

**ABORTION AS DISRUPTION:
DISCOURSES SURROUNDING ABORTION
IN THE TALK OF MEN**

by

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

In the

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

at

RHODES UNIVERSITY

SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR CATRIONA MACLEOD

JANUARY 2011

Abstract

This research examines men's talk around abortion using critical discourse analysis. Current literature indicates a dearth of studies addressing the topic of men and abortion in various domains. An understanding of men's relationship to abortion, however, is crucial to understanding abortion as a social phenomenon. This study utilises the work of Foucault around discourse and power, as well as Butler's work on gender to create a theoretical framework to approach data. Data were collected in the form of interview groups made up of men, as well as newspaper articles and on-line forum discussions that featured men as the author. What emerged from these texts was a 'Familial Discourse' which posits the nuclear, heterosexual family as a long term relationship between a mother and father, which forms the ideal site to raise children. Discourses that support the family are a discourse of 'Equal Partnership' which establishes the man and the woman as being in a heterosexual relationship where each partner is seen to have equal power, and a discourse of 'Foetal Personhood' which constructs the foetus as a child in need of a family. Related to the heterosexual matrix, the formation of a family unit comes to be constructed as 'natural'.

Abortion acts as a disruptor to these discourses. By disrupting the formation of the family unit, abortion negatively affects the individuals involved. A relationship where a formation of a family unit was disrupted cannot survive. If the female partner has an abortion without her partner, it is seen as disrupting the equal partnership between the man and the woman. Men in this case see themselves as 'powerless' compared to women. From this point a 'New Man' discourse emerges, where men position themselves as loving and responsible in the context of a nuclear, heterosexual family unit. Abortion disrupts 'Foetal Personhood' and is constructed as murder. In the case of rape the 'Familial Discourse' can be invoked either to justify abortion or resist abortion, based on whether or not a family unit can be formed. These discourses reproduce patriarchy.

Keywords: Foucault, Butler, Discourse, Masculinity, Patriarchy, Abortion

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, Catriona Macleod, for her dedication to this project even in the most trying of circumstances. I would like to thank my co-researchers, without whom this work would not be possible. I would also like to thank my friends over these past few years for providing support when I needed it most. Most of all, I would like to thank my parents.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Context

With South Africa becoming a democracy in 1994, the ANC aimed to address issues of gender inequality and reproductive rights (Patel & Myeni, 2008). As a part of this, the Choice on Termination of Pregnancy Act of 1996 was legislated. This Act allowed women to safely and legally terminate a pregnancy and for the state to provide this service. In this Act, a woman of any age may terminate a pregnancy in the first trimester without the need to consult with her partner or anyone else. After this period, a woman may terminate her pregnancy with the consultation and approval of medical practitioners.

In addition to addressing issues of gender inequality and reproductive rights, the legalisation of abortion resulted in a lower incidence of unsafe abortions (Berer, 2004) and a lower mortality rate from unsafe abortions (Berer, 2004). Maternal morbidity immediately decreased after the implementation of the Act (Jewkes, Brown, Dickson-Tetteh, Levin & Rees, 2002).

This is not to say that the passing of the Act has been unproblematic. In addition to difficulties due to a lack of resources, there has been resistance to free access to abortion due to negative public opinion around abortion. While there were pro-choice groups who advocated the passing of the Act, polls at the time of the passing of the Act showed that the majority of South Africans were opposed to the legalisation of abortion (Stark, 2003). There have been legal challenges to the Act itself and to the fact that the act allows minors to seek a termination of pregnancy without parental consent (Mhlanga, 2003).

Despite the fact that the Act legalised abortion, illegal and unsafe abortions are still performed, with up to 100 000 being performed each year (de Nobrega, 2006). Some reasons for “backstreet” abortion still being common are lack of information or knowledge that abortion is legal and the social stigma of having the community know that one has had an abortion (Varga, 2002). In addition to this, despite the fact that it is their legal obligation to provide abortions or alternatively give a referral, nurses and doctors sometimes refuse to do so (de Nobrega, 2006).

The Gendered Nature of Abortion

The above discussed barriers to free access to abortion, such as the stigma around abortion, illustrate that there is a very social element to the practice of abortion. Boyle (1997) concurs with this and points out that, in addition to being a health issue, abortion also involves particular social, psychological, legal and political practices. These practices occupy spaces in both private and public spheres of life. This can be seen, for example, in the seemingly individual choice on whether to abort, one's opinions on abortion on the one hand and on the other hand, the vast literature on the psychological effects of abortion, the legislation around abortion and the political battles around abortion, for example in the form of the pro-life/pro-choice debate.

There is a gendered dimension to the social practices surrounding abortion. For example, debates around abortion rely on particular discourses surrounding motherhood (Boyle, 1997). Motherhood, or to become a mother, is constructed as an essential aspect of being a woman (Dubriwny, 2010). This is predicated on the notion that women have the biological capacity to reproduce. And because of this, women are constructed as having "natural feminine instincts that allow them to happily and selflessly nurture their children" (Dubriwny, 2010, p. 287). The process of becoming a mother is seen as natural and women should not intervene in this process (Braam & Hessini, 2004). Abortion, then, is seen as an intrusion upon the natural process of a woman becoming a mother (Braam & Hessini, 2004).

That women are constructed as mothers in relation to abortion does not mean that men are excluded from the practice of abortion. The "issue of abortion typically has been categorized as a 'woman's issue'" (Holmes, 2004, p. 103) and "complete accountability for the birth of children... appears to lie with women, and they are the focal point of attention in research, policy and even the marketing of contraceptives" (Hussain, 2003, p. 46). This is despite the fact that men have historically often acted as gatekeepers to women's reproductive rights (Boyle, 1997). According to Varkey, Fonn and Ketlhapile (2000) women have reported in various studies fear of being stigmatised, disapproval and violence as reasons for not informing partners about their decision to have an abortion. They go on to report that 56% of women were too afraid to inform their partners of their decision, and 36% of those that did tell their partners received a negative reaction. Recognising that men play a role around abortion practice leads to the impetus for this research.

In general, there is a lack of acknowledgement that the attitudes of men are critical to the reproductive behaviour of women (Hussain, 2003). Hussain (2003) thus calls for an examination of reproductive processes (including abortion) from a perspective of gender to understand power relations between males and females in a wider socio-cultural context.

Unfortunately, research regarding men and abortion has not examined power relations that mediate the practices surrounding abortion, but has instead focussed on a limited number of issues, such as male response and men's attitudes toward abortion (see further discussion in Chapter Four). Thus there is a great need to study power relations with respect to men and abortion. In addition, this type of study can aim at extending the available literature that deals with women and abortion, by speaking to men's relation to abortion.

The Research

In focussing on issues of power relations, there is a need to conceptualise what power is. In this research, I draw on Foucault's (1978; 1982) work on discourse and power. Foucault's work here focuses on how objects in the social world have a history and how power emerges in multiple ways and from multiple sources to construct those objects in the social world. Being that Foucault did not directly discuss gender, the work of Butler (1990, 1993) is examined. Butler's work takes up Foucault's around discourse and power and applies it to gender to show the radically constructed nature of both gender and sex. In this regard, Butler discusses the heterosexual matrix, which has implications for questions around reproduction and abortion.

Being that this study examines issues of discourse and power, it situates itself in a post-structuralist paradigm. Post-structuralism is a term used to refer to loosely affiliated thinkers who share a close attention to language and a rejection of the transcendental subject (Sarup, 1993). The subject instead is considered to be constituted through language or discourse. Language in turn is not considered to be a neutral vehicle for thought, but rather a constitutive element of thought.

Drawing on this post-structuralist paradigm, research questions are thus:

- 1) What discourses do males draw on when talking about abortion?
- 2) In what ways do these discourses construct the topic of abortion?
- 3) How do these discourses position gendered subjects in relation to abortion and to each other?

Data were collected through interview groups comprised of men with the focus of the interviews being on abortion. To achieve this, a vignette case as well as an informational brochure were presented and discussed within the groups. In addition to these interviews, data were also collected in the form of newspaper articles that were written by a male author and on-line internet forum comments that were made by men around the topic of abortion. Data were then analysed using Parker's (1990) method as it aligned itself with Foucault's work around discourse and power and Davies and Harré's (1990) work on subject positionings.

Overview of the Chapters

The research question deals broadly with discourses surrounding abortion in the talk of men. As such, it can be broken into three parts: discourse, abortion and men. Thus in the first three chapters I aim to respectively discuss each of these terms in relation to the research question.

In Chapter Two I discuss discourse and how this relates to Foucault's ideas around power and knowledge. The discussion here focuses on how for Foucault power is not a single overt structure to be overcome. Instead, Foucault sees power as running through our interactions and delimiting what we can and cannot do. This then is related to gender through the work of Butler, who takes up Foucault's ideas in this regard. Butler presents the ideas of viable subjectivity and cultural intelligibility which are then related to the concept of the heterosexual matrix. Butler's ideas are then extended to show how they are relevant to understanding abortion.

Following this, in Chapter Three, I discuss the notion of masculinity drawing on the theoretical framework established by Foucault and Butler. To understand masculinity I extend the theoretical framework to discuss the concepts of patriarchy and phallogocentrism.

I discuss in particular how phallogocentrism occurs in masculinity studies and how this concept, together with that of patriarchy, identifies pitfalls to avoid as well as directives to take when attempting to study masculinity.

In Chapter Four I provide a reading of abortion literature relevant to the South African context. Here I examine the history of abortion in South Africa. Emerging from this are notions of 'foetal personhood' and an attached 'motherhood' which construct the foetus and the woman, but which also have implications for how abortion is constructed. I then discuss some of the research that has already been conducted regarding men and abortion.

At this point, having mapped a theoretical framework as well as the social terrain of abortion, I attempt to translate this into a method of investigation. Thus, Chapter Five serves as a description of the methodology used in this study. Being that the concept of discourse is central to this study, I trace the history of discourse in social theory so as to find a suitable means of analysis relevant to this study. I thus discuss some methods of discourse analysis and justify the use of Parker's (1990) method. I then discuss the 'mechanics' of the research, being sample, data collection and issues of reflexivity and ethics.

Having established how the study was conducted, I present a discussion of the results in two parts. Chapter Six forms the first of this and focuses on a 'Familial Discourse' emerging from these texts, which presents an idealised form of the nuclear, heterosexual family. This discourse is supported by a discourse of 'Equal Partnership' between the man and the woman and a discourse of 'Foetal Personhood'. Each of these discourses contributes to the formation of a family unit. These discourses are then related to Butler's concept of The Heterosexual Matrix to show how they are constructed as 'natural'.

Following this, Chapter Seven forms the second part of the discussion of results. Here I discuss how abortion disrupts the discourses presented in the preceding chapter. Because abortion disrupts these discourses it is constructed as detrimental to the individuals involved as well as society. I then relate these discourses to the concept of patriarchy to show how they serve male interests.

Finally, Chapter Eight concludes this work by presenting a brief overview of the research and a summary of the main findings. I then provide some implications and suggestions for future research.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Orientations

Introduction

As the central problematic of this project has to do with power, it is necessary to discuss what exactly power is. Foucault's work on power has been utilised in areas such as race, class, sexuality and of course gender. While Foucault does not explicitly discuss gender or gendered power relations, his work has been taken up and connected to gender by a number of authors (see for example Bartky, 1988; Sawicki, 1991; Deveaux, 1994). In this regard and for the reason that Foucault does not explicitly discuss gender, Butler's work proves highly useful in sculpting Foucault's ideas toward an understanding of gendered power relations. In this chapter then, I first discuss Foucault's ideas on power and then go via Butler so as to understand gendered power relations.

Foucault On Power

Foucault (1978, 1982) provides the reader not with a theory or methodology of power, but rather an analytics of it. Foucault's aim is not to define power, to see it as a thing or as a reified entity, but instead to describe how it operates and the ways in which it can be analysed. Rather than engaging in a discussion that names, classifies or categorises power and its essential features, his work offers a number of propositions on how power operates in society. And this is how his work becomes valuable – as a means to describe how particular power relations occur in social, political and economic relations, to see how they produce and delimit subjects and how those subjects are placed in the matrices of power.

Following this, a most important aspect of Foucault's work is a shift away from the conception of power as a sovereign entity. Sovereign power or the conception of power as a sovereign entity is a view that power is a singular, visible force held by an individual or a group of individuals. It is an external force acting over society and its ability to coerce individuals is only repressive. In such a view power may be overthrown by the subjects that it governs. Foucault (1982) rejects this and instead sees power as existing at the nexus of society. Power does not exist externally over social, economic and political relations, but rather within them, shaping and informing them. Power is not a singular entity possessed by

particular individuals, but is rather a series of practices, relations and strategies existing in a particular society. To imagine a society free from power relations is an impossible abstraction.

