On the (African) National Question: Sexuality and Tradition

Queering Development Seminar Series, Institute of Development Studies, Sussex17.2.00
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In Southern Africa, sexuality has become a highly contested site for the negotiation of authenticity, both in terms of the nation and identity. It has become a variable in Africa's ideological and material battle with the West. Most importantly, it has come to signify the limits of citizenship, testing African leaders commitment to international human rights agreements. Post-apartheid South Africa has granted constitutional equality to gays and lesbians – the first country in the world to do so. Since the adoption of the 'equality clause', courts have recognised the rights of gay and lesbians to serve in the army; with regards to adoption, gender references have been dropped from the legislation; and the recognition of same-sex unions is in the process of being addressed. This has provided the impetus for the appearance of a more insistently vocal and visible gay and lesbian presence in the neighbouring countries. Rather than follow South Africa's lead, other Southern African countries have united in their denunciation of homosexuality and homosexual practices. In Botswana, Namibia, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe, the ruling elites have publicly decried homosexuality, and maintain their intransigence in addressing the demands of gays and lesbians within their countries. In the light of a growing demand and need for regional integration, the demands of gays and lesbians remains a thorn in the side of any such attempt.

President Mugabe of Zimbabwe has been the most vocal and vitriolic opponent of gay and lesbian rights in the region. Refusing to allow the Gay and Lesbians of Zimbabwe (GALZ) to participate in the International Book Fair in 1995, he claimed that not only was homosexuality un-African, but that gays and lesbians were "worse than pigs and dogs". His remarks were a catalyst for the exploration of gay and lesbians rights in the Southern African region, and, as Phillips (2000) points out he has been the most effective publicist for the organisation (GALZ) that he attacked. Other African leaders jumped on the Mugabe bandwagon, coming out in support of his position. Their rhetoric revolves around similar terms. In 1997, Alpheus Naruseb,

the Secretary for Information and Publicity of the ruling party of Namibia, supported President Nujoma's commitment to "uproot" homosexuality from Namibia. He claimed that Europeans were destroying Namibian culture through the imposition of "alien practices". The Namibian/Misa (05/02/1997) reported Naruseb's remarks: "(I)t should be noted that most of the ardent supporters of this (sic) perverts are Europeans who imagine themselves to be the bulwark of civilisation and enlightenment. They are not only appropriating foreign ideas in our society but also destroying the local culture by hiding behind the façade of the very democracy and human rights we have created." He added that, " the moral values of our nation …incorporate the fundamental principles of nature and should not be equated to the vile practices of homosexuals which has a backlash effect on our society." Mugabe's and Naruseb's vilification of homosexuality reveals the often paradoxical and vulnerable position of African states in the political economy of globalisation.

Implicit in their remarks, is the awareness of the vulnerability of the African nation-state, under siege from ever-encroaching neo-colonial forces. In this ideological and material battle, anti-colonial and nationalist discourses signify homosexuality as both the domain of perversion and as belonging to the West. This homophobic disavowal functions on two fronts: it projects on to its other the label of perversity, thus securing its position of moral authority, the only position from which demands on and on the behalf of 'the nation', 'the people' can be made; and it becomes the means to limit and define what would count as an authentic identity, be it racial or national. As a result of the colonial legacy, authenticity becomes fundamental in the negotiation of identity in the post-colony. It not only needs to constantly define itself in opposition to West, but also has to begin to articulate in substantive terms what is particularly African about the African.

This divide between the alien (the other) and the authentic (the self) is often articulated as the more uneasy distinction between tradition and modernity, uneasy because the post-colony is necessarily implicated in both sides of the divide. Post-colonial nationalist discourses are therefore paradoxical, in that they defend both tradition and modernity, at the same time. "The emergent post-colonial nation must posit itself as the vehicle for the economic and cultural progress – as the agent of modernity. Simultaneously, it must represent itself as the custodian of the fixed

identities conferred on it by (an imagined) pre-colonial past – as the repository of tradition" (Hoad, 1998:33). This for me seems necessary and integral to the discursive strategies of any nation-state, and in no way is limited to the post-colony. What is different, though, is the overdetermination of the sphere of tradition, because the (re)configuration and re-invention of tradition becomes the means to locating an 'untainted' identity. After the violent imposition of colonialism, often metaphorically imbricated as a violent sexual act, demarcations of racial and national authenticity become fundamental to the project of reproducing the nation, of future imaginings.

