"When they found out I was a man, they became even more violent": Autoethnography and the rape of men

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ABSTRACT: It is important to understand sexual and gender based violence (GBV) in South Africa which has one of the world's highest rates of sexual and GBV. In this paper, I focus and interrogate sexual assault and rape of men by other men. I consider harm done by boys/men not one dimensionally (i.e. boys/men harming women), but through the violence and aggression boys/men inflict on other men/boys. Through the qualitative research method, autoethnography, I look at the ways in which men harm other men through the prism of male rape. I demonstrate how autoethnography, grounded in personal experience, hindsight and reflexive writing is of great usefulness in exploring sensitive, traumatic and sensitive events. Through my own narrative, I show autoethnography is important in the analysis of individual experience to make sense of social phenomena. I contend male rape is used as a stopping device for men and boys who do not fit the hegemonic moulds of idealised masculinity, boyhood and manhood. I call for greater attention to the sexual violence of boys and men by other men, which albeit promising international work and scholarship, still remains scant and ignored in current South African literature outside of institutionalised settings like prison and military.

KEYWORDS: male rape, South Africa, sexuality, masculinities, violence

Underpinning every act of sexual violence is a struggle for the supremacy of gendered identities
(Couturier, 2012, p. 1).

Once upon a time I thought it was a female thing, this fear of men. Yet when I began to talk with men about love, time and time again I heard stories of male fear of other males. Indeed, men who feel, who love, often hide their emotional awareness from other men for fear of being attacked and shamed
(hooks, 2004, p. 8).

South Africa is a noted paradox. The country has what is seen as one of the most progressive constitutions in terms of gender and sexual rights inclusivity. Yet, the paradox lies in that South Africa has one of the world's highest reported levels of sexual and gender-based violence (Ndashe, 2004; Stauffer, 2015; Vetten, 2014). It is very high rates of rape, along with various violent forms of sexual assault and sexual violence that have caused some to contend South Africa has the worst known figures of rape for a country that is not at war (Moffett, 2006). The Institute for Security Studies (ISS) notes that according to the South African Police Service the reported cases of rape continue to decrease from 2008/9 (46,647 cases) and 2014/15 (43,195 cases) (Lancester, Gould, Vetten and Sigsworth, 2015). ISS argues official police statistics cannot be taken to be accurate measures of the extent of sexual crimes for various studies make the case that as little as one in thirteen rapes ends up reported (Lancester, Gould, Vetten and Sigsworth, 2015). Moreover, the National Victims of Crime Survey shows a decrease in reporting by rape victims by 21% in the period between 2011 and 2014 (Lancester, Gould, Vetten and Sigsworth, 2015). ISS echoes earlier work by Jewkes and Abrahams (2002) noting the elusive nature of the available data and statistics. Jewkes and Abrahams (2002) cautioned that there was still insufficient infrastructure to support crime reporting although undeniably the levels of forced and non-consensual sex are very high. The high rate of sexual and gendered violence, as well as underreporting of cases, has brought to the fore many calls to understand sexual violence in post-conflict South Africa (du Toit, 2014; Gentry, 2004; Reproductive Health Matters, 2000; Thomas, Masinjila and Bere, 2013).

It's recognised in literature that post-conflict settings carry legacies of violent struggle that inform post-conflict experiences of interpersonal violence especially

sexual violence (Bourgois, 2001 cited in Wood, Lambert and Jewkes, 2007). Posel (2005) posits that what makes sexual violence in post-apartheid South Africa different to the apartheid era is that it has come to be politicised. This politicisation of sexual violence in South Africa is seen through Mardorossian (2011) who has shown how in literature for instance, violence that is committed in white liberal contexts is seen as naturalised violence and is not subject to critique in the same way as the attention that is paid to "black on white sexual violence". Scholars like Morrell (1998) make recognition of the existence of multiple masculinities that are tied to the history of southern Africa through the period of colonialism, through to the apartheid era where race, class and geographic location were of primary importance in the formation of gender identities. Suttner's work (2005) has shown with the liberation party, the African National Congress, that the organisation carries with it multiple ongoing legacies of manhood including 'warrior traditions' and 'cultural systems' that may have negative implications including sexual violence that has the implication of limiting the ability of women to live freely (p. 103).