To further illustrate this shift away from power as a sovereign entity, a discussion of *Discipline and Punish* (published in 1977) is useful. In this work, Foucault traces the history of the modern penal system and examines how prisons operate. In so doing, he discusses some aspects of how power operates and how sovereign power (visible and singular) has been replaced by the more effective disciplinary power (invisible, anonymous and multiple).

Discipline and Punish begins with a startling comparison of a violent public execution in 1757 with a strictly controlled daily regiment of a prison in 1837. For Foucault, these two accounts represent more than just an example of prison “reform”. They must be thought of as representing a shift from a sovereign to a disciplinary power. The public spectacle of torture (and public execution) was a visible means to assert the authority of the singular *sovereign power* – the monarch. Participation then was essential; power needed to be observed and thus be made visible by the presence of the viewers. For these lower orders, the viewers, who were arranged in hierarchy below the monarch, it was clear who controlled the power and what would happen if that power was violated.

But in visibly asserting its authority, sovereign power also made itself susceptible to dissent. The act of participation, as viewers, allowed the possibility for the overthrow of power. The executioner could be attacked and it was not uncommon for the condemned to be attacked or freed by the viewers. Thus with sovereign power it was clear for the lower orders, *who* had the power and by *what means* to overthrow that power.

Because of this, and also due to the fact that less serious and less detected crimes were not adequately included in this form of punishment, a more effective form of power was needed. With the rise of Humanism, reformers argued for more humane means of punishment and advocated an emphasis on the individual human subject. Unknowingly, the work of the reformers led to the shift from sovereign power to the more effective *disciplinary power*. Where power was once singular and visible, it is now anonymous and multiple. Foucault (1977) uses the example of Jeremy Bentham’s design of The Panopticon to illustrate this new form of power.

The Panopticon is made up of two parts, a circular outer building that contains in the centre a tower. The outer building contains floors of cells, each cell being the thickness of the building allowing a window on the outside and the inside, which backlights any figure in that cell. The effect of this is that the prisoners (only one in each cell) cannot communicate with each other or with the guard. Nor can they see the guard, who could possibly be watching any one of them from the invisible confines of the tower. This then means that prisoners must become self-regulating. Each is reproducing the watchful gaze of the guard and is thus a self-policing agent. In this system of self-surveillance, all are visible save for the source of power. This then for Foucault describes how disciplinary power operates in society. Individuals become self-policing, self-regulating agents that have internalised the normalising gaze of society. The Panopticon thus represents the ideal form of power. People can be controlled more effectively and fewer people are required to visibly operate that control. It controls minds and bodies; it makes subjects subordinate without the need for a clear sovereign power.

The discussion of this shift in power from sovereign to disciplinary is not so much to assert the primacy of disciplinary power over sovereign power, but to demonstrate the nuances of Foucault's conception of power, to show how radically different it is to the view that power is an overt structure that is clearly visible to the subjects it governs. This kind of view of power, the kind that Foucault radically deviates from, is referred to by Foucault (1978) as the "juridico-discursive" model of power.

The juridico-discursive model of power sees power as a negative, that it is an overt force telling individuals not to do something. It always operates as this negative relation, constraining individuals and creating boundaries and limits. In this instance, power is much like the law, determining how things can be treated and understood. Power only prohibits and represses, and it is known what will happen if there is a display of anything that goes against the prohibitory law. And since power is an overt structure, it operates from the top down and is possessed by an individual or group of individuals, much like a king to his subjects or as the state to its citizens. In this way it is uniform; it works the same at all levels, differing only perhaps in scale, but nonetheless uniformly.

In this view, power is always negative; it is always telling people what they cannot do, as opposed to what they can do. All it serves to do is to prevent what it dominates from doing

anything. This is why Foucault labels this model of power as “juridico-discursive”, because it centres on obedience to the law and discipline if one attempts to usurp that power of law.

And finally, it is a power whose model is essentially juridical, centred on nothing more than the statement of the law and the operation of taboos. All the modes of domination, submission, and subjugation are ultimately reduced to an effect of obedience (Foucault, 1978, p. 85).

Foucault (1978) does not deny the existence of juridico-discursive power. He does, however, call attention to the fact that juridico-discursive power does not explain the many ways in which power works nor can it explain all social interactions and processes that occur. It is for this reason that Foucault details the characteristics of power. Power is not a ‘thing’ that can be possessed and thus lost; rather it is exercised from all points in all directions. Power does not act externally upon social, political and economic relationships; it is found within these relations and determines them. Power does not come from the top down in a hierarchal fashion to which each class is afforded less and less power – it is present at all levels of society. Though one can decipher the reasoning behind strategies of power, there are no individual subjects or architects that determine power.

What then is the use in seeing power in the way that Foucault describes? A Foucauldian analysis of power allows one to analyse power structures that are not merely overt, but those that are insidious and at times seemingly innocuous. Such an analysis allows one to examine power structures as part of a cultural matrix, where power relations are not named as such and instead are taken for granted practices which are seen as part of a natural order. Here power runs through the individuals, institutions and social processes it governs. In this regard, Foucault’s *The Birth of the Clinic* (1973) examines the development of the medical profession and the institute of the clinic. In this work Foucault describes the types of relationships that form with and through the medical profession, such as the doctor to the patient or the anatomist to the cadaver. It is not that these are ‘objective’ relations or ‘mindless phenomenologies’, but rather that they are governed by power relations that dictate what is relevant to particular interactions and how subjects can interact with one another in each of those above named situations.

Although here Foucault is referring to disciplinary technology, his later work on governmentality (see Foucault, 1991) describes other modalities in which power manifests.

What these modalities have in common, however, is the shaping of social interactions through the reproduction of particular power relations.

A Foucauldian analysis thus offers the ability to see social interactions and social relations as relations of power. For Foucault, objects in the social world are an effect of power – they are sources where power emerges. As Foucault (1978, p. 93) states, “power is everywhere, not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere”.

Foucault’s work has been criticised by numerous authors as being overly deterministic and nihilistic (McLaren, 2002) and as describing a “totalitarian power from which there is no escape” (Sawicki, 1991, p. 25). Indeed, Foucault (1980, p. 141) states that power “is already there, that one is never outside it, that there are no margins for those who break with the system to gambol in it”. But he goes on to say that though “one can never be outside power [this] does not mean that one is trapped and condemned to defeat no matter what” (Foucault, 1980, p. 141).

Foucault (1978, p. 95) states that “where there is power, there is resistance.” This does not allude to the liberal concept that power and resistance are in diametric opposition, where one can overcome the other in order to achieve freedom (Macleod & Durrheim, 2002). For Foucault, ‘resistance’ is another name for ‘power’ (Heller, 1996). Depending from which perspective one assesses a dialectic power relation conflict, one could equally assign one group as ‘resisting’ the other (Heller, 1996). Foucault uses the term ‘resistance’ to describe that some groups have less power than their adversaries, not that they are ‘powerless’ (Heller, 1996). The act of classification then is necessary, because in assigning one group as having less power than an adversary, this is in effect an act of resistance, an exercise of power (Heller, 1996). The act of classification itself can always be contested by the resistance or the exercise of power by another group (Heller, 1996). Thus for Foucault (1978) ‘power’ is not only repressive or disciplinary, but can be ‘resisted’ or contested by other forms of power.

In Foucault’s (1972, 1977, 1978) work, power, knowledge and discourse are inextricably linked. Knowledge and power “directly imply one another” in that power relations always have a corresponding field of knowledge, and that knowledge assumes certain power relations and in turn legitimises these relations (Foucault, 1977, p. 26). Knowledge then is a political act – to gain knowledge about something in a particular way is an exercise of power.

Certain types of knowledge construct the social world, and each of these constructs brings with it the potential for social change.

According to Foucault (1978), discourse is what links knowledge to power. Foucault (1972, p. 26) defines discourses as “practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak”. He goes on to say that discourses “are not about objects; they do not identify objects, they constitute them” (Foucault, 1972, p. 26). Objects discussed by Foucault such as madness, sexuality or discipline or for that matter any object in the social world, such as abortion can only exist meaningfully in the discourses that surround them. How we can speak about an object (through discourse) determines what can be known. What we know about an object determines how we can speak about that object. Knowledge and thus power is an effect of discourse. This then has implications as to how individual human subjects relate to the social world, and the ways in which they can act.

Foucault (1972) rejects the notion of the “transcendental subject”, a concept that underlies much scientific and emancipatory discourse, such as that of Marxism or Humanism. He rejects the notion that there is an “essential” or “true self” to humans, one that could be discovered empirically or by means that similarly evoke a universal self. Instead for Foucault (1982), individual human subjects are constituted through discourse; individual subjects are enmeshed in various power relations. It is not that there is an undifferentiated subject that is thrown into different socio-political contexts over various historical epochs, but rather that it is those very contexts, those discursive formations that have as their effect the subject – a subject that differs according to context. The historical emergence of the mad, the criminal or the perverse individual or for that matter mothers, fathers or a foetus cast as a child, does not posit some “essential” characteristic of these individuals. Rather, their subjectivity is constituted through discourses that would identify them as such and their relations to other subjects are found in those particular discursive formations.

Criticisms of Foucault are offered by writers from many differing theoretical backgrounds. A relevant critique of *Discipline and Punish* is that it is not historically rigorous enough, that it is selective and under sourced (Hook, 2004). A counter-argument would be that Foucault is not interested in history for the sake of history, but uses it to show how power operates (Hook, 2004). McNay (1994 cited in Hook, 2004) comments that vast arrays of phenomena are regarded as undifferentiated by Foucault’s concept of disciplinary power. This then draws

attention to the claim that Foucault's ideas must be applied to specific contexts (Hook, 2004) and that Foucault's earlier ideas on disciplinary power should be regarded alongside his later ideas on power, such as that power is multi-faceted and not only either juridico-discursive or disciplinary.

The most imminent critiques of Foucault's work, echoed by a number of authors, are his androcentricism (see Soper, 1993) and the normative tradition he assumes (see Ells, 2003). It has been claimed that as a white male Foucault did not pay enough attention to power relations intersecting along categories of race and gender. Furthermore, Foucault critiques the normative tradition of the Enlightenment, but at the same time he covertly relies on these values. Various authors have thus called Foucault's work useless or nihilistic in its disavowal of normative values which must at the same time presuppose them (see Ells, 2003).

Despite the fact that Foucault seemingly ignored race and gender in his work, this does not mean that the ideas therein cannot be appropriated and used to address issues of race and gender. Rather than being pre-occupied with the lack of attention to gender in Foucault's work, it is better to focus on what the implications are for understanding gendered power relations (Macleod & Durrheim, 2002). This means an analysis of gender that does not rely on the notion that gender is fixed or unitary, neither that it is a core expressing itself in a given social context, but rather that the *gendered* subject is produced as an effect of a myriad of power relations. How then are subjects produced along gendered lines? What are these multiple forces of power? What type of strategies, practices and interactions can be identified that power itself has created and delimited along gendered lines?

An analysis of *gendered power relations*, using Foucault's tools, identifies power as being exercised, rather than being possessed by men, and as such emerging through the individuals, institutes and practices inherent in power relations, that delimit and place subjects in different positions. Thus there cannot be a reduction to man/woman dichotomies whereby men are necessarily overtly exercising power over docile women; rather power is shifting and exercised at points of interaction and practice.

But this is not to deny that certain subjects (produced through power) are placed at an advantage over other subjects. The fact that there are more male politicians than female, demonstrates that there are power relations in effect which enable men to assume these

positions much more easily than women. Furthermore, it is not to deny that there are women who are placed in situations of violence perpetuated by men. A Foucauldian analysis of gendered power relations recognises these overt forms of power, but also pays close attention to other forms of power. It examines the multiple relations of power that produce subjects and how these govern them.

The Contributions of Butler

Butler (1990; 1993) is an author who has been heavily influenced by Foucault in her work around gender, feminism and sexuality. Butler takes up Foucault's ideas, as well as the ideas of others, and applies them to gender to describe how individuals become gendered subjects. Her work is pivotal in understanding gendered power relations. Butler begins by re-assessing the notion that sex is biological and that gender is cultural. She notes that sex is constructed by gender and this leads her to further arguments around how gender constructs desire and *viable subjectivities*.

The idea that gender and sex are separate, or that they can be separated, was a strategy used by feminists to counter the power imbalances in society or the idea that women's place in the social arrangement was natural (see Lloyd, 2007). This strategy challenged the notion that biology determined a woman's internal state, her psychological make-up as well as her place in society. By drawing attention to the construct that 'sex' is fixed and that 'gender' is in constant flux, feminists had a means to critique those power imbalances in society and thereby challenge and change them.

In this view, then, sex exists prior to gender and gender is added upon sex. There is a biological core that exists and culture is added upon that core. Butler (1990), however, argues that if this were so, then any sexed body could assume any gender. A 'male' body could assume a 'feminine' gender, if indeed the case were that gender was added upon sex. "Taken to its logical limit, the sex/gender distinction suggests a radical discontinuity between sexed bodies and culturally constructed genders" (Butler, 1990, p. 10). Butler goes on to say that if gender were truly a cultural matter and sex a biological one, then there should be no reason for the existence of only two genders. The fact of the matter though is that there is a relationship of each gender to a particular sex. There are two genders, as there are two sexes, and each is attached to a specific sex. One cannot then adequately see gender as constructed

and not related to sex. It is 'male' bodies that specifically become 'masculine' and 'female' bodies that specifically become 'feminine'.

