculine' violence from the South African context in light of the three elements which encompass the three different models deduced from their work. These elements are culture, history, and community. In the previous chapter, we determined that all three reconstructionist, that is, Kangudie, Villa-Vicencio and Mugambi, make use of culture in completely different ways. For Kangudie, African culture in his theology of reconstruction refers to the creative and innovative energies drawn from the Kemitic African ethic of holism that should form a critical part of reconstruction. The constantly reforming eschatology of his African Christian theology of reconstruction is stimulated and promoted by these creative and innovative energies found in the dynamism of those who are in solidarity: God, Ancestors, humans, animals, and nature.

Mugambi's African Christian theology of reconstruction requires the revitalisation and reinvention of African values and customs that advances a post-liberation discourse. Culture in his theology of reconstruction is attached to African values and customs that were destroyed by the colonial enterprise. Reconstruction requires the re-invention of these values in our societies that are in colonial ruins. For Villa-Vicencio's theology of reconstruction, human rights and law-making discourse is the culture upon which reconstruction can actually take place in a post-apartheid South Africa. What is central to note is that culture is employed differently by these theologians in order to advance the discourse of reconstruction.

Intertwined with how they conceptualize culture is the way they picture community and history. All of them advocate for communitarian living although they do so differently. All of them discuss the use of heritage but do so differently. Using three models of reconstruction presented by these theologians, we will attempt to see if all models disrupt epistemic 'masculine' violence. The first model we will give attention to is the reconstructive model of inclusivity advocated for by Villa-Vicencio. The second model of reconstruction we will give attention to

is the reconstructive model of Africanisation of Mugambi. The third model of reconstruction is the model of African axiological ethics advocated for by Kangudie.

The central part of this chapter will attempt to locate this discourse within the South African context. Two issues will receive primary attention. The first is the discourse on culture and nationalism and their relationship to a Christian theology of reconstruction. Secondly, we will critically discuss three models of Christian theological reconstructive paradigms in light of epistemic 'masculine' violence in South Africa in order to determine the most plausible model capable of countering such violence.

4.1 Culture, Community, and the Reconstructive motif

Culture and nationalism are key features of the reconstructive theological paradigms we have discussed. Ideng (2015) defines culture as a set of common values and practices shared by a group of people. According to Ideng (2015: 97-111), these common values and practices are that which make a particular community unique to other communities. For Ideng (2015: 97-111), these values are expressed in law, religion, political and the social aspects of that particular community. These particular values are generational. The location of our question of culture with regards to the discourse on epistemic 'masculine' violence is with that which is considered culture within the South African context. What should be critical to note in the South African context is the merging of African traditional communities with their own set of values prior to post-Apartheid South Africa and a new South Africa that has become a community formed by the constitutional values, enshrined within the constitution of the Republic of South Africa. In the previous chapter, we noted the difficulties of the merging of these different communities in Xaba's discourse about struggle and post-struggle masculinity (Xaba, 2001).

4.1.1 Culture as Nationalism in the Theological Reconstructive Paradigm

One central paradigm that can be noted in a theological reconstructive paradigm in Africa is its form of ideological commitment towards some level to nationalism in the previous chapter. Culture in this theological paradigm is based on the commitment to values and customs that play a critical role in identity formation. In Kangudie's theology of reconstruction, the foundational premise of life is the commitment to dynamic holism expressed by pharaonic Egyptology that assists us in living with each other even in conflict for the sake of liberation and justice. Mugambi's theology of reconstruction is not only premised on just particular values

but also advocate for the recognition of ancient culture in Africa that will contribute to the reconstruction of Africa. Villa-Vicencio' s theology of reconstruction is firmly premised on human rights discourse. At some level one can note these loyalties and values that become key characteristics of defining a national identity of a people from a particular context. One can also note the nationalist ideological commitments in all these theologies. Reference to culture in Africa and South Africa within such a theological paradigm calls for some level of communalism based on a shared understanding of values, commitments, and traditions that will also be able to help us to deal with whatever conflicts. In exploring the notion of nationalism as a theological reconstructive paradigm, it becomes very important to try and understand what nationalism in South Africa is and how it contributes to epistemic 'masculine' violence.

According to Harrison and Boyd (2018) "as an ideology, nationalism involves creating a worldview - a *Weltanschauung* - a set of coherent ideas and values that give meaning to the past for a social group, explains the present and offers a program for possible future action".

It must be noted that there are different forms of nationalisms where people share a common set of values and a worldview such as ethnic nationalism. Ethno-Nationalism would refer to loyalties and commitment towards values and tradition shared by a particular ethnic group.

The cultural formation in South Africa, insofar as it is nationalistic, is expressed by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, adopted after the apartheid regime. This cultural formation in post-apartheid South Africa finds its premise in the national ideology framed by the Convention for Democratic South Africa (CODESA). In South Africa, the nationalist ideology as institutionalised by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa is not ethno-nationalism but a multi-racial nationalism that attempts to accommodate all races. This can be noted in the preamble of the constitution of South Africa which reads as follows:

> "We, the people of South Africa
> Recognize the injustices of our past;
> Honour those who suffered for justice and freedom in in our land;
> Respect those who've worked to build and develop our country; and
> Believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity We therefore, through our freely elected representatives, adopted this constitution as supreme law of the Republic so as to -
>
> > Heal the divisions of our past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights.