Current existing studies in the South African context have looked at sexual assault from various angles. These include studies of patriarchal norms permitting sexual assault to occur (Claassens and Gouws, 2014; Kottler and Long, 1997), while other studies have looked into risk influences of young girls and the conditions that render them vulnerable to sexual assault (Petersen, Bhana and McKay, 2005). Others have looked at more "extreme" forms of male violence, including the rape of infants by men (Posel, 2005; Praeg and Baillie, 2011). Although Kapp (2006) notes in South Africa – women, children, boys and girls have been raped, what is striking in the literature on sexual assault is its women centric nature. This is justified as women and children continue to be the most vulnerable to sexual assault and rape (Gentry 2004), for Gqola (2015) maintains that there are prevailing notions by men in South African society that see the pain of women as negotiable. The harmful prevailing notions and philosophies carried by men and boys about entitlement to sex and the bodies of women have raised concerns and calls from various sectors of South African society for a deeper engagement of boys and men about sexual violence. As Davis (2015) has written, and in light of prevailing male sexualised violence, it is important to look at the lessons that boys and men learn, and the meanings that they come to attach to what it means to be a man.

In this paper, I intend through autoethnography to use my experiences from pre-and-teenage years as a boy, and later a man, with other men and boys to unpack the silence in South African literature and studies of men and masculinities on the serious issue of the rape of men. I begin by providing some background and context into work on men and masculinities in both South Africa and internationally, particularly as it relates to sexual violence against women and men. I proceed to unpack the current available literature on the rape of men. Thereafter, I provide some context through literature on the importance of the autoethnographic method of writing and its particular usefulness in addressing sensitive and ignored issues including sexual trauma. I thereafter go on to share my story, contextualise it in light of larger violence in South Africa against men deemed gender non-conforming and thereafter provide some concluding remarks.

Men, masculinity and masculinities

hooks (2004) critiques the focus on male power that assumes all males are powerful and have it all. This critique is in line with existing work on masculinities that complicates the conception of men as one homogenous group. Certainly, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) have shown that there are multiple hierarchies in gender construction. Through the lens of hegemonic masculinities, we can understand that not all ways of being "a man" are honoured, but rather it requires that 'all other men to position themselves in relation to it' and that the concept gains legitimacy through subordinating men and women (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 832). hooks (2001) has gone on to show how ideas around domination and subordination as 'a natural order', and 'that the strong should rule over the powerless by any means' are central in justifying abuse (p. 24). hooks (2001) writes that men who believe in the notion of men as the superior sex, and women/the feminine as the weaker sex often make use of physical assault in order to subordinate. Yet, as Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) note, men are not passive to these processes; they note that men can move between multiple interpretations of manhood according to the intersecting needs of the men. Thus, although men may choose to adhere and adopt to hegemonic masculinity when it is desired, men may also choose to move away and keep hegemonic masculinity away from them at other times. Men, according to Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) therefore

'position themselves through discursive practices' (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 841).

The recognition that gender is socially constructed – and that masculinity and femininity are always loosely defined, variable and not natural practices simply tied to the genitals that people inhabit is to Gardiner (2004) one of the most important accomplishments of 20th century feminist theory. Men now have to be accounted and considered as complex and gendered beings (Mellstrom, 2003), and engaging daily in the active politics of doing gender (Connell, 2000). There has to be a reflection on the dynamic ways in which men enact masculinities, as well as the toxic effects on both men themselves as well as the negative effects on the lives of others particularly through the enactment of rape, domestic and homophobic violence (Connell, 2000). Recently, Ratele (2014) has argued, based on two reported cases of homophobia in South Africa and Malawi that homophobia is used to protect the dominant forms of manhood, and that the violence against gay and lesbian persons can in part be read as resulting from the unattainability of the dominant masculinity. This echoes Ratele, Shefer, Strebel and Fouten (2010) who observed that boys often express heterosexuality as a way of distancing masculinity from femininity – and thus perform heterosexuality through a distancing from homosexuality. Francis and Msibi (2011) have argued (through Kimmel, 2000) that the fear of being perceived as 'a sissy', means that men who do not meet the social requirements of what being a man means, are exposed and more vulnerable to violence and discrimination as they are seen to be 'selling the side' (p. 160). This is consistent with Pierterse's (2014, p. 365) observations that homosexual men are seen as feminine and Othered:

> … men who display other (non-sexual) characteristics associated with femininity (for instance, looking or dressing androgynously, being timid or introverted, speaking in a high voice, taking care of their appearance), are conversely typecast (and outcast) as being homosexual. 'Real' men must thus consistently distance themselves not only from women, but also from 'effeminate / feminine' (homosexual) men.

Pierterse (2014) continues saying that this distancing takes the form of violence and aggression and thus much of the dominance males have over both women

and other men is constituted through both actual and threatening physical and/or sexual violence. hooks (1990: 59) invoking rape in Robin Morgan's book *The Demon Lover: On The Sexuality of Terrorism* continues that this behaviour by men, allows men across various strata's (including race, class and nationality) to bond on the notions of manhood that make assertion of masculinity through violence and terrorism tantamount. This means that the patriarchal power that men use is not exclusive to upper and middle class white men, but that men across class and race enjoy the patriarchal power (hooks, 1982).