Following this, Butler argues that sex is not 'pre-discursive', that it is not something that exists prior to culture or discourse. She postulates that to see sex as pre-discursive is part of a whole apparatus of production of which sex and gender are both its effects. If each gender fixes itself to a specific sex, then sex itself must be thought of as part of the same cultural matrix that produces gender. And because of this, sex is not a mere apolitical surface upon which culture acts – its discursive existence is evidence of its political existence. To see sex as prior to culture or as an apolitical surface is "one way the internal stability and binary frame for sex is effectively secured" (Butler, 1990, p. 11).

This idea is developed in Butler's (1993) later work. Sexual difference does not follow directly from the material differences of sex, because sexual differences are already framed and regulated through a cultural matrix or certain discursive practices. Sex then, is 'normative' and a 'regulatory ideal'; it is "part of a regulatory practice that produces the bodies it governs... [which has the effect of its power to] produce, demarcate, circulate, differentiate the bodies it controls" (Butler, 1993, p. 1). These regulatory practices then materialise "sex" over time and through a process of a repetition of norms that give the appearance that this was always a given. Materiality then is an effect of power, in its ability to demarcate and produce bodies in particular ways. Gender again is not something added upon the neutral surface of the body, but instead the materialisation of the body must be understood as being produced through regulatory norms.

It is not that Butler is denying that only certain bodies perform certain functions, for example that, barring technology, only female bodies can give birth. Rather, reading Butler leads one to ask when and how does the fact that only females can give birth enter the cultural matrix in specific ways. At what point does the fact of birth lead to females being cast as 'mothers' or 'patients' in familial or medical discourses respectively? This is what Butler means when she says that bodies are materialised through regulatory norms. The body that gives birth is not at its essence a 'mother' or a 'patient', but the body gains subjectivity in this manner through certain regulatory norms and discursive practices. With regard to abortion, a female that terminates a pregnancy may be cast as a 'patient', a 'bearer of rights' enacting her free choice, or as a woman who has to face the trauma of abortion through rejecting motherhood.

A woman who terminates a pregnancy is not in essence any one of these things, rather she has entered a particular cultural matrix around which discursive practices and regulatory mechanisms already exist and are enacted by institutes of health, law and the family respectively.

Butler is not, by showing that sex is an effect of gender, attempting to reconceptualise sex and gender and their relationship. Instead she demonstrates how they function in a particular context or grid of cultural intelligibility (Lloyd, 2007). A 'grid of cultural intelligibility' for Butler "refers to the production of a normative framework that conditions who can be recognised as a legitimate subject" (Lloyd, 2007, p. 33). Who is a subject? Who *can be* a subject? This for Butler is tied to the idea of a liveable life, one that is considered valuable (Lloyd, 2007). There are thus consequences for those who deviate from the norm, for those who do not assume a 'legitimate' subjectivity. It is possible that those subjectivities are 'unthinkable', but also they may be punishable.

The grid of cultural intelligibility of gender for Butler (1990) centres on 'the heterosexual matrix'. In this, gender only makes sense through heterosexual desire and it follows as such that: 1) men and women are distinct; 2) the role of men is to desire women and vice versa; 3) desire follows from gender, which follows from sex. So 'male' and 'masculinity' mean a desire for women, and 'female' and 'femininity' a desire for men. Both gender and desire follow from sex. Desire here is made to be heterosexual and brings with it the oppositions of masculine/feminine which in turn are thought to be expressions of male/female. These then are particular identities; 'masculine' is tied to 'male' which is in diametric opposition to 'feminine' and 'female', for which it must express desire. In this way certain 'identities' are rendered either deviant or unthinkable – ones that do not follow the path dictated by the heterosexual matrix of sex/gender/desire. If one does not follow this, it is considered as a "development failure" or "logical impossibility" (Butler, 1990, p. 23). 'Intelligible genders' are those which follow the framework set out by the heterosexual matrix. Those are *intelligible subjectivities*.

Butler's work has been taken up most ardently by queer theorists, especially due to the fact that she identifies compulsory heterosexuality as a feature of intelligible subjectivity. While my study does not deal directly with this aspect of sexuality, Butler's work has relevance to my study when reproduction is related to her concept of the heterosexual matrix.

It is a biological fact that reproduction (barring technology) requires sexual intercourse between men and women. This fact, however, enters the grid of cultural intelligibility through the heterosexual matrix. As Butler has conceptualised, within the heterosexual matrix, men and women are distinct and their roles are to desire one another. Both gender and desire follow from sex, which is cast as being pre-discursive. Desire results in intercourse, which (sometimes) results in reproduction. One can thus trace reproduction directly back to sex cast as being pre-discursive. There are two distinct sexes, which follows that there are two distinct genders. The role of these two distinct genders is to desire one another. Desire results in intercourse. Intercourse results in reproduction. But it is not that reproduction is merely the final optional stage in the heterosexual matrix, it is present from the very beginning and at all points. Reproduction in humans *requires* the existence or rather presence of two sexes. That there are two genders, that they desire one another, that they have intercourse is predicated on the existence of two sexes for the function of reproduction.

It may seem quite strange to discuss in such detail what appears to be obvious: that the existence of two sexes among humans is required for reproduction. As stated, reading Butler's work leads one to question at what stage and in what ways the fact that only female bodies can become pregnant enters the cultural matrix. Similarly, in what ways is the fact that reproduction in humans requires two sexes cast? Reproduction is cast as a 'fact of nature' through the heterosexual matrix. The heterosexual matrix casts the function of the two genders to desire one another, thus resulting in compulsory heterosexuality. In the same way, it sees the existence of two sexes as a function of reproduction, thus rendering regulatory mechanisms around reproduction 'natural'. Examples of such regulatory mechanisms are the clinics and hospitals which cast a woman as a 'patient' to the familial discourses which cast her as a 'mother'.

Following this, if a woman reproduces, she is cast as 'mother' and this is seen as natural and pre-discursive. Debates on abortion often rely on particular discourses surrounding motherhood (Boyle, 1997). Because motherhood is a 'natural' progression from sex and reproduction, it is central to a woman's identity and functioning. Abortion itself then becomes a dangerous act, possibly even antithetical to a woman's being. Braam and Hessini (2004) echo this argument in noting that there are societal pressures to becoming a mother and the process of becoming a mother is seen as natural and women should not intervene on this process. Thus abortion is seen as an intrusion upon the natural process of a woman

becoming a mother. This, in turn, can be read as a manifestation of the heterosexual matrix. The regulatory mechanisms that cast sex as pre-discursive do so for reproduction, too. This allows those regulatory mechanisms to be viewed as a part of the natural order or as part of a natural process. Abortion thus represents an intrusion upon this natural process.

This argument relates to the global conditions of abortion. In Chapter Four, I link this to the local conditions of abortion in South Africa and in Chapters Six and Seven I link this to the data analysis.

Returning to Butler's initial arguments, sex is not pre-discursive since it is constructed by gender. It is not the expression of an inner essence or core, but both sex and gender are produced by certain discursive practices and regulatory mechanisms. Gender for Butler (1990) is not then a noun, the inner core or essence, but a verb, a discursive practice. It is a sequence of events, acts and practices that are highly regulated and discursively produced and that congeal over time to give the appearance of a natural essence. Since these events, acts and practices are discursively produced, Butler (1990, p. 33) follows Nietzsche's dictum that "there is no 'being' behind doing, effecting, becoming; 'the doer is merely a fiction added to the deed – the deed is everything.'" The doing, the acts of gender, those that are thought to be the expressions of an inner gender are in fact the true *meaning* of gender in that they are the expressions of the social regulation and production of gendered subjectivities.

These acts that constitute gender (the doing) are repeated over time in an extremely controlled manner so as to give the impression of a core being. In other words gender is "a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame" (Butler, 1990, p. 33). In this sense gender is performative, in that these acts, gestures and signifiers produce what is the gendered subject. And this is where Butler introduces the notion of *performativity*, which is very close to Foucault's conception of *subjectivity*. As discussed earlier, Foucault does not recognise a subject outside of the discursive formations and powers that constitute that subject. In the same sense that the mad, the perverse and the criminal are the effects of discourse, or formed by constitutive discursive formations, gender is produced by the effects of discourse. Butler takes this view, but also introduces performativity, the notion of a *repetition* of acts to give the illusion of a transcendental subject. For example, if women are repeatedly assigned the task of child rearing over time and through history, this produces the appearance of a 'true' gender, the true essence of womanhood, one that seems as though it had always existed.

Salih (2007) points out that when Butler says that gender is performative, this is not quite the same as saying that gender is a mere *performance*. A performance requires an actor, or a reified entity that exists before the act of performing, whereas performativity is constitutive of a subject. We must return once again to Butler's earlier idea that both sex and gender are constructed in that certain bodies are deemed masculine and others feminine and that each gender has a specific sex assigned to it. Salih provides the metaphor of clothing in this instance. While gender is a sequence of repeated acts, we are not disconnected individuals who have an objective, rational say in the matter. We may choose the clothes that we wear, but we are limited to the kinds of clothes available at the time that we may put in our wardrobes.

But if even the clothing we seemingly select is not of our choosing, how do we resist or change the constructedness of gender? Butler, in identifying that gender is an effect of discourse, encounters the same critique levelled at Foucault. Butler's response is much the same as Foucault's: a subject produced by power is not itself a recanting of the idea of agency. Since power constitutes the subject, the subject is the site of agency. Power produces the conditions of possibility. As discussed, for Butler repetition over time is what makes gender seem real, as if it always existed, as opposed to being context specific. So for Butler (1990, p. 185) then agency "is to be located within the possibility of a variation of that repetition". The discourses that restrict gendered behaviour in particular ways also implicitly contain ways in which those restrictions can be resisted. "The injunction to be a given gender produces necessary failures" (Butler, 1990, p. 185); and it is these failures that defy the restrictions that are evidence of ways in which they can be defied. It is not a subject outside of culture who examines ways in which to resist, but rather the taking up of tools that culture itself provides. Returning to Salih's (2007) wardrobe metaphor, we are restricted to specific wardrobes, but we still choose what clothing we wear, how we combine different clothing and the ways in which we wear that clothing. In this way we are going against common conventions of how to wear clothing; this is, in Butler's terms, producing necessary failures that defy restrictions.

Benhabib (1995 in Salih, 2007) argues against Butler's notion that the gendered subject is constituted by the performance of acts. She argues that if the self is made up of acts, how can one change the acts? And since women have had a long struggle for autonomy, Benhabib cautions against thinking of women as merely constituted by acts. This first criticism misses

the point, by collapsing performance and performativity into one concept. As discussed earlier, this assumes a subject behind acts as opposed to being constituted by them. It is *performativity*, and not performance that creates gendered subjectivity and thus allows for autonomy. On Benhabib's second critique, Butler (1993) concedes and recognises a value in identifying the category of 'women' for certain political and legal activism. At the same time this is with the acknowledgment that there is no unified subject, there is no transcendental and all inclusive 'woman' that can be identified, but rather that it is a category that must be continuously re-evaluated and contested. Critics have also voiced concern that Butler pays too much attention to sex difference, as opposed to a sex hierarchy, but as Lloyd (2007) points out, this relies on the assumption that gender relations are merely male-female, whereas through the concept of the heterosexual matrix, Butler shows an ordering that identifies the constructed nature of sexuality as well as gender in subordinating individuals.

This is all the more reason why Butler's work is so central to my own project. Reproduction, and in turn abortion, cannot be reduced merely to male and female gender relations. There is the aspect of sexuality, and this specifically relates to the heterosexual matrix. As discussed earlier, sex is cast as being pre-discursive, and because of this so is reproduction. In a given cultural matrix, reproductive practices and the surrounding regulatory mechanisms are going to be seen as natural and constituting a specific form. Abortion thus will have a particular place in this cultural matrix.

Conclusion

In this chapter I discussed Foucault's ideas on power and how they relate to knowledge and discourse. I discussed how Foucault's work provides an analytics of power, how power relations operate and how they delimit and produce subjects. This was presented as being radically different to the juridico-discursive model of power, which sees power as a single repressive entity telling subjects only what they cannot do as opposed to what they can do. Foucault's work is useful in identifying how the multiple forces of power relations operate to shape social relations, subjects and institutions it governs.

Following this, I then discussed Butler's work which extends Foucault's ideas on power to an understanding of gendered power relations. Butler's work examines how gender as well as sex is constructed and how the body materialises through these constructions and regulatory

norms. Central to Butler's work is her concept of the heterosexual matrix, which casts sex as pre-discursive and following this there are two genders emerging from sex which have as their role to desire each other. This then enables the entire regulatory mechanism to be seen as natural.