Inasmuch as the nation projects itself heroically into the future, it also creates its past, often in terms of constituting the domain of tradition. 'Tradition' is often claimed to be that which existed before colonialism, and also that which existed outside colonialism (in the form of resistance), and thus is always implicated in both the identitarian project and the process of reconstructing the nation as having always resisted the alien intruder, maintaining it 'sovereignty' despite its occupation and rule by the colonial power. It is simultaneously inside and outside of history: inside because it points to and (re)creates a past, and outside, because its assumptions rely on the transhistorical persistence of certain practices, and in fact a whole culture, sometimes a whole race. Therefore when the certain African leaders argue that homosexuality is un-African, their claims are not made on behalf of just their nations, but for Africa as 'the nation'. On a continent where the nation-state is constantly under threat (or perceived to be) from both the rapacious West and other African states, this appeal to a universal homogeneous African identity comes as something quite facile.

But the appeal to tradition does serve substantive political ends. Mugabe's denunciation of homosexuality works to both exclude gay and lesbian demands for full citizenship rights, by demarcating the limits of Zimbabwean citizenship that relies on notions of authenticity, and in his relegation of gays and lesbians to the subhuman, to lower than the status of animals, he effectively removes gay and lesbian rights from the ambit of human rights. We see the all-too-easy renegotiation of tradition (which is essentially conceived as transhistorical) in the interests of the maintenance of the hegemony of modern secular structures of the post-colony. To argue that that tradition is re-interpreted and re-invented from the viewpoint and vested interests of

the present, seems a well-trodden idea. What seems for us of interest is that tradition is, not only, in African nationalist and anti-colonialist discourses posited as the other of western modernity, but that critiques of the African nation's appeal to tradition are often complicit with this position.

Hoad (1998) and Phillips (2000) in their analyses of the current increase of the demands of gays and lesbians in the Southern African region and the consequential denigration of these identities and refusal on the part of certain African leaders to grant them full citizenship rights, rely on the distinction between tradition and modernity, problematising the former and to a greater or lesser extent privileging the latter. In both their critiques, tradition comes to occupy the place of 'fantasy', of imaginative recreations of an irretrievable past, of false memory, and ultimately of falsity itself. On the other hand, modernity, with its concomitants of individual subjectivity, the rights and duties of the citizen, and the commitment to equality and social justice is posited as 'truth' (although this 'truth' for Phillips (2000) is more troubling). In his article 'Tradition, modernity and human rights: an interrogation of contemporary gay and lesbian rights' claim in Southern African nationalist discourses' (1998), Hoad, on the one hand, problematises the invocation of tradition which is used to counter-act the premises of gay and lesbian equality. He points out that the refusal to grant gays and lesbian citizenship rights is often couched in the terms of its antithesis to Christian norms and values. These values which include a normativisation of heterosexual monogamy are western in origin. If the 'archeology' of tradition reveals, a word in the local language (the shona word *ngochani*) and a traditional cure for homosexuality, then, he suggests that the African demagogues are clearly mistaken in their characterisation of homosexuality as un-African. On the other hand, he faults gay and lesbian activists' employment of the traditionalist rhetoric. After President Nujoma's and Naruseb's threat to "uproot" homosexuality, gays and lesbians in Namibia argued for recognition both in terms of the state's commitment to universal human rights and the suggestion that the state was corrupted by Victorian ideology i.e. homophobia rather than homosexuality was the western import. They asserted that in pre-colonial societies there were a range of sexual activities that could be deemed homosexual.(1998:37-38). Rather than begin a project to unearth traditional homosexual practices, Hoad rejects the appeal to this particular