Morrell, Jewkes and Lindegger (2012) note in South Africa, through the leaders of the leading political party, African National Congress and its youth wing, a resurgence and valorisation of African masculinity that places a premium on the superiority of men. Recent work by Shefer, Kruger and Schepers (2015) shows that young men often internalise that as men they should be feared (although some of the men were finding other non-dangerous forms of expressing manhood). This is related to Ratele's (2015) recent work showing despite evidence of healthy masculinities, there is still resistance that opposes an engagement with boys which includes problematic cultural traditions and as well as limits tied to socio-economic status.

Yet as Javaid (2014) notes, it is also important to understand the ways in which men not only dominate women, but they themselves are dominated by other men. Javaid (2014) shows that there is wide literature showing that men as well are harmed and victimised by gender expectations and sexism. Ignoring men poses the danger of maintaining not only patriarchal order, but also then serves to privilege hegemonic masculinities (Javaid 2014). In the next section I set out through the prism of literature on the sexual victimisation and rape of men to show that there is enough evidence to warrant concern about the ways in which men harm, hurt and abuse other men through sexual assault, and later through autoethnography I show how we can, through this method, start lifting the silence on this topic.

The rape of men

Couturier (2012, p. 1) writes that there are dangerous repercussions if sexual violence is not understood in its full gamut. The rape of men is cloaked in secrecy, and remains hidden in the consciousness of both the domestic and the international. Couturier (2012) contends the rape of men is shrouded in secrecy for dealing with

it requires a necessary interrogation of cultural constructions of gender, as well as a rethinking of normative frameworks in society. As Chapleau, Oswald, and Russell (2008) have illustrated, rape is used as a tool to ensure that women *and* men are not going astray from prescribed gender roles. Ron and Hugo (2013) note that the rape of men brings with it necessary reconsideration of normative and gendered binaries about what it means to be strong, weak, a guardian and victimised. Bringing the rape of men into the discussion of gender requires a rethinking and different analysis that requires moving beyond seeing rape as something that only women are primarily on the receiving end of 'by hegemonic forms of masculine gender oppression' (Couturier, 2012, p. 1).

Struckman-Johnson (1988) reports on sexual victimisation of men in the United States of America as being on the rise since the 1970's. Despite reports, men in research on sexual victimisation were for decades asked to respond in research only as perpetrators, and not as potential victims of sexual assault (Struckman-Johnson, 1988). In their study of 507 men and 486 women looking at the differences between the experiences of women and men with regards to unwanted sexual activity, Muehlenhard and Cook (1988) found that women (97.5%) more than men (93.5%) were most likely to experience unwanted sexual activity whereas men (62.7%) were more likely than women (46.3%) to experience unwanted sexual intercourse. Recent work by French, Tilghman and Malebranche (2015) with 284 adolescents and young adult males from diverse backgrounds shows that four in 10 of the participants in the study had experienced sexual coercion (43%), including physical coercion (18%). Walker (2005) in a non-clinical setting study of 40 men who had survived rape in the United Kingdom notes that during their sexual assault, a number of the men were subjected to misogynistic and homophobic comments including one of the men being called 'a filthy queer' (p. 74). The long-term effects of the rapes for the men included psychological harm, self-blame, depression and self-harming acts amongst others (Walker, 2005).

In South Africa, the rape of men outside of the prison context still attracts very little attention (Ron and Hugo 2013). This does not mean that rape in institutional contexts like prison is unimportant. Rather, as Ghanotakis, Bruins, Peacock, Redpath and Swart (2007) have argued, prison rape is not isolated, but rather works to reinforce rape culture and perpetuates the use of sex to express dominance. Moolman's work (2015) is instructive, expands and shows how prisons are constituted

through heteronormative practices that intersect on gender, race, class, sexuality and age. Working with 72 incarcerated sex offenders in South African prisons, Moolman (2015) notes how in prison homophobic statements are uttered to reiterate 'the naturalisation of heterosexuality', where males are sexually assaulted and are deemed responsible even where it is not consensual (p. 6745).

Javiad (2014) writes that there has been a lot of work that has been done to uncover the harmful ways in which male violence harms women in very particular gendered ways, yet there has been little interrogation of the ways in which men harm other men, particularly through the lens of rape and sexual assault. When sexual assault of men by other men is acknowledged it is often through the prism of war as with Couturier (2012), and not as a daily encounter in everyday life. Exposés such as Storr's (2011) show the ways in which rape of men by other men is viewed only through the lens of something that occurs only in conflict driven societies and not something that also occurs in everyday practice. It is no surprise when male rape and sexual assault by men to other men occurs, it is often scandalised as something barbaric and that is not ordinary or common in society. Storr (2011) writes for instance:

> Men aren't simply raped, they are forced to penetrate holes in banana trees that run with acidic sap, to sit with their genitals over a fire, to drag rocks tied to their penis, to give oral sex to queues of soldiers, to be penetrated with screwdrivers and sticks.