To this I added that reproduction is a key aspect of the heterosexual matrix. Humans require two sexes to reproduce, and because sex is cast as being pre-discursive, so too is reproduction. The regulatory mechanisms around reproduction, then, come to be regarded as a natural outcome, from the clinics that cast a woman as patient to the family that cast a woman as a mother. Because reproduction is cast as a natural process, abortion comes to be regarded as an intrusion upon this process.

This chapter thus forms a theoretical framework which provides a lens to examine past research as well as interrogate data relevant to my study. While in this chapter I have examined gender, I have not explicitly discussed what masculinity is. Thus drawing from the theoretical lens outlined in this chapter, in the next chapter I discuss some relevant aspects of masculinity and how such a discussion may be utilised toward an understanding of the discourses surrounding men's talk around abortion.

Chapter 3: Contextualising Masculinity

Introduction

In the previous chapter I discussed Foucault's ideas on power and how they relate to gender via Butler. Since my work is broadly associated with masculinity and the emerging field of masculinity studies, it is necessary now to discuss masculinity. Kahn (2009) notes that there is no one clear definition of masculinity and that definitions vary contextually. In this chapter then, by drawing on the previously articulated theoretical framework of Foucault and Butler, I shall discuss and conceptualise masculinity and how it is to be deployed in my own work. To do this, I discuss the feminist concept of patriarchy, which posits patriarchy as an organising principle around which power imbalances between men and women are enabled and following this, I discuss the concept of phallogocentrism which constructs masculinity, and femininity, in particular ways respectively.

Introducing Patriarchy

An essential concept in understanding masculinity is patriarchy, because as I shall demonstrate, masculinity emerges from patriarchy. Millet (1970) shifted the meaning of patriarchy from referring to societies where men were heads of households and responsible for the family unit, to referring to societies in which men have power over women. She describes patriarchy as being universal, ever-present, pervasive and invisible to the extent that it seems 'natural'. Patriarchy operates through a process of socialisation through social institutions that actively maintain and reinforce it, such as the family, religion, education, literature and the state. The effects of patriarchy are wide-ranging, from covert exploitation, such as discrepancies in pay between men and women, to overtly forceful actions such as domestic violence and rape. For Millet, this means that patriarchy is an ever-present power that inhabits not only the public sphere such as government and employment, but also the private sphere of the family and sexuality. The oppression of women in the public sphere is related to oppression in the private sphere. That men have more power than women in the family is linked to the fact that men have more power than women in government. Each instance where women are oppressed serves to legitimise male power at the expense of

female subordination. In this way, Millett overtly politicised the term patriarchy and made it available for feminist discourse.

The use of the term patriarchy by Millett is of critical importance (Bryson, 1999). It enabled feminists to see the connections between the seemingly individual experiences of women to the large principles of domination in society throughout history and across different cultures. By revealing that males have vested interests in maintaining connected patriarchal practices, the concept of patriarchy also explained why even the most moderate reforms put forth by the women's rights movement were so vehemently opposed by men.

Patriarchy has been described as “mechanisms, ideology and social structures which have enabled men through much of human history to gain and to maintain their domination over women” (Ramazanoglu, 1989, p. 33). Because this is such a broad definition, problems will occur and as such, ‘patriarchy’ both occupies a central position in feminist thought and remains its most disputed concept (Ramazanoglu, 1989). Part of the appeal of the concept of patriarchy lies in its simplicity, that it examines a variety of social processes and exposes an underlying mechanism in which men benefit to the disadvantage of women (Bryson, 1999). But emerging from this simplistic view of the concept of patriarchy, critics have attacked it as “producing [a] hopelessly simplistic and distorted view of the world” (Bryson, 1999, p. 311). According to Bryson (1999, p 316) critiques of the concept emerge from related points:

that the concept of patriarchy involves ahistorical, transnational generalizations which conceal more than they reveal; that its universalistic claims are based on the experiences of white, middle-class, western women; that it rests upon a false, essentialist dichotomy which treats all men as the enemy and all women as passive victims; and that its focus on the politics of personal life encourages an inward-looking and apolitical perspective on the world.

And because of this two criticisms arise, firstly that the concept imposes an “ideological straitjacket which ignores the experiences of many men and women” and that secondly, it serves as a hindrance to political action by not accurately assessing the political situation and thus the possibilities of change that are available (Bryson, 1999, p. 316). So by not adequately assessing the social situation, the concept of patriarchy serves to legitimate an unequal society. The use of the concept of patriarchy is thus seen by many as politically pernicious and in an extreme version it may even mask the true nature of gender domination (Bryson, 1999).

According to Bryson (1999, p. 316) these criticisms, while significant, “reflect misuse and misunderstanding” of the concept of patriarchy, rather than problems with the concept itself. She goes on to say that most feminists have a much more nuanced understanding of patriarchy than what the criticisms of the concept propose. So how then should the concept of patriarchy be treated? Coupled with Ramazanoglu’s (1989) statement that the way patriarchy is defined and the way in which it is used by groups of feminists will differ according to theoretical background, it is necessary at this point to present a conceptualisation of patriarchy as it is to be deployed in this work

Conceptualising Patriarchy

As discussed in the previous chapter, Foucault’s work describes a myriad of power relations and discursive formations which construct both objects and subjects and create subject positions. Here power is not a singular monolithic entity that generates an oppressor and oppressed class, whose existence can necessarily be overtly distinguished. It is not enough just to view patriarchy as operating under the juridico-discursive model of power, wherein women can be made equal to men through progressive reforms. Following this, patriarchy cannot be seen as a singular entity. The myriad of power relations operating in society are not “reducible to one societal system or process” (Hearn, 1992, p. 3). But if, instead, there are many power relations operating then “there are effectively lots of patriarchies, dominated by different types of men, operating simultaneously, overlapping, interrelating, contradicting” (Hearn, 1992, p. 3). This then recognises that there are many subject positions that men can occupy in relation to women, as well as the positions that women may occupy in relation to other women and the positions men may occupy in relation to other men. And if indeed there are many patriarchies, they need to be identified at particular locations and at specific times.

One can illustrate this by highlighting a number of scenarios, more specifically here by drawing attention to the fact that gender intersects with categories such as race, class and sexuality and is affected by global capitalism. The experience of a white, middle class woman is quite different to the experience of a black homosexual woman coming from a lower class, which is in turn different to the experience of a minor girl working in a sweatshop in Vietnam. Though the system of male domination plays a role in subjugating these women, there are other power relations at work that intersect with gender. Furthermore, all men are

not always in positions of power over all women. A male earning income through menial labour may be subservient to a middle class woman. Some women also benefit from the system of male domination and Levy (2005) points out that *Playboy*, a pornographic magazine aimed at heterosexual males, is currently run by a woman.

Those classes named above, however, are not fixed or rigid categories. They are positions occupied *at specific times and locations* by subjects in relation to other subjects. Examining the fact that *Playboy* is currently run by a woman, one can see that a class advantage is granted to the women who run the publication, through the production of certain representations of women. Those same women however (those who run the publication), may possibly be disadvantaged in other ways, which are not always related to monetary gain or loss. This returns to Foucault's notion that discourse or discursive formations have multiple effects that go beyond the original intention of the speaker.

Why then in a Foucauldian influenced analysis should the term patriarchy be utilised? Bryson (1999) points out that patriarchy is a powerful term; it is not 'gender-neutral' like terms such as 'gender relations' or 'sexism'. It provides a "permanent reminder that men rather than women are the dominant and structurally privileged gender group" (Bryson, 1999, p. 312). "Naming" is an important step in political change, and for this reason the term patriarchy should still be used (Bryson, 1999).

Conceptualising Masculinity

So returning to the question of how to conceptualise masculinity, from a post-structuralist influenced stance, it is patriarchy that generates constructions of gender. Patriarchy is the set of overruling power relations that creates the gender-binary, and from which constructions of masculinity and femininity emerge by being defined in relation to one another. In other words, in order for men to subordinate women, constructions of masculinity must operate so as to define masculinity as superior to that which it is not – femininity. In accordance with Butler's work outlined in the previous chapter, constructions of masculinity are repeated actions that congeal over time to give the appearance of an ahistorical and decontextualised stable reality. Linked to patriarchy, these repeated actions over time establish masculinity as dominant over femininity, and frame this as part of the natural order.

Morrell (1998) provides further insights on constructions of masculinity, following a similarly discursive route, which aligns with Butler's ideas on gender constructions. There is no one universal masculinity, just as there is no one universal subject. Constructions of masculinity are located at specific times and locations, with specific societies containing many constructions of masculinity. Not all masculinities exert or have an equal amount of power and some will be more dominant than others. At this point one must add to Morrell's work, given the above discussion on patriarchy, that although some men may be subordinated by other men and not all men benefit equally from patriarchy, nonetheless all men in some way benefit from patriarchy and this is at the expense of women. Morrell continues, and in line with Butler, notes that particular men cannot be labelled as possessing a certain construction of masculinity. Rather, there are different constructions of masculinity (subject positions) that are available at particular points.

Introducing Phallogocentrism

A concept which is distinct, but that relates to and interweaves with patriarchy, is that of phallogocentrism^a. This will further extend the discussion on masculinity and thus efforts to understand its meaning and functioning. Irigaray (1985) uses this concept to refer to a signifying economy that excludes women or representations of women altogether. This serves to assert the authority of the masculine by exclusion of the feminine. For Irigaray, the subject is already and always masculine, because the feminine is never present (Butler, 1990).

Butler (1990) points out though that Irigaray sees a female subject (beyond the signifying economy) that is in need of representation. To re-iterate, Butler's view is that the system of signification is in itself what produces subjectivity. So for Butler, in contradistinction to Irigaray, it is not that women are represented falsely, but that phallogocentrism refers to the exclusion of any type of representation of women in the signifying economy from the very beginning. The distinction here from patriarchy is that while both subordinate women, patriarchy includes representations of women as a means of subordination, while phallogocentrism excludes women as a means of subordination, by rendering them invisible.

^a Also used interchangeably by several authors as phallogocentrism

Further insight here can be garnered through the work of de Beauvoir. While Irigaray sees representations of women as absent from the signifying economy, de Beauvoir (in Butler, 1990) sees the female sex as marked, while the male sex is not. This manifests in that (some) social science studies see gender as a point of difference, in which the masculine has already been privileged or been conflated with a universal subject (Butler, 1990). For de Beauvoir the feminine is the negative or lack against which the masculine, which is unmarked, defines itself.

While in Irigaray's work the feminine is invisible and in de Beauvoir's work the feminine is marked, what they share in common is that in the signifying economy the masculine is privileged or conflated with a universal subject. It thus may be useful when examining masculinity to consider alongside Irigaray's work, de Beauvoir's work to better identify the ways in which the feminine is made to be subordinate. In either case the masculine is advantaged at the expense of the feminine.

Men exist as the unstated or taken-for-granted norm in many contexts and women are expected to subscribe to this pre-set norm. Women may compete "equally" with men in economic positions or political office, but terms "remain set by people who can never give birth and who have never been absolved from many domestic and caring responsibilities" (Bryson, 1999, p. 314). In these social contexts then, phallogocentrism is in play in that the terms are set by the masculine, the masculine is the norm and the feminine by virtue of this fact is automatically excluded or marked as different.

Extending this, men are seen as "the measure of humanity and that society should be organized in accordance with their needs" (Bryson, 1999, p. 314). The very measure of being a 'human being' of 'humanity' is defined by male interests, 'male' is the unstated norm to which 'female' must always aspire, but at the same time cannot be. *Ode to Joy* contains the line "All people will become brothers"; the 9th of the 10 Commandments is "Thou shalt not covert thy neighbour's wife"; a newspaper article proclaims "No healthy person can be without a woman for three or six weeks" (Wodak, 2005). These statements refer to males, but are assumed to imply all humanity – that women are included in these gendered terms (Wodak, 2005). "This also pertains to so-called neutral terms that generally apply to men such as 'every', 'one', 'the doctor', or 'the politician' " (Wodak, 2005, p. 519). Miller (2005, p. 114) argues in the *past tense* that:

Men were once the implicit centre of most political discourse, social organizations, and intellectual inquiry - universal subjects of truth whose achievements, failures, milestones, foibles and bodies were historical and biological markers of human endeavour and nature.

The necessity of discussing the concept of phallogocentrism is on one hand to further understand how masculinity attains dominance (here by excluding women from the signifying economy), but also so as not to fall into this same trap – that of excluding women when attempting to understand masculinity. Unfortunately, (some) masculinity studies fall into this trap, and a brief discussion of these studies will provide some methodological insights pertinent to my own study.