type of tradition that relies on 'essence' and essentialising, and suggests that the solution to the form in which the demands for gay and lesbian citizenship rights takes, must lie in the reconfiguration of tradition, not tradition as essence, but as political strategy: claims must be made on behalf of a tradition of human rights. The post-colony's memory of a not too distant absence of these rights and its attempts to institutionalise democratic reforms in its process of modernisation, become the basis for making claims for gays and lesbians. Forget tradition, Hoad argues, because, "to enter the debate using the traditionalist argument is, in some ways, to have lost it before one has even begun" (1998:38). Rather, focus on procedural democracy, and employ a right-based discourse, and if one needs to appeal to tradition, make sure it is a 'modern' tradition.

Tradition is also problematised in Phillips (2000) critique. He shows through his examination of lobola and the mediation of kinship relations and gender in Zimbabwe, that it is a selective political process that maintains the hegemonic order. Further, Mugabe's appeal to tradition, ignores the fact, Phillip argues that a "Zimbabwean national identity arises from a new political process which relies on modern notions of citizenship within a democratic polity"(2000:18). Therefore a Zimbabwean national identity precludes the sphere of the traditional, for Phillips; but he also conjoins tradition and law (being representative of citizenship, democracy and individual subjectivity), by claiming that through the renegotiation of tradition, law and government policies are made, values and discourse are produced (2000:18). What emerges in his analysis is an alleged direct connection between national identity and modern notions of democratic citizenship, and a contradictory characterisation of tradition as both outside the secular state, and determining it from within. Like Hoad, Phillips both rejects tradition as a basis for the affirmation of marginalised identities and its use in the vilification of these identities, and privileges the power of a rights-based discourse in contesting processes of marginalisation. Although he empties out 'the traditional' of its claims to authenticity and truth, and suggests the incoherence of the discursive strategies employed by state in its refutation of citizenship claims by gays and lesbians, he ultimately re-instates the binary of the traditional and the modern. It is curious that this re-inscription betrays a yearning for the traditional.

In his article, 'Constituting the Global Gay: Issues of individual subjectivity and sexuality in Southern Africa'(2000), Phillips maps the tradition/modernity dichotomy onto a binary that places 'fluid' identity and sexuality on one side and fixity on the other. As a legal theorist he focuses on how the law has promoted an increasingly fixed conception of both identity and sexuality. He, thus, points out that the introduction of colonial law in Zimbabwe, was accompanied by a discourse of morality, specifically Victorian. With law came the Judeo-Christian conceptualisation of sexual desire "as an object of discipline by, and for the sake of one's self.."; notions of morality and perversion that exceeded the demands of reproductive regulation, concerned more with the discipline of the self; an ideology whose precondition for and result of a structured society were repression and discipline; capitalist structurings of the economy and social relations; the polarisation of desire into a homo/hetero binary; via Foucault, the access of the state to the body of both the individual and society through a 'bio-politics'; and the notion of individual subjectivity, the precondition for criminal accountability and legal responsibility. Opposed to the Christian and medico-scientific construction of sexual desire and erotic regulation is the pre-colonial focus on lineage and kinship relations: acts were considered illicit only when they disrupted kinship ties (Jeater), there was an alleged absence of the hetero/homo binary, where differences of age, gender, and social status are more important, in many non-Western societies (Greenberg); there was also a morality that placed greater emphasis on social and communal interests, rather than locating within the body of the individual (see Phillips, 2000:7-10). Modernity, thus, brought with it a fixation on and a fixing of sexuality and identity, while 'traditional' African practices hints at a more fluid conception of these categories. However, Phiilips argues, that while modern secular constructions of self and society are repressive, it also liberates: in its reliance on individual subjectivity, it provides the basis for the notion of rights, and specifically human rights, which are sought on behalf of and expected to reside in the individual.