Storr's (2011) narrative perpetuates the idea that when male rape happens it is always violently pushed to the limit, where men are made to do the most extreme, uncommon and terrifying acts. The silence socially around male rape is based around notions of idealised manhood that says that men cannot rape other men and where it has occurred it is always extreme and extraordinary (Merz, 2014; Ron and Hugo, 2013). Ron and Hugo (2013, p. 88) note that:

> We are conditioned in this country [South Africa] that a male is nothing more than a machine. They can't have feelings. They can't show emotions and above all else men don't cry. We are supposed to be strong and brave. So when you do not fit that mould, you are not a man anymore … most girlfriends I had left me

soon after they heard [that I was raped]. I've been told that I must have been gay for letting a man touch me. I've been asked if maybe I wanted it. I've been told maybe it was just experimental.

Javiad (2014) contends that notions such as these espoused by Ron and Hugo (2013) are based on social ideas of heterosexuality that posit that men are the penetrators and not penetrable, as well as seekers of sex and not the ones pursued for sex. Davies and Rogers (2006) in their review of literature on perceptions of sexually assaulted male victims, find that gay male rape victims are judged to be at fault more often than male heterosexual victims for gay male rape victims are seen to have enjoyed the act. It is further speculated that gay male victims deemed to look effeminate are blamed more than those who are 'straight-acting' (Davies and Rogers, 2006, p. 375). Moreover, although my focus in this article is on male rape by other men, it is worth noting that even when the perpetrator of the sexual assault is a woman, it is noted to be perceived as impossible for women to sexually assault men (Davies and Rogers, 2006). Men are perceived as incapable of resisting sex and thus take any opportunity presented (Davies and Rogers, 2006). This notion is tied to ideas of male prowess and strength, and that men ought to have resisted or fought back against their assault (Davies and Rogers, 2006). The embarrassment that victims of male rape often feel is attributable to the constructions of male sexuality that expects men to always be virile and ready to satisfy women (Javiad, 2014). The stigmatisation and demonization of male rape is made particularly worse where there is confusion about consensual sex between two men (homosexuality) and male rape (forced) for both of these according to Gear (2007) are 'smothered in taboo and stigma' (p. 210). Gear (2007) further writes that because homosexuality has historically been outlawed in many countries and still is in many, there is very little reported cases because victims of male rape would by reporting their rape be charged for sodomy or breaking the laws thus there are still silences on male rape. Yet, Nthabiseng Motsemme (cited in Gqola 2015: 171) notes that even silence has value:

… we need to read silences not as absences but as spaces rich with meaning. In asking why these silences exist, why they are forced and/or chosen, by whom and when, lies a wealth of knowledge.

A noted limitation of much of the existent literature on the sexual victimisation of men is that much of it sampled student populations, but as Davies and Rogers argue, this does not mean that findings, even from narrow samples do not have generalizable implications for the wider general population. This is a lesson we have had to learn in April 2016 in South Africa with the #RUReferenceList and following protests and responses. The #RUReferenceList was a list of reported sexual assault perpetrators at 'the university currently known as Rhodes[1]' University, eRhini in South Africa that was released anonymously online. The list was first released through a university confessions page on Facebook, which spread through other social networks such as Twitter via screenshots taken by observers. Following the list, a number of women led protests against rape culture at the university and at other campuses in South Africa more broadly took place. The list and following protests as Dlakavu (2016) writes, served to provide a social cost to rape, and part of efforts to bring an end 'a social system that still wants to let sexual assault be swept under the carpet.' This was an incredible moment not only on the university campus, but also nationally. A key limitation of the events was that the conversation was still centred primarily on women survivors, and rightly so in that context of the list, but this does not mean that men are not affected by sexual assault on university campuses. Turchik (2012) has shown that among British college students, 51.2% of the college men reported having experiencing sexual victimisation at least once since the age of 16. This supports earlier research by Holmes and Slap (1998) showing that adolescent boys are at highest risk of sexual victimisation. Troublingly, Holmes and Slap (1998) further observed that the boys most at risk came from low socio-economic backgrounds, were non-white and were not residing with their fathers. The authors, at the time, noted that the sexual abuse of boys still remained underreported and under recognised. It is the meaning and uncovered wealth of knowledge in the silence on male rape that I want to focus on next. I will first provide a brief introduction into autoethnography and thereafter proceed to share my narrative followed by a discussion.