> Lay the foundations of a democratic and open society in which government based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by law.
>
> Improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person; and
>
> Build a united democratic South Africa able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations.
>
> May God protect our people.
> Nkosi Sikeleli'Afrika.Morena Boloka Sechaba saheso.
> God seen Suid-Afrika. God bless South Africa.
> Mudzimu fhatutshedza Afurika. Hosi katekisa Afrika."[15]

What can be noted in the preamble of the constitution is that it resembles Villa-Vicencio's model of reconstruction when describing the "South African". Central to the nature of nationalist ideology in South Africa as noted in the preamble is a multi-racial nationalist ideology that recognises the past but attempts to forge a future with similar objectives and end goals institutionalised by the constitution. Most notable therefore is a newly formed community with particular ideas and values that describe their identity. This new community shares values expressed in the Constitution of South Africa such as human dignity, a sense of belonging that is expressed through law, education, human settlements, traditional leaders, the government, and other issues.

4.2 Reconstructive Model of Mutual Inclusivity

The theological reconstructive model of mutual inclusivity is a model expressed by Villa-Vicencio's theology which endorses socio-political reconstruction through human rights discourse. This theology advocates for at least six principles. These six principles are the formation of value-based laws, inclusivity and restoration, appreciation of diversity, redress of economic injustice, constant self-criticism, and correction. Theology plays the role of being prophetic within the chosen paradigm of constitutionalism and law-making that allows for correction. What must be appreciated about this model is its desire to foster unity, justice, and reconciliation.

[15] *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, preamble.

This desire stems from the concerns it has of marginalisation and oppression. Villa-Vicencio captures the purpose of such a model in the following words:

> "To ensure that in the process of reconstruction nations are able to turn away from greed, domination and exploitation, in whatever clothes may appear, to an age of communal sharing and personal fulfilment" (Villa-Vicencio, 1992:2).

Central to the model of inclusivity is the ability to live in community despite our differences. I will now discuss this model in light of epistemic 'masculine' violence in the South African context.

4.2.1 Challenges with this Model as it relates to Epistemic 'Masculine' Violence.

The first challenge with this model as it relates to epistemic 'masculine' violence is the extent to which law-making contributes to the process of identity formation. Referring to law making, Villa-Vicencio draws us to the positive impact of law-making, similar to that of the Israelites after exodus. Theologically, the law becomes an identifying marker of what people are supposed to be (Villa-Vicencio, 1992:113). Similar to the theological proposition that Villa-Vicencio makes, it must be stated that law-making has played a critical role in masculine formation in South Africa from a constitutional perspective.

It must be noted that the constitution of the Republic of South Africa is not only the supreme law but is a constitution that provides a basis for identity. Recognising this within the South African context, Sauter (2015) contends that a constitution provides a national identity to citizens of a country in which such a people become identifiable in a community of nations. This is crucial to point out considering Xaba's discussion on struggle and post-struggle masculinities in South Africa. This is because, according to Sauter: "The South African Constitution is not just a legal document but a rhetorical document that asserts both ideological and material power" (Sauter, 2015:190).

The constitutive power of ideology and materialism plays a critical role in how people can come to know themselves and understand their gender particularly through a constitution. Xaba's discourse on struggle and post struggle masculinities at best expose the role of the constitutive power of ideology and materialism in how people come to understand their masculinity. Xaba's discourse on struggle masculinities and post-struggle masculinities is supplemented by the study that details why certain men chose to be absent fathers (Mavungu et al,2013). While the constitution plays a key role in identity formation as asserted by

Saute(2015), what becomes evident are the challenges of the model of mutual inclusivity. The first one relates to how changes of a socio-political context can negatively influence how people understand their masculinity. This is proven by Xaba (2001), Cock (2001) and Mavungu et al (2013). In the South African context, this refers to the failure of the constitution to sufficiently address historical injustices. This is important to note when considering how the constitution, to a certain degree, can recognise the agency of African epistemes yet failing to appreciate how intertwined socio-political living or arrangement are directly tied to African epistemes and morality[16]. Recognising the inability to financially provide for one's family due to unemployment as detailed in either Xaba's study or the study of absent fatherhood (Mavungu et al, 2013), for African men, this means failing to live up to the ethos of African masculinities. This could render one a failure in African indigenous communities. The second challenge with the model of mutual inclusivity particularly as it is tied to constitutionalism is the issue of being trapped by the snare of using value-based laws as an epistemic framework of conducting research. In this instance again, I refer to Walker's (2005) research on men in a new South Africa and how a new constitutional identity contributed to her epistemic framework of conducting research on masculinities. This is something she did without questioning the innocence of the very same constitution. I must assert that Villa-Vicencio makes mention of the fact that historical injustice must be addressed, and which theology should take seriously.