It seems odd and contradictory that after outlining the impact that colonial law and its discourses of morality had on Zimbabwean society, Phillips now ladles President Mugabe with having initiated the homo/hetero binary in Zimbabwean society, and

thereby constituting 'new' identities. Phillips writes, "..many Zimbabweans have come to see themselves as 'heterosexual', where they did not have such a categorically sexual self-consciousness before"(2000:24). He adds that after Mugabe's remarks Zimbabweans have developed a binary conception of sexuality, seeing themselves as either heterosexual or homosexual, and that he has concretised what has previously been fluid. In Phillips analysis, it seems that Mugabe is the only modern man in the country; all other Zimbabweans are seen as having an essentially pre-colonial attitude to identity and sexuality. This problematic characterisation arises from a dual relationship that Phillips has to both tradition and modernity: although he rejects appeals to tradition for the refutation of gay and lesbian citizenship rights, he implicitly privileges it as the domain of "unspecified fluidity", and despite modernity's drive to limitation, demarcation, repression and categorisation, it can also empower and liberate through its rights-based discourses in a democratic polity. This may be seen as the liberal- universalist dilemma. Painfully aware, as Phiilips seems to be, of the concomitants of a human rights agenda and a rights-based discourse, neo-colonial forces and a rapacious free market that constantly threatens the independence of the African nation-state and an individualism that erodes any appeal to the community and the social context, he has to disavow the sphere of tradition, in favour of the accruement of individual rights within a democratic framework. The African nation-state, then, for Hoad and Phillips, must be called to task on its commitment to democratic principles and a liberal human rights agenda, in any strategy of addressing the rights of gays and lesbians.

What seems to us as a problem in both Hoad's and Phillips' analyses is a categorical mistake. Although tradition is often opposed to Western modernity in Africanist, nationalist and anti-colonialist discourses, we have seen how tradition, far from being external to modernity, is often 'recreated' as a means of negotiating the demands of modern political institutions - the state's appeal to tradition maintains its position of power and mobilises 'the people' on behalf of its vested interests. Rather, we suggest that the division needs to be located not between modernity and its outside, but a division that is instituted within modernity i.e. between nationalism and democracy, a division that is asymmetrical and differentially articulated, temporally and spatially in

the colony and, consequentially in the post-colony. It is the complexity and the contradictions that arise from this embattled relation in the African nation-state that allow for not only an appeal to racial authenticity (by constituting the 'African' by labeling what is deemed 'un-African'), and the maintenance of an antagonistic relation to the West, but also a reliance on the notions of democratic citizenship. An exploration of the emergence of 'third world' nationalisms and nationalist thought, with their gender objectives, though not specific to the third world, is instructive in any attempt to understand the discursive strategies employed by certain African leaders to locate the outside of African identity and citizenship, and to articulate a strategy for addressing homosexuality as both a social and political issue in the African context.

Jayawardena (1986) notes that, principally, nationalist struggles in the colonies aimed at achieving political independence from the imperialist power, attempted to forge a national identity, and carried out internal reforms to modernise society. They adopt a paradoxical strategy, that is directed internally against precapitalist structures e.g. ruling dynasties and religious orthodoxies and externally against the colonial power. This strategy is paradoxical as it relies on Western models as a means to combat Western aggression. These struggles take on a bourgeois-democratic form, she argues, as the development of a new national consciousness, in the form of an appeal to patriotic ideals intended to mobilise the people, are conjoined to modern secular political structures. Therefore, in the striving of the bourgeoisie to gain political and economic power, traditional structures had to be dismantled, "while reviving what was defined as the true and pristine traditions of a distant and independent past"(1986:5). What we see here is not the re-invention or renegotiation of the past, but the invention of tradition within the modern nationalist struggle; a discursive strategy that simultaneously proclaims the nation's sovereignty, in relation to the occupying force, and mobilises and unites the people, by the creation of a 'history' of the nation, and thus a national cultural identity. It is for these "limited imaginings", Benedict Anderson suggests that millions of people are not so much willing to kill, as willing to die (1991:7).