Autoethnography

There have been increasing calls in the past years for new ways to document and express experiences (Gibson, 2013; Giordano, 2014; Roberts-Smith, 2012; Tomaseli, 2013). Autoethnography is an unexplored method and form of writing

noted to make for uncomfortable reading (Blinne, 2012; Denshire, 2014). Part of what makes the autoethnographic account different is that it breaks down the barriers or disjuncture between the self-other dichotomy by placing the researcher as the central locus of study (Anderson, 2012; Denshire, 2014; Ellis and Bochner, 2000). In autoethnography, the subjective experiences of the researcher are seen as important and the researcher is encouraged to make meaning of experiences alongside the persons who are the object of the study as they make meaning in their complex and varied lives (Siddique, 2011).

In autoethnography, personal experience through research is used in order to make sense of larger cultural experiences – combining autobiography and ethnography. As a qualitative research method, 'autoethnography is both process and product' (Ellis, Adams and Bochner, 2011). Autoethnography allows the researcher to ground personal experience and what Ellis, Adams and Bochner (2011) term 'experiences shrouded in silences.' Autoethnography recognises that although the writer does not live through experiences for the sake of documenting through research, the hindsight from reflexive accounts can provide "epiphanies" about remembered moments that have had a significant impact of the trajectory of one's life. What stretches autoethnography further than personal reflection, is that social science publishing conventions require that the recollections be accompanied by an analysis of the experience(s) (Ellis, Adams and Bochner, 2011). One way in which an autoethnographer can achieve analysis, is through contrasting existing literature against the personal experience one has had (Ellis, Adams and Bochner, 2011). This is especially important for one of the critiques of autoethnography is that it is narcissistic and cannot be generalised into larger populations. Philaretou and Allen (2006, p. 73) write:

> Since autoethnographies are usually on sensitive topics and produced by a very elite sample of college professors and other intellectuals, whose educational background and academic training necessarily and in unknown ways influences the reconstruction of their lived experiences, they will always have the limitation of being nonrepresentative of the general population. For this reason, mixing and matching various research methodologies – for example, utilising both mainstream qualitative and quantitative methods in conjunction with autoethnographic accounts – can help strengthen research findings as each method provides its unique contribution.

Reflecting on the process of writing the autobiographies of her childhood, hooks (1999) shares that the yearning to share one's story is at the intersection on the one hand of wanting to recover the past, and yet on the other hand experience both re-union and release from the process of writing. hooks (1999) shares that in sharing aspects from the past even as those experiences might not be part of present day life, one can look at how that 'living memory' (p. 84) is not a singular and isolated even but forms part of a continuum. Scott (2014) maintains autoethnographic writing allows for the examination of individual complexities along with singularities on various aspects of social reality. As Mkhize (2005) has theorised, the lived personal experiences of individuals are not isolated, but is deeply entrenched in the larger social contexts together with the limitations that frame them. Gilbourne, Jones and Jordon (2014) posit that autoethnography is particularly useful in accounts of circumstances that are particularly traumatic and challenging. This is further affirmed by Run (2012) who shows the usefulness of autoethnography in understanding postcolonial contexts, as the method allows one to unpack the personal narratives while being able to frame it in larger collective experiences of 'other' people. In this way, autoethnograophy places high value on story sharing as a deeply pedagogical practice that is not separated from the making of meaning in social phenomena (Reitan, 2015).

Various authors have used autoethnographic writing in diverse ways. Rickard (2014) used autoethnography to make sense of her experiences as a teacher and self-identifying lesbian at a school in Ireland in the 1990s. Rickard (2014) looked at the ways in which hegemonic narratives silence non-conforming ideas and identities by using her experiences to explore ways in which heteronormativity can be challenged and an environment accommodating of everyone created. Trivelli (2014) uses autoethnography to make sense of personal experiences with self-medication while suffering from clinical depression, unpacking the ways in which various factors including the discursive, the human, the non-human and the personal and the political come together in the economy of the pharmaceuticals. Cohen (2012) on the other hand utilised autoethnography to make sense of floods in Bangkok in 2011 to excavate larger implications of the experience in relation to community responses.

