

unacknowledged forms of politics and identity. Their union marks the end to parallel journeys amongst the three Gods—that is, Mvelinqangi, Allah and God, the Father of Jesus. Gogo, Shantha's grandmother, is a sacrificial lamb that dies for the sins of the different communities. Her death initiates the breaking down of the wall that has for centuries kept the different races separate. The power of love (positive sentiment) has been skilfully shown to rise triumphant over racial divide and enmity.

This novel is one of the first stimulating works in Zulu to touch on racial and socio-cultural reconciliation and to reflect the changing relations and attitudes between parents and children in a period of transformation. There are minor pitfalls, such as mixing the Hindu and the Muslim surnames and names: Naicker is a Hindu surname and Shantha a Hindu name while Salim is a Muslim name. But these features do not mar the good quality of the work and, in this case, already suggest an intermarriage between the two Indian groups. The novel will appeal to scholars and a general adult readership.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Gender

*Changing Men in Southern Africa*

Morrell, Robert (ed)

Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 2000. pp. 356

ISBN: 086 980 9830

Lazarus Chifumbe Mulenga

Department of English

University of Transkei

*Changing Men in Southern Africa* employs a social constructionist approach to gender analysis. As characterised by J. Stacey and D. Richardson in *Introducing Women's Studies* (in Richardson and Robinson 1993:68 and 78, respectively) social constructionism claims that gender and sexuality are social constructs, shaped by context and time. Gender is thus not conceived of as biologically or genetically determined, universal and unchanging, and 'our sexual feelings and activities, the ways in which we think about sexuality, and our sexual identities, are not biologically determined but are the product of social and historical forces' (Richardson, in Richardson and Robinson 1993:68). This theory of gender informs the work of many other scholars in the field, scholars such as Rajend (2000), Penvenne (1998),

Demetriades (1997) and Connell (1995). They reject the claim that all men construct and express their masculinity in the same way, and all women their femininity in one and same way.

Morrell's introductory chapter makes two claims about masculinity in South Africa: that it is diverse, and that it has undergone—and continues to undergo—changes. Morrell rejects the claim that all men, black and white, in South Africa are chauvinistic, misogynistic and homophobic (3, 33). He argues that a stereotyped description of South African men not only 'isolate[s] specific aspects of masculinity and represent[s] these as common and universal, but it fails to capture masculine diversity' (3). Morrell further argues that there have been recognisable changes in the construction of masculinity in South Africa in response to social and political changes. He points out that although there may be signs of hegemony in South African masculinity, there are also signs of accommodation.

The rest of the book is divided into four thematic sections: 'The Body in Action: Guns, Sports and Violence'; 'Fathers, Families and Kinship'; 'Performing Masculinity' and 'Sexuality'.

### **Masculinity and bodies**

The first five chapters focus on the expression of masculinity through militarism and sports. Jacklyn Cock, Sandra Swart and Tokozani Xaba, in their respective accounts, trace South African militaristic masculinity to the apartheid era, and show how the images of this masculinity differ from group to group. Cock and Xaba identify the AK47 assault rifle as the militaristic masculine symbol for the black liberation movements such as ANC and UDF. In addition, Cock identifies a rawhide shield, knobkierie and spear as the Zulu nationalist symbols of militaristic masculinity. Swart adds a horse and a gun to the list defining Afrikaner militaristic masculinity. All three accounts acknowledge that in post-apartheid South Africa attempts to demilitarise society have been made, although militaristic masculinity lingers on. According to Cock and Xaba, although some black male freedom fighters have been demilitarised, others have not given up arms and have become misfits in the new South Africa; similarly, in the white community, not all Afrikaner right-wing AWB members have found it easy to give up their firearms.

Focusing on surfing, Crispin Hemson and Glen Thompson also, in their respective accounts, highlight diversity and change in South African sport masculinity. Hemson notes that the black male youth involved in the Thekwini Surf Lifesaving Club in Durban have demonstrated a rejection of the hegemonic and oppositional masculinity their township peers exhibit. Their construction of masculinity is so accommodative that it has room for recognition even of female lifesavers who demonstrate sharpness, intelligence and commitment to duty.