Nationalist struggles' attempt to transform itself and creatively re-imagine itself, cannot proceed by mere imitation of the adapted Western models – it would lose its claim to a unique and special history and nature, and its oppositional stance to the colonial force. This leads to a contradictory relation to the modern notions of democracy and liberal rights, in that it is both imitative and hostile to these models it imitates. This hostility involves a rejection, "in fact, two rejections both of them ambivalent: rejection of the alien intruder and dominator who is nevertheless to be imitated and surpassed by his own standards, and rejection of ancestral ways which are seen as obstacles to progress and yet also cherished as marks of identity"(Plamenatz cited in Chatterjee, 1986:2). This lead to a fissure in nationalist and anti-colonialist discourses and strategies, the positing of the nation as sovereign, pristine and unchanging, and the nation as the vehicle to transform society into a modern form (see Hoad's comment above). In the post-colony, as the means of the latter lie in the hands of the ruling elites, the former becomes 'overdetermined' to combat the new forms of imperialism, in much the same way the invention of tradition articulated an oppositional stance and a unified homogeneous cultural identity during the colonial struggle. This fissure may be expressed as the division between the nationalist and democratic political forms.

Chatterjee (1986) describes the problem of nationalism in the history of political ideas. Nationalism, in political thought is often seen to be part of the same story that saw the birth of liberty, progress, and thus universal history and is part of the same historical processes which gave rise to capitalism and industrialism. It is claimed to be an aspect of the desire to concretise politically the urge for liberty, equality and social justice. "As an ideological framework for the realisation of rational, and highly laudable, political ends. However, it has given rise to the most destructive wars, informed ideologies of racial hatred in the West and in the colonies, and led to the most oppressive political regimes"(1986:3). Within European nationalist thought itself, we find that nationalism could quite easily be irreconcilable with liberty and equality; a chasm emerges between nationalism and democracy, a split that may be said to have it founding moment in the dissolution of substance with the birth of modernity. Recalling structurally, although limitedly, Platonic categories, the moral

law for Kant is both universal and transcendental, a law "which being independent of nature is not empirical but has its ground in reason alone,"(Kant quoted in Walsh, 1956:319). Kant, in distinguishing a transcendental Subject from a practical subject (the subject which prescribes to itself, in the mode of the categorical imperative, the law of its actions)is credited by some as initiating a modern conception of the subject.

In his book, *The Era of the Individual: A contribution to a History of Subjectivity* (1997), Renaut explictes the Kantian theory of the subject, a theory that gives it a place of originality at the heart of the history of subjectivity. For the conceptualisation of values (ethical, juridical, and political) to be self-grounded or self-established, the subject nees to think of itself as autonomous. Renaut's exposition points to five principal moment in the Kantian development of the theory of the subject (1997:168-172). However, two of these moments are important for our purposes – Firstly, the theory of 'radical finitude as the structure of subjectivity': Composed mainly in the *Critique of Pure Reason* by the 'Transcendental Aesthetic'. The 'Aesthetic', distinguished from the Leibnizian monad, Kant maintains, includes a dimension of openness in subjectivity. "At the same time this rupture of monadicity marks the emergence of finitude in the subject, since it presupposes an exteriority, an 'outside' or 'an other' and hence a limit in relation to this otherness." This finitude must be distinguished from the traditional doctrines of finitude, where finitude, by implication Man (or man), in relation to the Absolute, was posited as limited and relative. Kant turns this position on its head: he posits finitude as a structure of knowlegde as a condition for the possibility of representation. The Absolute is thus relativised: "precisely because of the finite structure of human knowledge, the Absolute can only be an Idea, not a reality in itself", leading to the notion of radical finitude, where the Absolute is conceivable only on the basis of finitude. This redicalisation, Renaut concludes, de-ontologises the Absolute, "engineering a first retreat from the divine"; this, in turn de-ontologises the subject. In the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant specifies, Renaut shows the practical subject and "more precisely through the idea of autonomy as an activity of self-foundation, a positing for itself the law of its own actions"(1997:172). Renaut characterises the movement from the idea of radical finitude to the notion of the practical subject, as the movement from independence to autonomy.