Phallogocentrism in Masculinity Studies

Psychology and other social sciences have typically treated males or the masculine as the norm by which women or the feminine are judged, and any difference is seen as deviance to the norm or as inferiority to the masculine (Brannon, 1996). This can be read as an effect of the previously discussed phallogocentrism. The influence of the women's movement is credited with the emergence of women's studies and studies working from within feminist research paradigms that aimed at the liberation of women (Mama, 1996). These studies also aimed to tackle the previously mentioned phallogocentrism in the social sciences, highlighting both new issues as well as how some issues were framed. As a result a considerable number of critical gender studies and feminist studies exist. Perhaps as a result of the women's movement, there came a barrage of thinking and writing about men during the 1980s and 1990s in social movements and in the social sciences (Miller, 2005). One can now speak of 'men's movements' and 'men's studies' (Miller, 2005).

These men's studies or studies on masculinity are undertaken through a number of different disciplines and theoretical paradigms (sometimes contradictory) and cover a wide range of social phenomena (Alsop, Fitzsimons & Lennon, 2002). What the literature shares in common is that masculinity, as is gender, is a cultural phenomenon – that it is socially constructed (Alsop, et al, 2002). These studies then draw attention to the way in which gender as a cultural phenomenon disadvantages women, but also men (Alsop, et al, 2002).

While feminist studies on women have always situated female subjects in relation to male counterparts, so as to target gender discrepancies, this has not always been true of studies describing men (Miller, 2005). It is only logical to assume that, since femininity and masculinity are both effects of discourse (in particular discourses of gender that would create a seemingly binary system), that studies on either men or women would necessitate naming the other. This, however, does not seem to be the case and many studies on masculinity or where men are the focus of research neglect to name women, as if masculinity were constructed in isolation in a world devoid of women. Beynon (2002) is an entire book that treats masculinity as a cultural phenomenon yet neglects to mention women in *any* of the studies presented. For example, studies here on men's experience in the present suggest that men can act violently or feel emasculated. If indeed this is true, to whom are they violent? In relation to whom do they feel emasculated? The answers to those questions are always in relation to other men. Men are violent towards each other. Men feel emasculated in relation to other men.

A more complete picture could be gained if women were considered: In what ways are men violent towards women? Does emasculation have anything to do with constructs of femininity? Excluding women from these studies, or the feminine signifier, seems to be a throwback to earlier social science research before the women's movement, where women were not mentioned in studies. In effect, the feminine signifier is rendered invisible, in much the same way as described in Irigaray's conceptualisation of phallogocentrism. By not referring to women, these studies at best do not give an accurate picture of the social world and at worst reproduce unequal power relations by not drawing attention to them and thus working in the service of patriarchy.

Macleod (2007) develops this argument and names three ways in which masculinities studies can fall into the phallogocentric trap. The first is that there is the conflation of "women and men into a singular, universal model" (Macleod, 2007, p. 7). This is very similar to how earlier social science studies presented findings which sampled men as being representative of all humanity. As evidence Macleod describes how Morrell (1998 in Macleod, 2007) uses the term 'youth' to refer to a particular social group, but as Morrell progresses 'youth' really means 'young men'.

The second is the over-concentration on men and masculinities as signifiers while not connecting these to women and femininities. Authors in masculinities studies may argue that there are studies that deal directly with women, and so in turn there should be studies that deal directly with men. This ignores the fact, however, that studies on women are not studies of women in isolation, but women in relation to men. Studying women emerged as a result of women being historically excluded in research, either by being ignored (masculinity as humanity) or as being represented as 'other' or as different to a masculine norm. The danger here is that studies on men may run the risk of re-asserting or re-producing this historical exclusion of women in research.

The third and final point that Macleod (2007) makes about masculinity studies is that by referring to men's subjectivity as being contained within the boundaries of masculinity/masculinities, there is the risk of re-asserting the masculine/feminine binary. In masculinity studies there are at times reference to a sort of taxonomy of masculinities, such as hegemonic or compliant masculinity. In this taxonomy, however, there is no way to escape masculinity – a man's subjectivity is always rooted to some hitherto named masculinity. This thereby re-asserts the existence of a male/female binary. Similarly, Miller (2005) asks whether there is ever a chance for the activities of men not to be thought of as the formation of a dominant social group over men, or over women for that matter. Macleod goes on to note that in this taxonomy of masculinities, masculinities are pitted against one another, vying for dominance. But in doing so, the fact that masculinity is defined in relation to femininity is lost.

Following these arguments, there lies the danger of characterising men in only one particular way. A large section of masculinity studies relies on Connell's (1995; 2000) work around hegemonic masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity is the dominant or ideal form of masculinity, which subordinates other forms of masculinity. There is no one type of hegemonic masculinity and the dominant form may be usurped and a new form of hegemonic masculinity may be established. And while Connell is not herself saying or necessarily advocating this, some masculinities studies by focussing narrowly on hegemonic masculinity and the competition for the dominant form have typified men in a particular way. Men and various forms of masculinities become typified as aggressive, dominant, destructive and violent. Masculinities and men must always assert themselves and everyday interactions that

display values such as sharing and selflessness are ignored (Miller, 2005). This then does not accurately capture the social world.

Returning to the exclusion of the female signifier in masculine studies, Miller (2005, p. 114) accuses a large portion of this body of work as being “largely a first world discourse about men’s rights, nurturance, feelings, and confusion” and perhaps this is as a result of a taxonomy of masculinities whereby some masculinities are subordinated by the dominance of others. This type of work can quickly become opportunistic, relying on the rhetoric that ‘men suffer, too’ and that ‘men are also victims’, thereby ignoring that men are largely the benefactors of patriarchy, ignoring unequal power relations, dismissing the claims of the women’s movement and of much feminist research, and ignoring that men are by and large the perpetrators of gender violence.

Perhaps here it would be a good idea to refer to Dyer’s (1997) notes on critical whiteness studies, specifically the “green light problem”. This relates to allowing phenotypically white people to *keep* research focused on themselves and similarly also claim that they suffer in a hierarchically raced world, relating feelings such as guilt, for example. The point of critical whiteness studies, however, is to examine this hierarchy and how it maintains power over the subjects that it governs, “The point of seeing the racing of whites is to dislodge them/us from the position of power... by undercutting the authority with which they/we speak and act in and on the world” (Dyer, 1997, p.2). Similarly, relating this to masculinity studies, one should keep in mind that an examination of masculinity is not to keep the focus on men so as to re-assert their dominant position in research, but to highlight power imbalances perpetuated by the system of patriarchy, so as to enable a clearer picture of those power imbalances.

Methodological Directions

The discussion on phallogocentrism and how some masculinity studies fall into this trap extends the theoretical conversation on what masculinity is. As stated earlier, the aim of the women’s movement and feminist research as stated was to draw attention to the power imbalances regarding gender and the biased methods of investigation in the academe. The focus of men’s studies then should not be to re-assert the dominance of the masculine signifier, and always to remember to relate this to the feminine. Faithful to Butler’s work,

Connell (1995; 2000) notes that masculinity is constructed through the lens of symbolic difference, that is that masculinity gains reality because it is non-femininity. This is more than just a *mere contrast* of gender, but that gender gains reality through this contrast. Methodologically then, my study aims when investigating masculinity to not forget to relate this to femininity and the power balances therein.

Conclusion

In this chapter I extended the discussion on what gender is from the previous chapter through an examination of masculinity. To understand this, the concept of patriarchy was introduced as described by Millett (1970). I examined criticisms of the concept, as well as why the concept still retains significance. From this point, it became apparent that patriarchy needed to be relevantly conceptualised for my particular work and this was done through Foucault's work. The concept of phallogocentrism was then introduced and discussed. This proved relevant in two ways. Firstly, to further understand the ways in which masculinity is constructed and gains dominance and secondly, related to this, how phallogocentrism manifests in masculinity studies. This last point provided some methodological directives on how I was to conduct my own study, most pertinently not to neglect that masculinity is constructed against femininity, and must be related to it.

This chapter thus further conceptualised gender, especially with regard to masculinity and refined the theoretical lens articulated in the previous chapter. This will be used in the following chapter to examine the literature around abortion.

Chapter 4: Contextualising Abortion

Introduction

As discussed in Chapter Two, Foucault argues that objects in the social world, such as madness or sexuality, have a history. In this chapter then, I examine the history of abortion and how the practice of abortion has been constructed and received. This will necessitate a discussion of pro-life and pro-choice arguments and the surrounding rhetoric. Emerging from this rhetoric are the constructions of foetal personhood and motherhood, and these will be examined through the already articulated lens influenced by Foucault and Butler that this study takes. Finally, being as this study focuses on men, I shall examine past research that deals directly with men and abortion.

History of Abortion in South Africa

The recorded history, or rather written, history of abortion in South Africa begins via colonial documents (Bradford, 1991). Ethnographic and historic studies show that prior to this, abortion existed in Africa (Braam & Hessini, 2004). During this time abortion was induced by herbalists and the herbs “were frequently toxic or stimulated the muscles of the womb” and these worked because “a woman first poisoned herself, then expelled the dying foetus in violent uterine contractions” (Bradford, 1991, p. 121). Bradford (1991) points out that while these methods could prove fatal to both women and fetuses, they were most likely difficult to access or ineffective. In these cases, women may have instead abandoned or killed their infants after birth.

Colonialism would usher in new practices around abortion and these would include new types of abortifacients. With colonialism came certain notions and ideas such as that ‘life begins at conception’, the reproductive function of women, and Western ideas on marriage, sexual relationships, pregnancy and the family (Braam & Hessini, 2004). Bradford (1991) describes how missionaries as well as officials were shocked by practices of abortion in South Africa. They saw this as means for women to cut the link between sex and reproduction and thus fornicate freely and not have to follow social regulations or conventions.

Bradford, however, goes on to say that women in the Transkei, for example, despite having some access to abortion, suffered through patriarchal controls over their sexuality and reproduction. Abortion in this time was wrong in that it related to a woman or a woman's sexuality as property or as a commodity (Bradford, 1991). Men might force women to get abortions against their will because they did not want to be sued by the husbands of these women, who viewed wives as property. Similarly, if a chief's wife became pregnant through adultery, she was expected to get an abortion. Abortion itself devalued a woman as a commodity: a woman who had an abortion was no longer a virgin and thus her family would receive less compensation when she was married. Social status was attached to having many children as they could continue the family after their parents died and they provided wealth, labour and care for the elderly (Braam & Hessini, 2004). A husband thus might batter or divorce a woman who had several abortions (Bradford, 1991).

But it was not only black women who required abortion services; white women required them, too. Bradford (1991) points out that during the nineteenth century subordinate groups distributed abortifacients to the dominant groups. Rich people got these products from poor people, agrarian societies from hunter-gatherers, men from women and black people from white people. Not only was it cheaper to procure an abortion from a lower social class, but the medical elite was controlled by white men who did not take seriously enough women's issues as well as actively policed and punished women seeking out abortions. In this way, Khoisan abortifacients spread to white settlers as well as to black people in the Transkei.

Eventually during the 1870s abortifacients that gained popularity in America and Britain found their ways into the colonies for those who could afford them (Bradford, 1991). Although not sanctioned by the medical profession, the profession nonetheless had to admit that these products were indeed effective. Women who could not afford these new products or could not consult herbalists began experimenting with dangerous substances that resulted in inducing abortion, damage to the body or even death. And if these methods did not work to induce abortion, suicide was the final solution.

In the late part of the 19th century, a number of interesting developments occurred. Surgical abortions by the medical profession became safer which, coupled with regulation, pushed out people from the non-medical profession offering abortions (Bradford, 1991). Under common law abortion was allowed if it was thought that the existence of the foetus threatened the

mother, and individual doctors essentially made this decision. There were, however, some social barriers that stopped doctors from performing abortions (Bradford, 1991). Doctors would perform abortion due to hazy rhetoric surrounding saving a woman's life or due to socio-economic circumstances, while many others fell back on the idea that they were preserving life by not performing an abortion. During this time, nurses and midwives working independently began to provide abortions, if a woman could not find a doctor to perform this task (Bradford, 1991). These abortions were not necessarily safe as these women did not have access to anaesthetics or other medications.

But these nurses and midwives usually only provided abortions for white women – black women were increasingly marginalised in this area (Bradford, 1991). This led to black women experimenting with dangerous substances to induce abortion, and to getting nurses and other hospital workers to steal certain medication and selling them at great costs. Bradford (1991) states that these methods were not very effective and increasingly unsafe. She goes on to say that black women were losing access to older methods of abortion and were forced to try methods that had been abandoned by white people.

British Influence

It may be useful at this stage to discuss Britain's history of contraceptives and abortion, as Cope (1993) argues that South Africa's relationship with contraception and abortion has strong ties to Britain due to colonisation. The activism around legal abortion reform in Britain was only possible once contraception became socially and legally acceptable and this would in turn become a factor in influencing South Africa's need to adopt a legal policy to abortion (Cope, 1993).