Despite the growing literature and application of autoethnography in various contexts including erotica [Ott, 2007; Ott, 2007a] there is still scant literature using autoethnographic methods to make sense of sexual trauma and sexual assault,

particularly with men. Philaretou and Allen (2006) make the case that autoethnography is best suited for studying sensitive topics including consumption of pornography on the internet, addiction to sex as well as various forms of sex work. In addition to the benefits of validity and reliability, autoethnography also provides much therapeutic benefits particularly for people seen as *Other* while contributing to the enhancement of social scientific knowledge (Philaretou and Allen, 2006)

Beyond Ron and Hugo (2013), there are virtually no other scholarly narratives in South African literature that contribute to understanding and the unpacking the rape and sexual assault of men through autoethnographic method. Moreover, the existing narratives are almost all exclusively focused on middle class white men, and very little on non-white persons. Black feminist scholars have gone some way to show that one's race, class, sexuality, gender amongst many other factors play an important role in how one experiences oppression (Collins 2000), and that all these factors intersect along race and gender (Crenshaw 1993). Crenshaw (1993, p. 1277) for instance in her work looking at the interaction between gender and race in context of violence against women of colour notes that:

> … Black women who are raped are racially discriminated against because their rapists, whether Black or white, are less likely to be charged with rape, and when charged are less likely to receive significant jail time than the rapists of white women.

Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) has argued that autobiographical and life history methods are critical and characteristic in work on men, for such methods allow for the centering of individual subjects. In writing my narrative below, I therefore attempt to locate myself in this tradition of reflexive autoethnographical writing to locate my experience in larger processes that in the words of Collins-Buthelezi and Higginbotham (2015) refer to as 'the ordering of sexual lives in Africa' (p. xiii).

"Why do you seem like isitabane nje [a gay]? … I will rape you"

I was born in 1988, in Lady Frere in a village called Bangindlala in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. The province is most famous for being the birthplace of two former presidents in post-apartheid South Africa, these being Thabo Mbeki

and Nelson Mandela. Yet, the area that I grew up in was for all intents and purposes pretty isolated from the rest of the country, the metropolitan areas and the cities. Earliest memories include making mud structures, swimming in the river and herding livestock in the early years. I started school ("Sub A") when I was four years old, which I would later learn was unusually young. Although my parents were married and still are, growing up it was mostly my mother and I in the house. My siblings (older brother and sister) were in boarding school already, and my father worked in the mines. My father formed a part of the well-documented migrant labour system arising from the colonial and apartheid history of South Africa where men had to leave the homestead to work up North in the mines. My father was one of the men who went to the mines, sent home remittances and came home once or twice at most in any year.

When I was in Standard three (Grade five), my mother made a decision to find me a school in nearby Queenstown. This town had much better resourced schools in the areas that were predominantly designated 'for whites only' under apartheid. At this time in the late 1990's and early 2000's many of the South African schools were increasingly opening up to black students. I was a part of this move from rural schools and into urban schools in efforts to garner a better education. Most rural schools, were, and are still incredibly under resourced. It was also at this point that for the first time I learned to speak, read and write English as my home language is isiXhosa. It was also the first time that I was in a school where there was a diversity of racial groups, at least amongst the teachers. I lived in a boarding school with other predominantly black boys and girls, many of whom came from similar settings to mine and sometimes-surrounding villages to mine.

In 2000, I changed schools again and moved to a school in a metropolitan area. The school was in Port Elizabeth. In my time at the school, I had an opportunity join a prestigious boys' choir associated with an Anglican church close to my school as one of my extra-curricular activities. I lived in one of the peri-urban centres and walked to town where my school was. I also had choir practice in town, as the church was in town. Choir practice took place several times a week if I recall correctly, on Thursday, Saturday mornings and one last rehearsal on Sunday morning before church service. At this point I was living with my older sister who was in her early twenties and we did not have a car or our own transportation. We either had to walk or use public transportation for a long time. It was

about a 10–20-minute walk to town and back to the flat we rented, depending on the pace.

There was an incident one time. Usually once every end of the month we would get a little stipend in church as a gratitude to our services. It was not a lot, about twenty to thirty South African Rands (about two dollars), and about five hundred Rands (twice a year or every six months). The choir was predominantly white, and my black choir mates were one of the first intake of black students. Many of the fellow black students came from the townships and peri-urban centres with only one of my black choir mate living in the suburbs. On getting our stipends at the end of the month, usually me, and my black choir mates would hang out in town rewarding ourselves with ice cream, playing computer games and so on. It was amazing what one could do with twenty Rands back then.

On this particular day it was a similar situation. We finished choir practice around 11:30am and my friends and I went to town, played and hanged out. It became time for us all to disperse and we said goodbyes and went separate ways around 15:00 that day. Many shops in town are closed around this time on Saturdays and the town was quite still and quiet. Upon separating from my peers, I started making my way up the steep hill going home. I remember feeling so happy this day. I guess to my 12/13 year old self it felt like 'pay day' – a day to reap the fruit of hard work. On my way home I remember playing in the fields, waving hands all around, picking up stones and so many other things. As part of the walk home on this particular route, I passed through a park, with a very long staircase that had metal support in the middle of the staircase to hang to. It was dead quiet, but it was not unusual for a Saturday in that particular area. When I was about halfway through I remember three guys coming towards me from the top, and I do not know what it was about them but my heart immediately knew I was in danger. It could have been the force and very fast pace at which they were walking but I remember feeling scared, with no place to run and frankly too scared to run.