The practical subject, is, in a philosophical sense positively specified by Kant as a subject that prescribes, through the categorical imperative, to itself the law of its own actions. The categorical imperative involves a universalisation of the maxim of particular actions. The transcendental subject, which is a categorical structure that makes possible the "nonsubstantial unity of the condition s of experience"(Balibar, 1991:37), is incommensurable with any particularity. Thus, the universal and the particular become two moments that cannot coexist, but are necessarily successive, Manent (1998) argues. "Moreover, the moments are not identified with any kind of stability"(Manent, 1998:151). Further, Kant, in *The Moral Law or Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (1956), distinguishes between two types of freedoms: Freedom, as a transcendental *a priori*, which is the precondition of and irreducible to the freedoms legislated by the political body, but in a very imprtant sense determines those freedoms, as it is an impetus to the political, and particular freedoms that would fall into the domain of state legislation. Thus, we see with Kant, that the advent of modernity, we have a split between the non-representable (the transcendental Subject and the Idea of Freedom) and the representable (the practical subject and particular rights and entitlements), mapped on to the subject and the political body. The place of the Absolute, with Lefort, in substantive political terms, becomes empty with the death of the king and the advent of democracy. Because this place is empty (Lefort, 1988) and 'non-representable' (Kant), but as it is simultaneously relativised in the structure of knowledge (see Renaut, 1997:151), it is open to endlessly being represented, with appeals to 'the nation', 'the people', 'the race'. If democracy is articulated within a discourse of rights and equality i.e. the particular accruement of individual entitlements, then nationalism, in its appeal to transhistorical processes, can lay claim to the space of the transcendental, a claim that is always already false because it attempts to actualise the non-representable. But this does not mean it isn't effective, as it does represent an urge to give a home, a location in the transcendental homelessness of modernity.

The fact that a gap exists, and possibly an irreconcilable one, between an appeal to the allegedly transcendental nation and democratic principles, and the fact that this is not peculiar to the African nation-state, is worth noting, not because these are particularly novel ideas, but that this disjuncture becomes more evident in the post-colony. With

the advent of modernity, there is a coevality of the rise of nationalism and the institution of democracy in the West. In 'third-world' nationalisms, there is a temporal dislocation between the articulation of 'the nation' and democratic struggles. Chatterjee suggests that anti-colonial nationalism "creates its own domain of sovereignty within colonial society well before it begins its political battle with the imperial power"(1993:6) It does this by dividing society into two domains: the inside (the spiritual) and the outside (the material). The colonial power is kept out of this spiritual independent territory, which is both modern and distinctively not Western. "In this, its true and essential domain, the nation is already sovereign" (1993:12). An asymmetrical relation emerges in the post-colony. Whereas the ideology and the reforms of the post-colonial state were essentially liberal-democratic in nature, thus relying on the public/private split, anti-colonial nationalisms worked within a different set of distinctions i.e. between the material and the spiritual, the inner and the outer, "neither co-extensive, nor co-incidental to the field constituted by the public/private distinction"(1993:15). 'Third-world' nationalisms thus precede the battle for political independence in the colony, and is to a large extent located outside of the democratic reforms of the post-colony. This disjuncture clarifies both the split that is implicit in nationalist thought in general, and why appeals to the nation, don't necessarily respect the public/private split essential for making demands within a rights-based discourse, and must necessarily destroy all boundaries between the life of the individual and the life of the nation.

In terms of African nationalisms this leads to what has been differently articulated as the 'dual nation', 'dual citizenship', or 'the bifurcated state'(see Halisi, Kaiser, Ndegwa, 1998). Halisi (1998) posits a dual notion of citizenship among Africans, a duality that arises from the double signification of citizenship itself i.e. it is both a moral and legal category. Halisi extrapolates this duality on to different conceptualisations of citizenship. Liberal citizenship involves a rights-based discourse, while republican citizenship, which is informed by black nationalisms, emphasises political participation. "Unlike the liberal citizen, who is a passive bearer of status (a mere bundle of rights), the republican citizen experiences citizenship as practice (active participation in the determination, protection, and promotion of the common good)" (Peled cited in Halisi, 1998:424). Although Halisi is not particularly rigorous in his articulation of the peculiarity of the dual citizenship in the African