Although contraceptives were practiced by the middle class in late 19th century Britain, knowledge was difficult to come by and people who disseminated such knowledge were at risk (Cope, 1993). For example, in 1877 Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant who published Charles Knowlton's *The Fruits of Philosophy* went on trial as did Edward Truelove the following year for publishing informative tracts on the subject of birth control. In both cases, the defending parties were acquitted. The fact that they went on trial, however, demonstrates that legal authorities were trying to admonish those who disseminated information around

contraceptives. But despite these efforts by authorities, public knowledge on the matter of contraceptives was increased.

Medical professionals were equally as indignant as the legal authorities (Cope, 1993). They offered no help on the subject and condemned contraception. This came in the form of relating negative side effects to the use of contraception such as physical and mental ailments. There were some exceptions to this, but doctors who advocated contraception or spoke out in support of it, were ostracised by the rest of the medical community (Cope, 1993).

Despite negative attitudes toward contraception, people still tried to distribute birth control literature especially in light of poverty and suffering (Cope, 1993). These practices steadily grew and on the 17th of March 1921 the first birth control clinic in the British Empire was established by Marie Stopes. This was a free clinic which aimed to incorporate itself into other health services. By 1929 public support led to other clinics being opened outside of London. Many women's groups formed and this led to a 1926 resolution which was passed in the House of Lords calling upon the government to remove all obstacles to the introduction of birth control services into existing maternal and child welfare clinics. In 1930, government revised policy which would allow birth control advice to be given to women who attended a maternal and child welfare centre or were expectant/nursing mothers or were attending a gynaecological clinic for medical treatment. At this time, the Anglican Church, which previously followed the Roman Catholic Church around this matter, agreed to birth control as long as it was in line with Christian principles (Cope, 1993). This finally led to the National Birth Control Council being founded in August of that year.

Although no longer a colony at this time, but following the lead of Britain, The Family Planning Association of South Africa was formed in 1931 (Cope, 1993). This was despite facing opposition from the public, the church and the medical profession. Cope adds that the success of the British movement definitely influenced South Africa's own movement. By 1938, the government wanted to ensure South Africa was on par with the advances in the Western world and in this regard The Family Planning Association of South Africa was given a 1000 pound yearly grant as well as clinical appliances which were imported to South Africa.

It was at this point that British reformers could now attempt abortion reform and in 1936 the Abortion Law Reform Association was formed in London. In some ways, the outbreak of World War II stunted reform efforts. Social factors, however, arising from the war contributed to the notion that reform was necessary: in post-war Europe there was a rise of illegal abortions; abortion during this time was allowed by authorities in certain circumstances due to fear of botched abortions; there was a population boom during this post-war period of economic pressure, necessitating fertility control; and women were made aware of their value due to the war and hence wanted increasing rights, which also included the right to abortion. By the 1970s many European Countries started allowing abortion on request, or at least under certain social circumstances (Cope, 1993). South Africa could now not ignore what was clearly a global trend (Cope, 1993).

With the advent of Apartheid in 1948, however, opposition to abortion had increased which was racially tinted (McCulloch, 1996 in Naicker, 2003). At this time, backstreet abortions (abortions performed by non-medically trained doctors) were rife. The National government, however, was concerned about a decreasing birth rate in white populations and an increasing birth rate in black populations, and this was related to the ease with which white women could obtain abortions. Religious groups generally at this time were against abortion, and the Dutch Reformed Church saw it as a threat to South Africa remaining in white minority rule (Guttmacher, Kapadia, Te Water Naude & de Pinho, 1998). Government strategies to combat the perceived birth rate problems were to provide tax incentives to white women to give birth, while promoting birth control among black and coloured populations. Family planning thus, was very much linked to the racist policies of the Apartheid government (Guttmacher, et. al., 1998).

In addition to the government's racist policies regarding abortion, Cope (1993) describes a general contempt towards women, issues of women's health and women's rights. This is evidenced by the fact that in 1966 and 1969 the University Women's Association's and the National Council of Women's respective requests for reformation of therapeutic abortion were ignored. Despite government's ideological position on race and gender, it could not, however, ignore the medical profession.

Doctors sought clarification with regard to the law. Four years had passed in Britain since the 1967 British and The Royal College of Gynaecologists' report on abortion in which it was

stated that legal abortion was no more dangerous than following through with a pregnancy. Furthermore, there were fewer children up for adoption and The Emergency Bed Service in London reported a decline in emergencies that resulted from abortions. These issues, highlighted by the medical profession, led to two courts, in 1971, stating that there was a need for clarification of the law around abortion.

The Abortion and Sterilisation Act of 1975

In 1975, as a result of these global trends as well as national pressures, a commission made up entirely of white males, provided the guidelines for what would become The Abortion and Sterilisation Act of 1975 (McCulloch, 1996 in Naicker, 2003). It was clear that the committee was trying to reduce the abortion rate and control female reproductive rights (Bradford, 1991). As the then Minister of Health stated, women did not have to be on a committee that concerned them because “if one wanted to abolish capital punishment today, surely one would not appoint a bunch of murderers to go into the matter” (in Bradford, 1991, p. 137).

Under this Act, the process required to get an abortion was extensive. The woman’s doctor, along with two other doctors needed to recommend the abortion. Of the other two doctors, one had to be practising for at least four years and neither could perform the procedure. In some instances, permission had to be also granted by a psychiatrist or a magistrate. The abortion had to take place in a state hospital and meticulous records had to be kept. Circumstances under which a woman could obtain an abortion were: if the pregnancy endangered her physical health; there was a risk of permanent mental damage; the woman was mentally disabled in some way; if the pregnancy was the result of rape or incest or if the child would be born with mental or physical disabilities. If the pregnancy was the result of rape, this had to be proved.

There were, however, groups who wanted more progressive abortion legislation such as the Abortion Reform Action Group and parts of the medical community itself (Guttmacher, et. al., 1998). As a result, parliament made the act out to be more progressive and seemingly granting more rights to women. This was done by listing the circumstances a woman could seek an abortion in the Act and that doctors performing abortions would not face being prosecuted (Guttmacher, et. al., 1998). The procedure to obtain an abortion, however, as discussed, made it more difficult to obtain an abortion than before.

It is difficult to get a complete picture of abortion during this time, since there were no adequate means to monitor abortion outside of state approved medical centres (Guttmacher, et. al., 1998). Regarding legal abortions, only 40% of applicants were granted permission to have abortions (Dickson, Jewkes, Brown, Levin, Rees & Mavuya, 2003). This resulted in a yearly figure of 1000 legal abortions and an estimated number of illegal abortions ranging from between 120 000 to 250 000 (Guttmacher, et. al., 1998). The number of women reporting to hospitals with septic and incomplete abortions increased, as well as maternal morbidity and mortality due to septic abortions. One should also note that data recorded at this time are problematic in that the data do not include women who did not report to hospitals following complications from incomplete abortions (Guttmacher, et. al., 1998). It is estimated that 34% of incomplete abortions were the result of illegal abortions (Cooper, Morroni, Orner, Moodley, Harries, Cullingworth & Hoffman, 2004).

The Choice on Termination of Pregnancy Act of 1996

With South Africa becoming a democracy, the government's aim was to address issues of gender and reproductive rights (Patel & Myeni, 2008), as well as to decrease morbidity and mortality related to illegal abortions (Dickson, et. al., 2003). This would manifest itself in a call to replace the 1975 Abortion and Sterilisation Act, which in turn would lead to the Choice on Termination of Pregnancy Act (CTOP) of 1996. The South African Select Committee on Abortion and Sterilisation (which convened to review the Abortion and Sterilisation Act of 1975) asserted that there are unequal power relations between males and females, and that females do not always have control over abortion (Erasmus, 1998). This Committee's recommendations would lead to the Choice on Termination of Pregnancy Act of 1996.

This Act legalised abortion in South Africa and made provisions for women to terminate a pregnancy until up to 12 weeks of gestation, and thereafter in consultation with a doctor due to extenuating circumstances such as risk to the women's health, foetal abnormality, pregnancy due to rape or incest, or pregnancy resulting in severe social and economic strain on the woman. After 20 weeks of gestation, a termination may only take place if the woman's life is in danger or if the foetus is severely malformed. The state must provide pre- and post-procedure counselling which is non-mandatory and non-directive. Spousal consent is not required for a woman to have an abortion. Minors do not have to gain parental consent, but

health service providers should, during counselling, encourage a minor to consult with one or both of her parents or guardians, or any other person that she chooses. A termination of pregnancy must be recorded by the person who performed the procedure and must remain confidential.

The passing of the Act was accompanied by “passionate [debate] between antiabortion and prochoice advocates” (Guttmacher, 1998, p. 192). At the time, large scale demonstrations were undertaken by prolife groups, as well as by numerous prochoice groups who voiced support for the bill. Polls at the time showed that the majority of South Africans were opposed to the legalisation of abortion (Stark, 2003). As discussed thus far, issues of family planning and abortion were influenced by colonialism as well as the racial policies of the Apartheid government. This manifests itself in some black people seeing abortion as a means of population control or seeing it as going against their religious beliefs, be they Muslim or Christian (Guttmacher, 1998). On the other hand, some black people are in favour of abortion on demand and of contraception. This could be seen in the voting on the passing of the Choice on Termination of Pregnancy Act, in which there was disagreement amongst ANC members (Guttmacher, 1998). The party, however, voted as a block and not according to individual members’ belief systems and members were told to either support the Act or not attend the vote.

The effects of this Act are fewer medical complications for women having to have unsafe abortions. Maternal morbidity immediately decreased after the Act (Jewkes, Brown, Dickson-Tetteh, Levin & Rees, 2002). Having safe and legal abortion reduces complications that would arise from unsafe abortion. This mirrors international trends which similarly reflect that legalised abortion results in a lower incidence of unsafe abortions as well as a lower mortality rate from unsafe abortions (Berer, 2004). There is also economic relief for women, who could pay as much as R1000 for a termination of pregnancy prior to the act (Presentation on Abortion to Parliamentary Select Committee on Health). This is in addition to earning potential that would be lost or loss of school time and possible expulsion for young women in school as a result of being hospitalised due to complications arising from unsafe abortion. In addition to the economic stressors of an unsafe abortion, carrying an unwanted pregnancy to term carries with it associated costs of bringing up a child.

This is not to say that attempts to implement the Act have been unproblematic. By 2000 only 32% of the 292 facilities designated to perform terminations were functioning (Dickson, Jewkes, Brown, Levin, Rees & Mavuya, 2003). In Mpumalanga, the Northern Cape and the Northern Province there were no functioning facilities, there were also substantial districts of South Africa where facilities were not available, such as the Drakensburg (Dickson et al, 2003).

Despite the fact that it is their legal obligation to provide abortions or alternatively give a referral, nurses and doctors sometimes refuse to do so (de Nobrega, 2006). Nurses make the process of obtaining an abortion and the procedure unnecessarily traumatic. This, however, is not only due to personal conviction but also due to under staffing (de Nobrega, 2006).

It should be noted that no government programme was undertaken to inform people about the new Act and as of 2000 55% of women surveyed in Gauteng by the National Department of Health were not aware of the Act (de Nobrega, 2006). While the CTOP Act has resulted in a decrease in the number of women reporting to hospitals due to incomplete abortions (Moodley & Akinsooto, 2003), illegal and unsafe abortions are still performed, with up to 100 000 being performed each year (de Nobrega, 2006). Some reasons for the fact that backstreet abortion is still common are lack of information or knowledge that abortion is legal and the social stigma of having the community know that one has had an abortion (Varga, 2002).

At this stage it may be intuitive to discuss opinions and reactions to abortion since the passing of the Act. It is not useful here to speak of pro-life and pro-choice positions, since this is an unrealistic dichotomy. Rather, one should speak of the situations in which people think that abortion is acceptable and I shall return to this shortly. At the moment, however, much research is tempered by this dichotomy and must be reported on in this way. Smith, Sdanki and Kimmie (1999 in Althaus, 2000) report that 48% of the South African population considered abortion morally wrong. Smith, Solanki and Kimmie (1999 in Patel and Myeni, 2008) report in a national survey that 54% of black people compared to 19% of white people in the sample are morally against abortion. Patel and Myeni (2008) report that, in their sample of university women, rape is the situation in which most people agree abortion should be allowed, and that this is aligned to a general trend in other research and sample groups.

Healthcare provider reactions to the legalisation of abortion have also, in many instances, been negative and Harrison, Montgomery, Lurie and Wilkinson (2000) found that healthcare workers regarded rape as an excuse used by women to get an abortion. Harrison (et al., 2000) also go on to say that as of 1996 less than 8% of nurses believe in abortion on demand. Walker (1997) found that rejection of abortion by nurses was due to role identification as mothers, nurses and wives. This does not necessarily mean that nurses will always turn away women who seek an abortion. A study on social work students found that they would still recommend a termination of pregnancy, despite their own moral belief system, because of a professional commitment to their clients (Varkey, Fonn & Ketlhapile, 2000).