They arrived and as I suspected, they asked me for money and at this point I barely had any having just spent it with friends entertaining ourselves. They started to surround me and started to touch and feel me all over my body. They were looking for a cellular phone, and I did not have one. They kept asking for one, and I said I do not have one. In the process of searching me, out of the three there was one man that was particularly aggressive. In this process he made a number of ut-

terances I do not now remember verbatim, but I remember they were around how 'uthetha njenge moffie' (loosely: 'you speak like a faggot'). His mumbling centred around my voice and how I spoke either like a 'moffie', and 'intombi' (a girl). After they were done searching me, and satisfied that I really did not have a phone or valuables, they started to walk away. Then as my heart was relaxing and I was proceeding to continue walking one stopped, he looked back and uttered: "kutheni ingathi usisitabane nje? Ndakuzeka mna" (loosely meaning: why do you seem like a gay, I will rape/fuck you). For a while it looked like he was going to come back, but two of the other men that he was with continued to walk, and I did not respond. I continued to walk home. I never told anybody at home. But this would be my first introduction to the threat of rape, as a boy, deemed at the time feminine and gay at the time. While it did not reach a point where it happened to me in this one particular incident, I have always known it happens, and it could happen to me. This was a trend that continued throughout most of my late primary school and high school life. I was severely bullied in high school, and often when I spoke back some of my male classmates would retort "ndakuzeka mna" (I will rape/fuck you). I learned very early on that a penis in this instance was a tool for disciplining me for not only speaking back, but for not fitting the predominant mould and vision they say in what made a boy / a man.

Discussion

The reason why I did not share this incident or threat, and did not even think to report it to the police when I think about it in retrospect lies with the shame I felt. I felt if I shared it at home then they would ask questions about my sexuality and I did not know how I would answer if they did. Associated with this is then is the added risk of rejection and violation from a very homophobic society and the threat of destabilising the relative peace I was able to have at home. Sharing the incident would have meant a further risk of victimisation should my family not have liked the idea of me being 'gay'. This is why Couturier (2012) notes many men are scared to report sexual assault, for there is persisting stigma against homosexuality. Couturier (2012) continues that heteronormativity means that homophobia ends up intensified to the extent that male victims of rape are not only made invisible, but also that should they share, they are also concurrently persecuted for being 'gay' (p. 8).

In South Africa we have the violent hate crime called corrective/curative rape, occurring primarily against black lesbian women (Anguita, 2012; Hunter-Gault, 2012). Corrective/curative rape is the distorted act of sexual violence where men rape and target primarily lesbian women in order to "cure" or change the women into heterosexuality through rape (Saunders, 2012). Lesbian women, particularly if they are butch, as Swarr (2012) has observed are targeted for such sexual violence because they deviate from compulsory heterosexuality and are seen to be a threat to heterosexuality and normative sexual norms. Moreover, it not just the way in which lesbian women threaten the heteronormative order that makes them particularly vulnerable, but also the economically marginal position black lesbian women occupy in South African society. Scholars have therefore called for a queer politik that takes seriously into account the ways gender, class, sexual orientation, abilities and religious expression amongst others intersect with homophobia (McGlotten and Davis 2012). What is often ignored is that gay men and transgender men are also in South Africa raped primarily because of their sexuality and gender identity.

In the past years there have been greater calls to bring the challenges transgender men face (including rape) to the fore (Currier 2015), and yet these are still barely sufficient. Matebeni (2012) documents for example, how transgender men experience abuse not only from wider society, but also within lesbian circles where the experiences of transgender men are excluded. Louw (2014) reports that most 'men, thanks to social stigmas, are ashamed to report sexual hate crimes – but they are almost as common as they are against lesbians'. Making sense of male rape however seems a little more complicated although Louw (2014) notes that 'the dynamics are different when people born [biologically] male are attacked, but one thing remains constant: the violent action of supposedly "teaching" those who deviate from society's patriarchal norm a lesson.' So, when the guy makes the linkage to me appearing like a 'gay', and when he made the assertion that he would rape me, he was asserting something being wrong with me, and the rape would be a punitive to bring me into his idealised ideas about how a boy/man is supposed to be. To him, there was something wrong with me that needed violent correction and this at the time confused and terrified me greatly. I felt confused, embarrassed but also exposed and vulnerable.