post-colony, the distinction is useful is pointing to the strategies employed by the African nation-state of opposing one to the other in the interests of the ruling elites. Populism, often derived from nationalist rhetoric, can be opposed to citizenship rights: "populist segments of a formerly disenfranchised people often regard the fight for citizenship rights…as co-aptation designed to blunt the radical edge of social movement politics"(1998:427). Ekeh (1975) refers to a split form of identification that produces 'dual publics', a situation "that encourages the belief that the state can with impunity be raided for purposes of the primordial community" (1975:98). This attachment to a primordial community in African republican citizenship, can be a powerful mode in constituting and mobilising the nation under the banner of communal interests. Republican citizenship it seems can be both productive, in facilitating political participation, and repressive in demarcating the limits of the 'primordial community' i.e. who does and does not belong to this community. Both Phillips (2000) and Hoad (1998), in disavowing the discursive variable of nationalist and anti-colonialist, 'tradition', fail to understand its centrality to notions of African citizenship, and its 'productively' antagonistic position to the democratic accruement of rights.

What remains is to address the political economy of gender in nationalist and anti-colonialist discourses. Nationalism and masculinity are always already paired conceptually, Massad (1995) suggests, with nationalist agency articulated in masculine terms. Therefore, the metaphor of the nation as motherland or fatherland, the centrality of homosocial institutions in the defense and administration of the nation, and the gendered strategies of reproducing the nation, contribute to the constitution of a distinctly masculine nationalist discourse. In his study of Palestinian nationalism, he shows how the wrongs of colonialism is metaphorically imbricated in a violent sexual act, in its discursive strategies. After the 'rape' of colonialism, women were disqualified from the role of reproducing the nation. This, not only reveals, he argues, "the importance of eugenics in nationalist logic", but men now reproduced the nation: "Territory was replaced by paternity"(1995:469). Precisely because European nationalist agency was defined by white masculinity, the anti-colonial nationalist project, which adapted this model, had to define a masculinity that was distinctive from the Western import. This leads to what Massad believes is the persistent need to perform this masculinity, that simultaneously guarantees it.

Therefore, resisting occupation, "can be used to stage masculine acts as it performs nationalist ones"(1995:481). The homosocial form of bonding favoured by nationalism, Mercer suggests, through a pseudo-psychoanalytical reading, leads to a situation where , "the either/or logic of castration is brought to bear on relations between men via the binary fixations of a me/not-me boundary that positions the figure of the homosexual as the enemy within" (1996:125). This leads to a homophobic fixation and disavowal in liberationist and nationalist discourses. Therefore the vitriolic attacks against homosexuality, by African leaders, may be seen as emanating from the perceived threat that the homosexual represents to the fraternity of men, that constitute and reproduce the nation, in much the same way that the rights of gay men and women to serve in the army has been met with fierce opposition. Also, for what Fanon saw as the emasculation of the black man by colonialism, the re-staging and performance of masculinity in the post-colony, become an important marker in not only the ideological war with the West, by casting aspersions on its 'manliness', or lack thereof, but becomes significant in the rejection of the 'feminisation' of the black man by racist and colonial discourses.

We have attempted in this paper to interrogate the discursive strategies employed by certain nationalist and anti-colonialist discourses to refute citizenship claims made by gays and lesbians in the Southern African region. In their paradoxical strategy of imitation (of Western models) and rejection (of those self-same models), we hoped to have clarified both certain aspects of nationalist thought in general, and delineated the peculiarities of anti-colonial, but specifically African nationalisms. The centrality of 'the nation' to the African nation-state and the consequential duality of citizenship, must have important consequences for any strategy that aims at achieving gay and lesbian equality. Although a right-based discourse would seem appropriate to achieving those ends, the contradictory, and often antagonistic, relationship between the discourses of democracy and that of the nation, makes for a more complex situation. Therefore, addressing the political rights of gays and lesbians, and the social issue of homosexuality would demand a strategy developing simultaneously on two fronts: one directed to the acquisition of individual rights, as part of the human rights agenda; and the other aimed at developing and defining a sexuality that is specifically African - in much the same way as the most progressive of nationalisms.

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