While it has a commitment to injustice, this model assumes epistemic universality and fails to appreciate epistemic diversity – even on a theological level. It cements its base with the theological commitment to individual rights, collective rights, and the environmental rights. Human rights discourse addresses these rights separately without recognising alternative epistemic frameworks. Consider the very different epistemic paradigms on masculinities which includes but is not limited to social constructionism and socio-biological paradigms in the west. Also consider Africanist discourse on masculinities as advocated by Mfecane (2018; 2020) which centralises the African worldview. The crucial question with regards to this model is the extent to which it epistemically accommodates these very frameworks in its discourse on human rights. The problem within the South African context is the difference between Walker's discourse on the reasons for gender violence and Mfecane's discourse on the recognition of the

[16] Here I refer to practices such as ulwaluko (Initiation rite of passage for men) in the Xhosa culture.

Africanist worldview which is not considered for discourse on gender violence. At the very root, epistemically, these are different discourses.

This approach requires that diverse communities make epistemic compromises which in turn is epistemic violence. Expressing her frustration with the rainbowism ideology in the South African democratic dispensation that seeks to eliminate difference, Gqola (2001:94-106) notes the contradiction of accepting difference without the willingness to actually discuss its enablement. For her (Gqola, 2001:94-106), there is an assumption within the language of rainbowism that the ground is fair and equal for all South Africans, and all have equal access. Although Villa-Vicencio calls for the redress of economic injustice, even in such a case the question of equality and fairness should be extended to the very epistemic model of governance and law-making that is chosen. Choosing this model therefore without appreciating the complexities of epistemic diversity for discourse on reconstruction is essentially an act of epistemic violence.

Gqola (2001:94-106) argues that South Africa is a community characterised by heterogeneity and therefore depends on the continuation of this particular identities. What should be fundamental to note is the level of epistemic violence that takes place within the new nationalist framework in the construction of a new identity that delegitimises ways of being in Africa. Such epistemic violence within this nationalistic context is at best expressed by Fanon's critique of nationalist movements. For Fanon, one fundamental problem with nationalisms is the obliteration of cultural values for the sake of unity (Fanon, 2021:207-242). He argues that, not all nationalisms have a decolonial agenda because at their core lies the fight for justice in the context of inequality without possessing the intellectual capacity to build society (Fanon, 2021:207-242).It is because of this that nationalisms revert back to the ways of those who have always oppressed them as a way of dealing with things because they lack the intellectual capacity to deal with marginalisation constructively and to build (Fanon,2021:207-242).

I argue therefore that the very political social constructionist approach embraced by rainbowist constitutionalism fails to appreciate epistemic heterogeneity and contributes to epistemic 'masculine' violence. I argue that this is precisely the problem that leads to tension between social constructionist approach to masculinities and the Africanist discourse. The very idea of relegating the blame of gender violence in South Africa to African indigenous beliefs without questioning the social constructionist approach to masculinities and recognising alternatives is

where the problem of mutual inclusivity lies. Epistemic compromise can lead to epistemic distortion of how one can come to know oneself. The challenge with this model is its desire for some homogeneity of values. The problem with it socio-politically is that it could be linked to the very way masculinities themselves have been homogenised in Africa as noted by Ammann and Stadaucher (2021). The problem with homogenised description of masculinities in Africa is that it cannot be divorced from the value system it is believed to have been influenced by description as can be noted even in Walker (2005). This becomes very problematic once state power wills the discourse of the epistemically privileged.

The failure to appreciate epistemic heterogeneity in discourse on masculinities problematises attempts to deal with issues concerning masculinities themselves. This becomes problematic, particularly if laws which are formed because of epistemic compromise become the ideals which the humans, and in this discourse men should become. I make use of an example already discussed in previous chapters. Based on the model of mutual inclusivity, to what extent can initiation schools be incorporated into the South African schooling system if law making becomes the basis of reconstruction in a diverse South Africa with different races and ethnic groups?

This question arises out of the fact that these schools have epistemic credibility in African indigenous societies. The model of mutual inclusivity becomes problematic in as far as epistemic compromises are required. Epistemic compromise as a requirement cannot be divorced from epistemic violence.

4.3 Reconstructive Model of Reinvention

The second reconstructive model is a model which can be identified with Mugambi's theology of reconstruction. What is fundamental to this particular model is the reinvention of African cultures and values in the wake of colonial ruins. There are many approaches that have sought to make use of African heritage as a way of dealing with colonialism. This model is premised on the idea that colonialism ruined everything, and that society needs to be rebuilt using African epistemologies. It must be important to note that while the model on mutual inclusivity requires compromise, this particular model is selective and explicitly makes use of African discourse. I now turn to ways in which the essence of reconstruction has been captured in African epistemological discourses.