While there may have been legal changes with regard to abortion, these do not necessarily result in changes in constructions of abortion (Suffla, 1997 in Mojapelo-Batka and Schoeman, 2003). Stigma remains an issue that serves as a barrier to free access to abortion, and women gaining social support in cases of abortion. Women have reported, in various studies, fear of being stigmatised, disapproval and violence as reasons for not informing partners or family about their decision to have an abortion (Varkey et al., 2000). Another study reported that 56% of women were too afraid to inform their partners of their decision, and 36% of those that did tell their partners received a negative reaction (Varkey et al, 2000).

It should be noted that programmes have been initiated by government and non-governmental organisations to enable better access to abortion services (Cooper, Morroni, Orner, Moodley, Harries, Cullingworth & Hoffman, 2004). These are: workshops to encourage tolerance among service providers to abortion; initiatives by government to help women terminate a pregnancy in places where access is blocked by health workers; broadening the CTOP Act so as to allow health facilities with a 24 hour maternity service to offer first trimester abortions and to allow trained nurses to provide first trimester abortions.

Pro-Life and Pro-Choice Positions

Previously in research, as well as in public discourse, individuals have been categorised as either being pro-life or pro-choice with regard to abortion. The current view emerging from research is that this oversimplifies a complex set of ideas that people hold (Patel & Myeni, 2008). Whether or not people believe that abortion is right will depend on the situation in which a potential abortion takes place. These are not only restricted to what have been

thought of as ‘hard’ reasons such as rape, incest and health concerns versus ‘soft’ reasons such as finance, having too many children and limiting career options, but also include “issues of its availability, moral and religious considerations, legality, cultural differences on the value of fertility, method of abortion, stage of pregnancy, health workers’ values and attitudes, the AIDS pandemic, women’s autonomy, [and] fathers’ role in decision making” (Patel & Myeni, 2008, p. 737).

Returning to the pro-life/pro-choice dichotomy itself, discussing the social meanings and discourses surrounding pro-life and pro-choice positions yields insight into the current social context. It is not necessary to go into too much detail about the arguments themselves and how they are articulated, since these are well known and rigorously debated in the public domain. Simply put, the pro-choice argument favours access to abortion, while a pro-life argument is against access to abortion. Lim Tan (2004) adds that pro-choice advocates emphasise a woman’s right to choose what happens to her own body, while pro-life advocates emphasise the life of the foetus and that the act of abortion is thus anti-life.

That the act of abortion is seen as anti-life emerges from constructions of the foetus as an ‘unborn child’ or as a ‘baby’ (Lim Tan, 2004). If the foetus is constructed as such, this will have implications for how a woman and a given community are going to view and receive the practice of abortion. Framing abortion as murder may result in a woman who terminates a pregnancy experiencing feelings of loss, guilt, anxiety and shame (Adler, David, Major, Roth, Russo & Wyatt, 1990). These feelings, however, cannot be said to occur from the abortion procedure existing outside of a cultural system – experiences or reactions to abortion rely on particular constructions of the foetus as a person and the woman as mother.

Seeing abortion as an act of murder will also have implications in terms of the implementation of abortion services and how a woman who has had an abortion is received by the community. This is, for example, manifested in staff at clinics in South Africa being unwilling to provide abortions (Varkey et al., 2000), or making the procedure unnecessarily difficult and traumatising (de Nobrega, 2006) or women being afraid to be identified after having abortion due to fear of stigma and persecution from their communities (de Nobrega, 2006).

As mentioned, the pro-choice side of the debate emphasises a woman's right to choose what happens to her body as well as her having control over reproductive rights. Right to abortion is thus linked to a woman's autonomy, having equal rights and ensuring her health and well-being (de Nobrega, 2006). The benefits of health and well-being are seen to come from the right to abortion in combating things such as backstreet abortion and maternal morbidity. But, as de Nobrega (2006) points out, this is highly problematic in that not all women have equal access to abortion. There is lack of information regarding access to abortion, family and social pressures may prevent access to abortion, and health care workers may be unwilling to provide abortions. The point being made is that access to abortion cannot straightforwardly be thought of as a step toward greater gender equality. De Nobrega (2006) goes on to say that in addition to the fact that abortion does not necessarily solve gendered power imbalances, it can actually exacerbate power imbalances between men and women, such as women being forced by men into getting abortions against their wills. Furthermore, to frame abortion as central to gender equality elevates the class of gender over race and class, that also disadvantage women. Having access to abortion does not ensure that a woman will not be oppressed through things such as poverty and sexuality, and to assert this is to misunderstand the true nature of these phenomena and the powers that constitute them.

De Nobrega (2006) continues that calling abortion a 'choice' is also somewhat misleading in that it re-directs responsibility to the woman seeking abortion. The events leading up to an unplanned pregnancy are the result of particular power relations such as male control over contraceptive use, poverty, lack of education, coercive sex and gendered power imbalances. The choice to abort is not an act by autonomous individual, but one that is made at a particular point in a process of social relations. Furthermore, what of the woman who does not want to abort, but does not want to raise a child either? What choice is available to her? The re-direction of responsibility occurs in that men are not taking responsibility for unplanned pregnancies and government is not providing strategies to combat unequal power relations or providing alternatives to abortion. The responsibility of an unplanned pregnancy, one that is potentially born out of unequal power relations, is placed on the woman and masquerades somewhat as a free 'choice'. It is also possible for men to draw on this discursive field of choice to force women into an abortion and thus abandon responsibility. This is not to say, however, that free access to abortion has not empowered some women, but that for other women, there may be pressure to terminate a pregnancy against their own desires.

Foetal Personhood and Motherhood

Thus far I have mentioned that a foetus can be constructed as an ‘unborn child’ and that this influences a pro-life position, whether a woman chooses to terminate a pregnancy and how a community receives a woman who has terminated a pregnancy. For this reason, it may be useful to examine the implications the concept of ‘foetal personhood’ has, specifically for women who may, as a result of falling pregnant, be constructed as ‘mothers’.

Foetal personhood is the construction of the foetus as a person or as a human already present in utero. As previously discussed, framing a foetus in this way may result in seeing abortion as ‘murder’ and lead to a woman who has had a termination to experiencing feelings of anxiety, guilt or loss. But this is only because the construction of foetal personhood implies that a foetus as ‘child’ requires a woman as ‘mother’. Thus, as soon as a woman conceives, she is constructed as mother, with all the cultural meanings and responsibilities implied by motherhood being invoked. Mothering becomes not a relationship to another, but an embodied state.

Debates around abortion, then, will rely on particular discourses surrounding motherhood (Boyle, 1997). Motherhood, or to become a mother, is constructed as an essential aspect of being a woman (Dubriwny, 2010). This is predicated on the fact that women have the biological capacity to reproduce. And because of this, women are constructed as having “natural feminine instincts that allow them to happily and selflessly nurture their children” (Dubriwny, 2010, p. 287). Mothering, or being a mother, thus comes with specific qualities, which are considered inherent and natural in all women. Kahu and Morgan (2007) further describe the biological constructions surrounding motherhood. The woman carries the foetus and thus is considered to have a strong bond to it, and this is influenced by hormones and a maternal instinct. Because of this bond, as well as these instinctual drives, she is considered to be the natural and preferred care-giver. It is important to note here that it is not children (or the fact of reproduction) that oppresses women, but rather the constructions around motherhood and mothering that do so (Burman, 2008).

To seek an abortion is simultaneously to make a statement about motherhood: a woman may already be a mother and not wish to make a further investment in motherhood; women who seek abortions and who are not mothers are either rejecting motherhood on this occasion or rejecting it permanently (Boyle, 1997, p. 28).

It may be the case that by rejecting motherhood, if this motherhood is constructed as being central to a woman's identity and functioning, that abortion may be seen as dangerous and even antithetical to her being and resulting in detrimental psychological and physiological effects.

In situations, however, where the negative effects of abortion are emphasised, there is never an examination of the detrimental effects of childbirth and motherhood, such as the health risks of following through with a pregnancy, negative psychological states around giving birth following an unwanted pregnancy or the negative effects of being an unwanted child (Boyle, 1997). If abortion is represented in a negative way, as being detrimental both to individual women and to society, this is in part maintained by the silence on the negative effects of motherhood (Boyle, 1997) and in this way reflects patriarchal power relations whereby women are inextricably tied to motherhood. Motherhood and bearing children grants women status, but there are also societal pressures for women to become mothers (Braam & Hessini, 2004). The process of becoming a mother is seen as natural and women should not intervene in this process (Braam & Hessini, 2004). Abortion, then, is seen as an intrusion upon the natural process of a woman becoming a mother (Braam & Hessini, 2004).

“Societal constructions of womanhood play a central role in shaping individual women's sense of self and consequently their ability to exercise personal power in relation to their sexual and reproductive health” (Braam & Hessini, 2004, p. 47). Coupled with the construction of foetal personhood, linking women's identity to motherhood ensures that social regulation of abortion occurs in ways that are not as overt as making abortion illegal.

The dual constructions of foetal personhood and that a woman's personhood is inextricably constructed as being tied to motherhood emerge in debates around abortion. Pro-life rhetoric utilises such terms as 'life', 'babies' and 'families', which is contrasted with the terms surrounding abortion such as 'death', 'blood' and 'infertility' (Braam & Hessini, 2004). Not only does this rhetoric situate women only as mothers, but this masks the fact that globally illegal abortions contribute significantly to the deaths of women, who are now put in danger because foetal personhood elevates the rights of the foetus above those of women (Braam & Hessini, 2004).

The construction of foetal personhood has implications not only in terms of positioning pregnant women as inevitably mothers. Through modern technology, the foetus as person renders the woman contradictorily present as mother and invisible. Solinger (2005) notes that a sonogram allows one to look at the foetus, but not the woman on the operating table – you cannot see both. The foetus now constructed as person is endowed with rights and takes precedent over the woman. It is, as Bordo (2000 in Solinger, 2005) calls it, a ‘super subject’. As a result women’s reproductive rights become vastly curtailed and eliminate the woman from representation through this discourse of foetal personhood. In this sense the woman is subordinated by the subject in her womb, which becomes deserving of more medical attention and rescue than her.

Post-Abortion Syndrome

Research resting on the aforementioned constructs of motherhood and foetal personhood has contributed to the so-called ‘post-abortion syndrome’ (PAS). This is defined as a type of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder that occurs in the form of the delayed onset of a broad range of adverse reactions following an abortion (Speckhard & Rue, 1992). These reactions may include flashbacks, nightmares or guilt among others. It should be noted that there is no support in the scientific literature for this syndrome (Lazzarini, 2008). The evidence, actually, points to the fact that there is no greater risk of adverse emotional reactions to terminating an unwanted pregnancy in the first trimester than there is in carrying the pregnancy to term (Macleod, 2008).

Research that supposedly finds evidence for this syndrome, however, usually does not account for a woman’s psychological state before abortion, but merely sees negative effects as a direct consequence of having an abortion (Chrisler, Golden & Rozee, 2008), or for that matter the effects of carrying an unwanted pregnancy to term. Women may have adverse reactions after an abortion because factors such as negative societal constructs of abortion, lack of social support, a pre-existing disposition toward feelings such as depression and anxiety or an emotional attachment to the pregnancy (see Adler, David, Major, Roth, Russo & Wyatt, 1990; Edwards, 1997; Steinberg & Russo, 2008; Macleod, 2008). Macleod (2008) regards PAS as reductionist in that it puts the emphasis on the abortion itself while ignoring the above factors as well as the factors that may contribute to a woman’s decision to terminate a pregnancy, such as economic difficulties, fear of stigmatisation, lack of support

during and after pregnancy, lack of support from health care workers and other general stressors.

The designation of PAS as a diagnostic category can be seen as a political move. It functions to naturalise a woman's experience within a particular construction of the foetus, thereby reifying the position of the foetus as an 'unborn child' (Hopkins, Reicher & Saleem, 1996). Any adverse reactions to an abortion are because the foetus was/is an 'unborn child'. As discussed, debates around abortion have centred on the right to life of the foetus or the right of the woman to have control over her own body, which leads to a deadlock (Macleod, 2008). PAS, however, constructs both the woman and the foetus as victim. It allows anti-abortion activists to be seen as caring for the experience and welfare of women (Hopkins, Reicher & Saleem, 1996). Macleod (2008) thus argues that this makes it seem as though anti-abortion activists are really on the woman's side and further reifies a woman as a perpetrator of violence for deciding to have an abortion.

Research on Men and Abortion

While it is only possible for a woman to have an abortion, the act of conception and the roles men play in actively enforcing societal norms, patriarchal in nature, are essential to understanding abortion as a social phenomenon. In addition to this, men are involved with abortion regarding the decision to abort, as well as in providing support for partners (Boyle, 1996).