Thompson, however, highlights the domination of white professional surfing over amateur, female and black surfing. Thompson further points out that the former is materialistic rather than recreational in orientation.

### **Fathers, Families and Kinship**

The five chapters comprising this section deal with the changes that are taking place in southern African patriarchal masculinity. Benedict Carton shows the extent to which the money economy has impacted on patriarchal authority over younger males in rural Zululand: on return to Zululand, the young Zulu male urbanised migrant mine workers do not subscribe to patriarchal authority as they used to before. Jonathan Hyslop asserts that the adventurous and brutal English patriarchal masculinity of the colonial era has changed. Contemporary South African white English patriarchal masculinity is far less authoritative, even within the family circles, and such men are not as keen to go to war as were their forefathers. Kobus du Pisani explores the changes in Afrikaner masculinity which has, he argues, evolved from the patriarchal owner of the family farm, to warrior, to sportsman, and business personality. It has also evolved from a puritan ideal, in which the commitment to the family is a trademark of Afrikaner nationalism, to various forms of independent thinking and living.

Bjorn Lindgren's study focuses on the installation of a female chief in a Swazi community in Mathebeleland. He points out that although contested by some men holding on to male dominant masculinity, a female, Sonqobile Mabhena, was—with community support—installed as chief after the death of her father. The last chapter in this section, co-authored by Thembisa Waetjen and Gerhard Marie, examines Buthelezi's claims of Zulu nationalism. As quoted, Buthelezi's characterisation of Zulu nationalistic masculinity changes from a militaristic type to that of family provider.

### **Performance masculinity**

This section centres on contradictions in masculinity. Sean Field presents a case in which social reality inhibits two young males from participating in a ritual they value—circumcision. A coloured person misses it because his mother will not allow it, whereas the black man misses it because he grows up in the coloured community where such a ritual is not practised. Rob Pattman examines the discourse of students in a Zimbabwean teacher training college and finds how contradictory their evaluative speech about girls is. Kapano Ratele's study of educated black males' attitudes to the gendered apportionment of domestic chores also shows some contradictions. Contradiction in performance masculinity is also noted in the

members of the Soweto Flying Squad. Joan Wadrop noted that those males rejected machismo masculinity.

## Sexuality

This last part comprises essays by Catherine Campbell, Ronald Louw, T. Dunbar Moodie, and Katherine Wood and Rachel Jewks focusing on sexuality. It highlights variations in the way men think about sexuality and sexual identities. In various contexts men have defined and redefined their sexuality and sexual identities. In some situations, such as the miners' hostels, some men have served as wives to other men. Yet in others such behaviour has not been condoned.

## Conclusion

This book would do well as an introductory text to gender studies, especially at undergraduate level. For those seeking greater depth, some accounts suggest the need for follow up studies to see to what extent current views on masculinity will hold.

## References

- Connell, RW 1995. *Masculinities*. Cambridge: Polite Press.
- Demetriades, C 1997. 'Language Gender and Identity: A Social-Psychological Study' in *Sociolinguistics: Abstracts and Full Dissertations*. <http://www.surrey.ac.uk/ELI/demetc.html>.
- Morrell, R (ed) 2000. *Changing Men in Southern Africa*. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press.
- Penvenne, JM 1998. Gender Studies, Area Studies, and the New History, with Special Reference to Africa. *Journal of South African Studies* 243, September: 590-598.
- Rajend, M, et al. 2000. *Introductory Sociolinguistics*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh Cluir Press.
- Richardson D 1993. Sexuality and Male Dominance. In Richardson, D, & V Robinson (eds): *Introducing Women's Studies*. Hong Kong: MacMillan.
- Stacey, J 1993. Untangling Feminist Theory. In Richardson, D & V Robinson (eds): *Introducing Women's Studies*. Hong Kong: MacMillan.

\*\*\*\*\*