4.3.1 Different Forms of Utilizing African Values and Customs in the Wake of Colonial Destruction

African philosophers have made use of different schools of thought when it comes to the utilisation of African epistemes. Ikhane (2017) for instance notes at least four schools of thought which have problematised the debate of method in African epistemology. The first school of thought is African ethno-philosophy which proclaims that Africans had "beliefs, systems and practices". For African ethno-philosophers the methodology lies in the description and the rediscovery of these beliefs and having acquaintance with other cultures (Ikhane, 2017:137-144). The second school of thought is African philosophical sagacity which recognises the role of sages in ancient Africa and believes that critical conversations with sages are the primary sources of knowledge. The third school of thought he discusses is professional philosophy which operates on universality and denies the existence of indigenous philosophy. The fourth school of thought is the national ideological philosophy. This form of Ideology encompasses an African version of nationalism (Ikhane,2017:137-144).

Recognising the centrality of recovery and a new society in a Christian Theology of Reconstruction, it becomes important to recognise how theological reconstructive motifs intersect with African epistemologies in as far as the Constitution and the Indigenous Knowledge Systems in South Africa are concerned. The importance of values which many people still hold dear to is perhaps notable even in a post-apartheid democratic dispensation in South Africa. Consider the study of Mavungu et al (2013) on absent fatherhood in South Africa. A father who is unemployed and could not provide for their child was viewed with scorn in society (Mavungu et al. 2013). This affected the way they viewed themselves in relation to the child (Mavungu et al.2013). Hadebe (2010) exposes the struggle Zulu Traditional Masculinities have come to terms with when it comes to the values enshrined in the constitution that emasculates men by giving women rights. What cannot be avoided is the complexity or schism of a dual identity which is: being a South African and being Zulu, Xhosa, and Tswana at the same time.

Mugambi's Theology of Reconstruction is an important discourse because it calls for the very reinvention of African myths, tales and customs in a way that will reconstruct Africa. It is not satisfied with the regurgitation of toxic ancient practices. Its epistemic building blocks are African culture and values in its reinvention project. This approach at some level resembles discourses on African Indigenous Knowledges in South Africa.

4.3.1 Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Mugambi's Reconstructive Motif in South Africa

One way of generally dealing with the issue of epistemic violence and champion recovery was the initiation of African Indigenous Knowledge Systems policy and legislation. Central to the African Indigenous Knowledge Systems discourse in Africa is to unearth authentic ways of being that were violently denied by the western colonial enterprise. Key sectors that the Department of Science and Technology focused on when it comes to African Indigenous Knowledge Systems was the recognition of women and traditional leaders and the integration of such systems into the private sector and into higher education (Higgs & Van Niekerk, 2002). For Murove (2018:164-180), Indigenous Knowledge Systems foster inclusivity and rightfully intellectualises African ways of being and knowing within the space of knowledge production. According to Higgs and Van Niekerk (2002:39), the National Research Foundation at the time prioritised at least six key areas for research in Indigenous Knowledge Systems in South Africa that required consideration and they are the following:

1.Nature of IKS and Indigenous Technology.
2.Traditional Medicine and Health
3. Indigenous food Systems
4. Socio-cultural Systems
5. Arts and Crafts and Materials
6.Cross-cutting and Supportive Issues and indigenous Technology

The central issue of our discourse is knowledge production in socio-cultural systems in Africa and how the process of knowledge production takes place within the context of recovery and reconstruction. Considering the central importance of rediscovery in the reconstructive motif, the critical question to ask is whether recovering ways of being from epistemic systems, drawn from pre-colonial Africa, is the eschaton for current challenges in a neo-colonial society.

Recognising Afrocentricity which forms the basis of Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Van Niekerk and Higgs (2002:40) assert that the idea behind IKS is to recapture an "undiluted African Identity" and to see it as the reconstruction of the past is deeply problematised by events and times with different realities. Van Niekerk & Higgs (2002:40) and Murove (2018) both contend that the context wherein knowledge is created is very crucial as it avoids producing distorted representations of knowledge production. In the context of epistemic

'masculine' violence in South Africa, the over signification of black masculinities research in a post-apartheid South Africa is deeply problematic as noted by Dube (2016). This is particularly crucial in light of the use of Eurocentric gender theories that are still prevalent in masculinities research as noted by Mfecane (2020), even in higher education. Citing Oddora Hoppins, Van Niekerk and Higgs (2002:41) assert that there are at least three factors that should be considered important for Higher Education researchers when it comes to indigenous knowledge systems, and they are the following:

1. The type of research questions that are asked and the tools that are used to recognise research as accredited and legitimate.
2. The ethical considerations that are important in research conducted on humans and nature.
3. The way in engagements IKS breaks down barriers of intolerance, ignorance towards indigenous knowledge in higher education.

What should be most notable in light of Teo's (2014) discourse on epistemic violence is the significance of these questions and how the socio-political context out of which they arise can contribute to epistemic 'masculine' violence. The crucial questions therefore are: what are the questions that are being asked about the masculine in South Africa and from which context are these questions asked? Why are these questions asked?

The last question is particularly important in light of epistemic violence that is expressed for colonially exploitative endeavours that will be nothing but harmful to the very research subjects. These questions are very important to ask when one recognises the intersections of race, gender violence, and socio-economic conditions. Recognising Indigenous Knowledge Systems in this way offers a lucid account of how reconstruction can become possible; this is not in this sense of just recovering past practices but being cognisant of colonially exploitative methods of knowledge production. It must be noted however that Indigenous Knowledge Systems as envisioned in the South African context itself does not really challenge constitutionalism. This is because it is governed by constitutionalism itself. The critical question in this light is the extent to which Indigenous Knowledge Systems enjoy equal epistemic autonomy as constitutionalism in South Africa.