The history of 'correcting' non-heterosexual identities in South Africa is not

just restricted to sexual violence. In the apartheid era there were many "corrective measures" designed to "cure" homosexuals in the country. McGreal (2000) reports that thousands of gays were put through electronic therapy, hormone treatments as well as chemical castration in the 1970's and the 1980's in the period where national service was obligatory for white men, and homosexuality was deemed to a crime. Kaplan (2004, p. 1416) continues that:

> The rationale for giving homosexuals reassignment surgery, in complete ignorance of the scientific literature on transsexualism, can only be described as repulsive. It was based on simplistic belief that male homosexuals were sissies, female homosexuals were tomboys, and surgery would end their preference for the same-sex by allowing them to fulfil their projected role in the opposite sex. The only conclusion that can be reached is that the psychiatrists involved were not only woefully and balefully ignorant but functioned as an extension of the military ethos.

Although South Africa in the post-apartheid era has made a lot of headway in the inclusion of sexual and gender minorities, particularly as one of the few countries in the world where "gay marriage" is legal is often perceived to be a safe haven. Yet in this section, and through my own narrative, I have shown that this is not so. There are still prevailing norms in society, specifically in this context, on how one is supposed to perform masculinity and failure to adhere still is subject to "correction" and social sanctions that can, and does include sexual assault and rape. This is why it important to look beyond just the legalisation of "gay marriage", as Scott (2013) has cautioned, but into the social processes that allow some people to live out their identities fully, while others are punished and not acknowledged.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have argued that the rape of primary gay and transgender men in South Africa is used as a stopping device to discipline and punish men who do not conform to valued and idealised ideas of normative manhood and masculinity. The title of this paper is taken from Louw's (2014) report. In the report, which tells the story of a transgender man who was sexually and violently assaulted by other

men, the informant shares that a group of three men ambushed his apartment. The informant continues, "they thought I was a woman, and when they found out that I was a man, that's when they became even more violent", shares (Louw 2014). In this paper, I argued that such incidence is not coincidental, but rather forms part of the violence and aggression levelled against men who do not meet the social requirements of being a 'man'.

My opening quote by Couturier (2012: 1) reminds us that such violences are direct struggles for the supremacy of certain sexual identities, over others. And as hooks (2004) remarked, men who are seen to be soft, are subject to attack. I argued that ignoring men who are also harmed and exist outside hegemonic masculinities harms and does a lot of damage. It is important that we also look at the ways in which men harm other men particularly when it comes to sexual assault. It is important that we go beyond scandalised narratives of war, conflict societies and prisons and look critically into everyday practices of sexual violence and assault by men, against other men.

I have argued here, because of the sensitivities around the sexual assault of men by other men and the difficulties in people sharing individual narratives, the methodology of autoethnography has much usefulness in helping us make sense of individual experiences and how they relate to larger collective challenges, particularly around sexual trauma and sexual assault.

I did a lot of thinking in the process of writing this narrative, and faced a lot of doubts internally – 'do I really want to share this?', 'Have I shared too much?', 'What will people think when they read?', 'What goes up on the internet stays forever', 'Is my story worth a whole article?', 'Am I being self-indulgent?' and many other thoughts as I reflected on this experience. I found the works of bell hooks (1999), and how she has used autobiography 'not to forget the past but to break its hold' (p. 80) extremely useful both as a researching writer, and as form of personal enrichment encouraging the worthiness of my truth being told. In a public talk in late 2015 at the university currently known as Rhodes, South African sociologist, Babalwa Magoqwana talked about becoming 'abantu abapheleleyo', becoming whole human beings. In writing this narrative, my hope is not only that it will contribute to knowledge on understanding of masculinities and sexual violence against men, but as Magoqwana shared, that it will contribute to knowledge that can help men find wholeness outside violence, misogyny and homophobia.

Yet, I also am reflective of that I am able to share my narrative because of various privileges that I have in society (including higher education, access to research resources, amongst others), and this in the context of South Africa is not available to many young boys and men who occupy marginal positions because of their chosen genders and sexualities. There have also been other efforts though the In-kanyiso[2] Project started by Zanele Muholi and others to give platform to primarily transgender and lesbian women who would generally not have the opportunity, to write their own narratives, and publish them on the site, I recognise that the glass is still half-full.

Writing this autoethnography, as cliché as it may sound, has been cathartic for me – and allowed me to tell the story, in my own words, interpretation and terms. It also most importantly showed me, that I was ready to be present, and that I am not defined, and refuse to be defined by what happened – and this recognition *indenza ndizive ndiphelele*, to feel whole.

Endnotes

[1]　'Rhodes University' in Rhini, in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa is currently known as 'the university currently known as Rhodes' (UCKAR) reflecting ongoing conversations about changing the name of the university, from 'Rhodes' which glorifies Cecil John Rhodes, a well-documented mass murderer and colonialist, to a name more reflective of the values espoused in the constitution of South Africa including dignity.

[2]　http://www.inkanyiso.org

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