4.3.2 Challenges of the African Reinvention Reconstructive Model

It is important to note that while this model is plausible, even in reinvention, its epistemological resilience is its weakness. I argue that this model contributes to epistemic 'masculine' violence. The key challenge with this model is the insufficient epistemic resources it has to adequately capture and be useful to someone outside of its epistemological framework. This is important to consider in light of the fact that the epistemic building blocks for this model is African heritage. The question in this regard is the extent to which the building blocks from African heritage can epistemically capture and co-opt the fullness of a lived reality of someone outside of the limits of its historical context.

Mnyadi's study exposes the problematic nature of co-optation inherent within this particular model. In defence of same-sex relations deemed to be un-African, Mnyadi (2021) draws upon discourse in African Traditional Religions to expose the fact that same-sex relations have always been part of Africa. According to Mnyadi (2021), same-sex relations was a common phenomenon among African Traditional Healers. These same-sex relations resulted from a traditional healer being guided by the dominant ancestor who could be male or female (Mnyadi, 2021). A male traditional healer could be guided by a female dominant ancestor, and this could lead to same-sex relations (Mnyadi, 2021). The critical challenge to consider is the use of the language to define same-sex relations in Africa that is not even related to traditional healers. What could pose as challenging in this case is same-sex relations being categorised according to hetero-binarism of ancestral discourse. Similar to Mnyadi's study, Murray and Roscoe (1998) exposed the existence of same-sex relations in Africa dating from about the 1800s. In the South African context, Murray exposed how same sex relations in the mining compounds functioned on hetero-binary gender structures (Murray & Roscoe, 1998).

What should be important to note therefore is that the models used to show the existence of same-sex relations come with an epistemic shell that might be insufficient to describe others outside of its framework. In this sense, I argue that not all same-sex relationships or the LGBTQI+ community can be accommodated by such epistemic shells. This is because everyone does not operate according to such gender social roles. The epistemological resilience of this reconstructive model can perpetuate epistemic oppression. Using the situation of the gay boy who claimed that he was the girl in the relationship in Langa (2020) the critical question here is what epistemic sources this boy would have to draw on, sources that will sufficiently capture his reality. This question can be asked even from the context of the advocacy of African reinvention. One crucial question here is whether hetero-binarism which framed same-sex relations in the history of Africa, as discussed by some scholars, will adequately capture the

realities and the experience of people in the LGBTQI+ community. The second crucial question is the extent to which the epistemic shell of such hetero-binarism even for the purpose of reinvention will provide epistemic justice for the LGBTQI+ community.

Another challenge with this model is its epistemic rigidity. In this instance, it must be important to note that this model is not sensitive to discourse on race. In as far as what Dube notes as a concern, the critical question is whether the epistemological framework of this model is flexible enough.[17] Recognising other racial and ethnic groups in South Africa such as white people and Indians, the question is to what extent this model assists these ethnic groups. Should these ethnic groups subscribe to this epistemic framework recognising the exclusive use of African discourse? This is a critical question to ask because of the extent to which the epistemic model narrows the discourse to African heritage.

4.4 The Reconstructive Model of African Axiological Ethics

The third approach we have discovered in reconstruction discourse is the reconstructive model of African Axiological Ethics. In this approach, as noted in Kangudie's theology of reconstruction, there is a Theo-political commitment to the interconnectedness of God, ancestors, humans, animals, plants, and the land in as far as acts are concerned. The principles which undergird this model are African values, found within dynamism of African myths and heritage as expressed by Kemitic heritage. The interconnectedness of liberation, inculturation, and reconstruction is inspired by an African ethic of holism which respects the relationship between God, human, ancestors, animals, and plants.

This approach is theologically inspired by the similarities of myths in biblical scripture and the African heritage of pharaonic culture and appreciates value in them. Using these two, Kangudie exposes the relationship between creation, salvation, liberation, reconstruction, and innovation as Christian and African. African, in this sense, refers to the commitment towards values that respect an African ethic of holism. I argue that if at all Christian reconstruction theology in Africa would counter epistemic 'masculine' violence, it would be this approach. I argue that because the epistemic building blocks of this approach are axiological, it can be epistemologically resilient without committing epistemic violence because of its sole commitment to an African ethic of holism. Contrary to the approach of mutual inclusivity and reinvention, the epistemic building blocks of this approach are flexible. This epistemic

[17] This refers to Dube's concern on the lack of focus on white masculinities in a post-Apartheid South Africa

flexibility allows for contestation, critical discourse, self-reflection, and correction with a central commitment to life as imagined within African holism. Being very pluriversal in nature, this particular model allows for different epistemic voices which could encompass different ethnic and racial groups. This is because while it is African due to its endorsement of African holism, its epistemic core is the harmonious relationship between God, ancestors, humans, plants, and animals. The 'African' within this model inevitably expresses a form of epistemic resilience while at the same time allowing different voices to contribute towards the development of Africa. Human rights and constitutionalism share a particular concern for human life, but we have exposed some of the difficulties one encounters when it comes to the discourse on epistemic 'masculine 'violence. In as far as this very discourse embraces an African holistic ethic, human rights discourse is not completely misaligned with the model of axiological ethic. This model allows for engagement in that respect.

The intersections of liberation, indigenisation, and reconstruction embraced by this model allows for the contestation of ideas in the aspiration of having a harmonious relationship between God, ancestors, humans, animals, and plants. It must be noted that such can be envisioned from different epistemic biases. These epistemic biases can range from Africanist discourse which in some instances could be sexist, or western discourse which in some instances could be racist. The critical challenge here is to contest any idea that is oppressive and marginalises and remain committed to the theological paradigm of African holism. It must ensure that African holism should not be taken for granted and remember that this requires us to think about life and that which disturbs the interconnectedness of life. This discourse can be extended to gender as well.

Using the example, I used in the section above, the critical question about initiation schools for instance would be to locate it in the interconnectedness of life that shares concern for God/s, humans, ancestors, animals, and plants. This refers to its possible contribution to such interconnectedness of life which encompasses the political, economic, ecological, psychological, religion and other spheres. This model allows us to be critical about power practices, beliefs, attitudes, and engage them with the intent to promote harmony and African utopias. Considering this, the questions that can arise from locating it with such interconnectedness are: what are the values within such practice which can inspire and contribute to liberation, salvation, and reconstruction according to the paradigm of an ethic of holism in the African society? In what way does this practice possibly betray an African ethic of holism?

What is clear in this regard is the rigorousness of a social analysis within this particular paradigm because of its epistemic flexibility. This is caused by its central commitment to harmonious living as conceptualised in African holism. This model is plausible because the African axiological ethic allows for discourse between social constructionism, socio-biology, and Africanist discourse in order to engage in search of values that will liberate the continent. Liberation is envisioned within the paradigm of the interconnectedness of the African life

This model challenges reducible epistemic violence because it is critical of socio-political violence meted out by colonialism as tied to knowledge production in Africa. It is also deeply critical of socio-political violence meted out by Africanist discourse in Africa. Consider Kangudie's displeasure with colonial Christian missions and the Rwandan genocide (Ka Mana, 2001). The idea of truth and knowledge which is tied to colonial power of colonial Christian missions exposes Kangudie's displeasure with Dotson's first order of epistemic violence. Dotson's first order of epistemic violence exposes how the habits, attitudes and ways of the epistemically privileged casts doubt on the epistemic agency of the marginalised. The concern with neoliberalism which has seen the marriage of western and Africanist discourse such as constitutionalism and traditionalism at some level also exposes the second order of epistemic violence. This is particularly so in the context of masculinities as can be noted in Xaba's discourse on struggle and post-struggle masculinities. What must be noted is that struggle masculinities and post-struggle masculinities are not just racial, but classist as well. This at best is also exposed by the implementation of Indigenous knowledge systems within the South African constitutional rule. There are many African men who are also in favour of the South African constitutional dispensation despite the imbalance or unequal recognition of diverse epistemic sources.

I refer to this because of the interrelations of power, materialism, and ideology in masculine formation for African men as discussed earlier and exposed in Mavungu and others' (2013) discourse on absent fathers in Johannesburg. Constitutional sexuality exposes the lack of collective epistemic resources available to sufficiently recognise the epistemic agency of the marginalised. The idea of collective epistemic resources which is governed by political power in socio-political contexts exposes Dotson's second order of epistemic violence. This model is critical of the second order of epistemic violence. This is evident through the very premise of

this model insofar as it accepts the interconnectedness of relationship within the African holistic ethic as sacred. The epistemic agency of every human being is respected in this model in as far as the holistic ethic is concerned. The LGBTQI+ community, heterosexual men and women would not need to be dependent on the epistemological systems which do not reflect their humanity for reconstruction and liberation. This particular model allows people to be critical of oppressive epistemologically resilient systems that epistemically co-opt.

This model, despite having a form of resilience because of its foundation, survives irreducible epistemic violence in a peculiar manner. As noted in the first chapter, there are tensions between irreducible epistemic violence and epistemic resilience. This is because the latter is necessary for survival, although it in turn falls for the snare of the former. The very epistemic resilience of this model allows epistemic flexibility, while being critical of epistemic rigidity. Its epistemic resilience allows for contestation of any form of epistemic resilience in its commitment to the interconnectedness of the utopian, harmonious relationships between the living and the 'dead' in Africa. This is applicable to discourse on masculinities as well. Critical reflection is required in the way we think about physical masculinist violence and its relationship with epistemic violence. This model allows us to be critical of the approaches that are used in order to think about masculinities in South Africa as well as their intersections with power. Its flexibility allows us to consider different discourses and their contributions because the primary commitment to research discourse is the African axiological ethic.

Here I make use of Dussel's discourse on the relationship between ontology and liberation to expose the nature of such epistemic flexibility and necessity. Dussel (1985:58-66) provides an interesting discourse on the relationship between ontology-phenomenology, epiphany, revelation, and liberation. Describing this relationship, Dussel (1985:58-59) contends that "ontology is phenomenology, it is logos or thinking about what appears (phenomenon of being) from the foundation (Being)". Central to Dussel's discussion on ontology and phenomenology is the way the ontological endeavour makes sense of the "event" according to its metaphysical premise. For Dussel, a liberation praxis is not a manifestation or the phenomenological-ontological rather it is an epiphany about the other that transgresses our own ontological conceptions of the other and in turn exposes the other for who the other really is.

What should be important to note therefore in the very discourse of Dussel is the ability to be open to the other, which I describe as the epistemically marginalised. The 'other' as epistemically marginalised is described as such because of the failure of any epistemological system to capture life in its entirety. The openness in Dussel's discourse becomes plausible for

the axiological model because of this model's commitment to life and its prioritisation for the interconnectedness of the divine, human, animals, and plants.

According to Dussel (1985), reconstruction as phenomenological manifestation arrested by metaphysics and its ontological descriptions is not liberation and I contend neither is its constructive reconstruction. Such a phenomenological manifestation is categorised according to the pockets of metaphysical language of a particular people. The danger of this can be recognised in Wafawanaka's discourse on masculinity and African biblical scholarship (Wafawanaka, 2021). Wafawanaka (2021:806-834) raises the issue of African biblical scholarship that has contributed to toxic masculinity by portraying women such as Sarah, Rahab and others as men or having more fortitude than men. It is important to recognise this threat of metaphysical inscriptions onto liberation as any discourse of reconstruction becomes deeply problematic if it lacks epistemic sensitivity to issues of class, sex, gender, race, and culture.

I argue that this model problematises the current discourses of masculinities in South Africa by critically reflecting on its intersections with race, class, and sex. Epistemically, this model does not take anything for granted. In this case, the very epistemic resilience of this model based on a commitment to a dynamic African axiological ethic will not be comfortable with a rigid form of constitutionalism that is insensitive to the epistemic diversity of South Africa. Its resilience will also be uncomfortable with the epistemic rigidity of the African way of being and indigeneity that fails to respect the interconnectedness of life as conceptualised in African Holism. Its prioritisation of life, as holistically conceptualised in the African society, allows it to listen to the other. Everyone is epistemically respected and engaged. This becomes critical in problem solving and providing solutions. One key challenge with this approach is whether it can ever avoid power discourses which legitimate certain epistemic discourse and in turn contribute to epistemic violence. The development of its practicality particularly as it relates to masculinity is one task worth developing in the future.

In this chapter, I discussed three models of reconstruction namely, the model of mutual inclusivity, reinvention, and African axiological ethics. These models were discussed considering epistemic 'masculine' violence in South Africa. The argument of the author is that the last model of reconstruction is the most suitable for discussing epistemic 'masculine' violence. This is because it can be epistemologically resilient while surviving a reducible form of epistemic violence. This approach is one which accepts the epistemological volatility of any epistemological system. It values more than itself in order create more concrete epistemic

blocks in the rebuilding of Africa. Its commitment to the African ethic of holism allows itself to be self-critical and correct itself. This particular model constructively contributes to the intersections of power, African traditions, and the constitution in as far as violence from "masculinist" is concerned. This model allows us to critically reflect on epistemically oppressive systems while having respect for life.

5 CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

This particular dissertation set to expose the nature of masculinist violence in South Africa. As noted in the previous chapters, violence as a result of masculine power epistemically continues to be a challenge in South Africa. Recognising the various discourses on masculinities and violence, this dissertation sought to show how an epistemic construction of masculinity can contribute to direct and indirect violence. In the case of direct violence, this could refer to murder, assault, and other contact crimes. In this case we recapture Gordons (2018) discourse of violence that was expressed towards a lesbian couple simply because they were not available for the romantic advances of men. In this particular instance these men felt entitled and wanted women to respond to their romantic advances because they were women.

What is explicit here is how a particular construction of masculinity led to direct violence. We can also recapture the boys in Langa's research study on masculinities which exposed how these boys were of the view that being gay was against God. Another part of the research discourse that we can recapture is Kretzschmar and Ralph (2003) who conducted a research study on women in a Roman Catholic diocese in Johannesburg. As noted earlier in the research study, because of the patriarchal structure of this church, these women had a distorted image about themselves and a distorted image about God. Molobi (2008) has also discussed the discrimination of women in the African initiated churches that have left them vulnerable to abuse and discrimination. It is primarily these forms of discrimination and violence, premised on Christianity and African culture, that inspired this particular research discourse.

Using Dotson (2014), Spivak (1985), and Teo (2014)'s discourse on epistemic violence, I sought to map out epistemic 'masculine violence. Providing various definitions for this particular notion, I argued that epistemic masculine violence takes place on at least two fronts in South Africa. The first front is the fundamental social constructionist approach to masculinities that is enabled by the state. The second approach is the contribution of indigenous cultures to epistemic violence. Central to this discourse was how those from epistemically privileged positions could utilize the power to represent the marginalised in a way that distorts their reality through knowledge production. Recognising the problematic nature of discourse on masculinities, I sought to engage three reconstruction theologians with the attempt to see

whether Christian reconstruction discourse contributes or disrupts epistemic ‘masculine’ violence.

Reconstruction theology became the preferable discourse because of the intersections of Christianity and culture in general. Engaging the work of Mugambi (1995; 2003), Kangudie (2000a; 2000b; 2001; 2002), and Villa-Vicencio (1992), I deduced that three models of reconstructive theologies arise out of their work. The first model of Christian reconstruction theology discussed was the model of mutual inclusivity. This particular model based on Villa-Vicencio's theology of reconstruction makes use of constitutionalism and law making for the reconstruction of Africa. The second model of Christian reconstruction theology was the model of African reinvention premised on the work of Mugambi. This model argued for the reinvention of African myths stories and customs as a crucial step towards rebuilding Africa. These were the necessary epistemic building blocks in the wake of colonial ruins. The third model of reconstruction theology was the model of African axiological ethics based on Kangudie’s theology of reconstruction. This particular theology of reconstruction makes use of values within African heritage as the starting point of reconstruction. In this particular case, this theology does not simply fetch things from the past but utilises them as points of engagement in order to creatively rebuild Africa through innovation. This is with reference to the ethic of African Holism.

This theology of reconstruction is fundamentally premised on the value of African holism which centres the relationship between God, the ancestors, humans, plants, and animals. I engaged the critiques of each reconstruction theology noting its strengths and weaknesses.

5.1 Findings of the Dissertation

After analysing these three discourses of Christian reconstruction theology in Africa, I argued that the best approach to dealing with epistemic ‘masculine’ violence is the model of an African axiological ethic. I argue that this model is the only model that can retain its epistemological resilience without necessarily co-opting anyone into a particular epistemological system.

Using the example of Ulwaluko (Initiation Rite of passage) in the Xhosa Tradition, for this particular model, respecting the interconnectedness of God, ancestors, humans, plants, and animals, requires that we critically engage and ask questions of this particular practice. These questions are asked in such a way that innovative ways of reconstructing Africa arise. The task of critical engagement is pursued recognising the forces of life that dislocates, oppresses, and

marginalises. As stated earlier, these tasks do not take for granted how any epistemological system can be violent. The task of constant critical engagement in commitment to the interconnectedness of life is itself an acknowledgment of the frailty of any epistemological system even for the one who uses this approach.

While the model of African reinvention could also be helpful, the central challenge with the model is the epistemic shell that could in fact commit epistemic violence. Using Ulwaluko, the Xhosa rite of passage for manhood, the challenge is the extent to which this particular practice could epistemically co-opt others into its epistemological systems that alters their reality. In the first chapter, I made an example of how such a model could operate. It could be the acceptance of this initiation rite of passage into the official schooling system of South Africa and utilising the particular practice in such a way that it will play a crucial role in reconstructing Africa. Re-invention of customs or myths as the starting premise comes with an epistemic shell. This is different from Kangudie's approach where values of myths receive more attention than myths themselves.

The challenge with the model of mutual inclusivity through constitutionalism is that it ignores the epistemological diversity by seeking mutual values which could in turn co-opt different people into compromised value-based laws. Compromised means the failure to recognise the epistemic legitimacy and authenticity of different communities in general. Using the very example of the practice of Ulwaluko in a diverse community, the crucial question is how such a practice can be understood in the context of law-making.

5.2 Limitations of this Dissertation

It must be important to note that this dissertation had a number of limitations. The first limitation was that one of the authors whose works I engaged was written in
French and Spanish. This required that his work be translated from French to English using Google Translate. It also required that one of his books be translated from Spanish to English. It must also be important to note that some of his earlier writings on reconstruction in the early 90s were not accessible. The books that were important for this research were translatable and accessible although prior sources could have expanded the tracing of
Kangudie's theology of reconstruction. It must be noted that secondary sources such as Dedji

(2001) have alluded to the fact that Kangudie has been consistent in his theology of reconstruction, even in earlier writings. Reconstruction as discussed in this dissertation is in alignment with other discourses on his notion of reconstruction.

5.3 Contribution of this Discourse to Theological Ethics

This dissertation problematises the way gender discourse is pursued in light of Christianity and African cultural understandings of masculinities. This dissertation contributes to theological ethics by exposing the necessity for cautiousness in as far as epistemic violence is concerned. There is the suggestion that all systems can be inherently epistemically violent. I argue that the only way to avoid this or mitigate the challenge that comes with such violence is by making use of an African axiological ethic, theoretically-speaking.

5.4 Further Possible Engagements

While the I have have argued in favour of an African axiological ethic, the question remains whether any practical form of such a model will not inevitably lead to epistemic 'masculine' violence. Recognising the very different ways in which we could be committed to the dynamism of African holism, the critical question remains how one can still contribute to epistemic violence while being committed to such a particular framework.

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