Unfortunately, research regarding men and abortion has not examined power relations that mediate abortion, but has instead focussed on a limited number of issues. Typically this research describes a docile male, one that is powerless in relation to a female, who is seen as having the final and authoritative decision on whether or not to abort. As discussed in the previous chapter, research here sometimes falls into the same trap as other masculinity studies, that 'men suffer too' or that men can be 'victims' of abortion, especially if partners decide to abort without their consent (see for example Holmes, 2004). This trend is not uncommon in other reproductive and contraceptive research. "[C]omplete accountability for the birth of children... appears to lie with women, and they are the focal point of attention in research, policy and even the marketing of contraceptives" (Hussain, 2003, p. 46). This,

however, ignores the broad recognition that male attitudes are critical to the reproductive behaviour of females (Hussain, 2003).

Literature that directly addresses abortion with regard to men usually refers to a lack of research. Furthermore, the majority of this research has been undertaken in the USA or Europe, with none of the research being conducted in South Africa. Of the available research, areas that are concentrated upon are male opinions of abortion (Kero & Lalos, 2004), male response to abortion (Coleman & Nelson, 1999), the decision making of young males with regard to abortion (Holmberg & Wahlberg, 2000), male emotional affect to abortion (McCreight, 2004), male experience of abortion (Reich & Brindis, 2006), theoretical understandings of male experience of abortion (Holmes, 2004), abortion attitudes as determinants of male involvement in abortion (Coleman & Nelson, 1999), and sex differences in correlates of abortion attitudes (Finlay, 1981).

With regard to the above, Finlay's (1981) research in the US found, almost thirty years ago, that male's ideas around abortion were more simply structured and less complex than those of females. Males here generally focus on what is the 'conventional' route to take when faced with a pregnancy, such as starting a family. In addition to this, females also take into account how having a child would fit into their lives as well as issues surrounding the pro-life/pro-choice debate.

Twenty-three years later, Kero and Lalos (2004) conducted a study with a sample based on men in Sweden who had accompanied their partner to the clinic for an abortion. Men here may see abortion as a responsible act, as well as morally wrong. These men reported positive feelings post-abortion, such as a feeling of maturity.

Coleman and Nelson's research in the US (1999) found that male involvement in abortion could be predicted by the extent to which abortion was thought of as a woman's issue, with men who thought abortion was a woman's issue being less likely to be involved in the abortion decision. Furthermore, men were more likely to lean toward what the researchers have defined as a pro-life position if abortion was thought of as a woman's issue.

Following this, Holmberg and Wahlberg's (2000) sampled adolescents in Sweden who had shared the decision to have an abortion with their partner. They found that factors that young

men took into account with regard to the abortion decision are possible emotional reactions to abortion and the impact an abortion may have on the relationship and support around abortion, such as confidentiality issues and communication.

Reich and Brindis (2006) used a sample of men whose partners had had an abortion. This work discussed how men assign responsibility for the abortion. Men see women as either holding all accountability for the abortion decision or that there must be a partnership with the man. If the woman made the decision without the man, the man may feel left out. Men could also feel left out of the decision, even though they contributed to the women's decision to abort.

Holmes (2004) presents a case study of an American man whose partner had gone through an abortion, a fact that she only revealed to him months after the abortion had taken place, and how years later this yielded negative feelings such as guilt and anxiety. Holmes goes on to link this man's negative feelings after the abortion to negative childhood feelings such as worthlessness. Holmes then provides some suggestions for psychotherapy for men in similar situations.

Various problems with this research have been noted. Data are collected chiefly through interviews and surveys with skewed samples (Reich & Brindis, 2006). Participants are mainly males in abortion clinic waiting rooms (Reich & Brindis, 2006). Studies thus are representative of a male engaged in a certain type of relationship. The assumption that the accompanying male is the sexual partner responsible for the pregnancy is also problematic. In one study only 22 – 25% of females went to clinics with the males with whom they became pregnant (Beenhakker, et al., 2004 in Reich & Brindis, 2006). Furthermore, males in research who have been interviewed as part of a couple have often made themselves unavailable in the interview and have even left during interviews (Robson, 2002).

Pertinent to this research is the criticism that research on men in relation to abortion has made male subjects the focus of research without reference to a wider social context. Reich (2007), for example notes that there are hardly any studies that examine men's constructions of the abortion experience. Such research must, of necessity, take the social discursive context into account.

The problems regarding research around men and abortion are symptomatic of a wider problem in research regarding male reproductive roles. Research of this nature usually centre only on a limited number of issues, such as men's knowledge of contraceptive use (Greene & Biddlecom, 2000). Research on male contraceptives "emphasises failures and drawbacks, rather than the possibility of overcoming them" (Hussain, 2003, p. 47). This in turn leads to the fact that other research on male reproductive behaviour favours a problem orientated approach or a perceived concern (Greene & Biddlecom, 2000). Such examples would be condom use with regard to HIV/AIDS, absentee fathers with regard to single mothers, or high fertility rates despite family planning (Greene & Biddlecom, 2000). A problem orientated approach is limited in that it ignores how men construct their roles and how these roles are perceived in relation to women; there is an emphasis on how men negatively differ from women (Greene & Biddlecom, 2000). Thus there is a clear need to examine the power relations regarding men and reproductive roles, and more specifically as can be seen from the discussion above, a clear need for a discursive analysis of men and abortion.

Conclusion

In this chapter I traced the history of abortion in South Africa, which was tied to reproductive control in Britain. Abortion practice was ideologically tied to race and gender, but through democratisation, abortion law was liberalised and resulted in the CTOP Act of 1996. This, however, did not necessarily translate into free abortion access for all, as barriers to implementation, such as under staffing and lack of knowledge, were coupled with a general resistance to abortion by health workers, which parallels the fact that most South Africans do not support abortion.

Support for abortion, however, was revealed to be contextually based – that is, whether or not a person will advocate abortion will be determined on a case by case basis, by factors such as rape or incest. Rhetoric around pro-life and pro-choice arguments may rely on the constructions of foetal personhood and those around motherhood. These two constructions result in a woman having fewer rights than her unborn foetus, and also being constructed as deviant for having an abortion by disrupting the process of motherhood. This in turn led to a discussion on PAS, a political move framed as a legitimate diagnostic category so as to suit the ends of a pro-life agenda.

Finally, I discussed research relating to men and abortion. The research here was shown to be problematic. It focuses on a limited number of issues, and typically describes a man who is docile to a female, who has the final decision on whether or not to abort, and can at time present men as victims. Further problems with the research are that studies are primarily done in the USA or Europe, with no studies available in South Africa. Problems with this research are those around sampling: participants are mainly men in waiting rooms, or men have been part of research have left during the interview.

Related to this is that since abortion is socially constructed and mediated by patriarchy there is a dire need for discursive research in this area. In the following chapters, I examine some methodological issues and try to address this problem and provide an analysis of various texts to attempt to rectify this imbalance.

Chapter 5: Methodology

Introduction

The previous chapters formed the basis of a theoretical discussion around issues of power, masculinity and abortion. In this chapter I wish to charter a means of turning these theoretical orientations into methodological directives. Since this work is heavily invested in Foucault's ideas around discourse and power, a discussion on what discourse is and how one can do a discursive analysis is first necessary. From this point on, I discuss the 'mechanics' of research being data collection, reflexivity and ethical considerations. This will lay the groundwork for a discussion of the analysis in the proceeding chapters.

Discourse: Definitions/Conceptualisations

As stated, since this work is heavily invested in Foucault's work around discourse and power, a logical starting point would be to define exactly what discourse is. Macleod (2002, p. 17), however, points out that the term "definition gives the impression of definite closure" and a more appropriate term is "conceptualisation". How discourse is conceptualised is dependent on specific theoretical perspectives and thus is a constantly contested domain (Macleod, 2002). As a result, conceptualising discourse is difficult in comparison to traditional concepts in psychology, such as 'personality' or 'development' (Parker, 2002). There is strong disagreement on what discourse actually is and how it should be approached or studied due to differing theoretical perspectives (Parker, 2002). It must be noted that the term discourse used in this discussion is different to how it is used in psycholinguistics or traditional linguistics which focuses on the performative act of language and how language is acquired rather than the content of language itself.

Despite these disagreements, there is some consensus among authors concerning the conceptualisation of discourse within a more social constructionist approach, viz. that language is seen as the resource that reproduces what is thought of as 'reality' (Burman and Parker, 1993). It is not that language has the ability to 'deny' what is real; it is that language cannot be separated from the reality it is producing. Macleod (2002) notes that discursive studies must avoid the false dichotomy of attempting to separate language and reality. In this

sense then, language needs to be examined to find what particular effects it has on particular social contexts and how language constitutes particular phenomena in those contexts (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999).

The following are some conceptualisations that illustrate the turn to language, as well as the disagreement among authors of what discourse is. “Discourse... is any regulated system of statements” (Henriques, Hollway, Urwin, Venn & Walkerdine, 1984, p. 105); “a system of statements which constructs an object” (Parker, 1990, p. 191); “discernible clusters of terms, descriptions, common-places and figures of speech often clustered around metaphors or vivid images and often using distinct grammatical constructions and styles”, although these authors prefer the term interpretative repertoires (Potter, Wetherell, Gill & Edwards, 1990, p. 215); “a form of social practice, rather than a purely individual activity or a reflex of situational variables” (Fairclough, 1992, p. 3). Given the discrepancies around what discourse is and how it should be approached, it is useful now to trace the origins of discursive theory and how this has manifested in different approaches to analysis. Following this, I shall attempt to justify the form of analysis that I have used.

Saussure’s Linguistics

Contemporary ideas around discourse emerged from the field of linguistics and a key figure in this regard is Saussure. While traditionally it had been held that language was a mere vehicle to express thought or an underlying reality, following a turn to the analysis of language there arose the theory that language itself constructs what reality is (Burr, 1995). In Saussure’s theory, a sign is made up of a signifier and the signified (Dant, 1991). The signifier (word) has no relation to the signified (the object in the world to which it refers) (Dant, 1991). In other words, the relationship between the signifier and signified is arbitrary and relates no natural meaning. In support of this, Saussure points out the existence of different languages (Dant, 1991). If language were a natural phenomenon, one that expressed an underlying reality, all terms in any language would find their exact equivalent in another. In English, there is a different term for the meat of an animal being *beef* and the animal itself, being *ox*. In French there is only one term for both the meat of the animal and the animal itself, *bœuf*. Furthermore, even if the sign itself is the same, what it signifies is contextual; for example ‘dog’ could refer to an animal or a person, as in “You’re such a dog” (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 10).

Saussure thus argues that it is a system of signs that gives the signifier meaning. “Language is a system of interdependent terms in which the value of each term results solely from the simultaneous presence of the others” (Saussure, 1974 in Dant, 1991, p. 100). While Saussure uses the examples of *beef*, *ox* and *bœuf* which may seem arbitrary, there are much deeper consequences. That the concept of *Ubuntu* (a kind of African ethic focusing on the interconnectedness of people) is not easily translated into other languages (see Ramose, 2003) demonstrates that it is a philosophical concept that exists and originated in a particular cultural context and is not a universal signifier.

Saussure’s identifies two aspects of language being ‘*langue*’ and ‘*parole*’ (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). “*Langue* is the structure of language, the network of signs that give meaning to one another, and it is fixed and unchangeable” (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 10). While *parole* is found in language use, it is how signs are used in specific ways by speakers. *Langue* is the system of language, while *parole* is the usage of that system. Since it is the underlying structure of language itself that makes speech and statements possible, *parole* is dependent on *langue*. To clarify, the system of signs is not an expression of an underlying reality, nor does that system emerge as a true reflection of the world. The system of signs, however, is itself an expression of the underlying structure of language that makes speech and statements possible.

Developing from and perhaps as a reaction against Saussure’s ideas are those of post-structuralism. While post-structuralism draws from Saussure the notion that the meaning of signs is not found in reality, but in the system of signs itself, it disengages with the separation of *langue* and *parole* and thus does not see language as being a stable, underlying structure (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). To illustrate this difference, Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) provide the metaphor of Saussure’s linguistics being like a fishing net and post-structuralism being like the internet. Following Saussure, a sign is like a knot on a fishing net, determined by other signs, but fixed in relation to those other signs. Following post-structuralism, signs are like links on the internet, connected, differentiated and related to each other. Links, however, can be removed and new links may surface thus changing the inter-relationship between signs.

Saussure’s work initiated a great ontological and epistemic shift in the social sciences, altering the way research was conducted (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). The difference between Saussure’s linguistics and that of post-structuralism serves as an apt metaphor for

the greater debate around the nature of the relationship between language and reality and the attached ontological and epistemic views.

At this stage, it may be useful to discuss an example so as to illustrate these differences. Taking up Saussure's ideas, the anthropologist Lévi-Strauss asserted that just as there is an underlying structure to language (*langue*) that determines its usage (*parole*), there is an underlying structure that determines human behaviour (Leach, 1970). To this end, Lévi-Strauss offers up the study of myths in South America. While myths may seem arbitrary and unpredictable, when interrogated there emerges a system in which myths are related to one another (Leach, 1970), much in the same way that Saussure posits that signs are related to one another. Lévi-Strauss goes on to say that underlying these myths are 'mythemes' which exist beyond culture and determine myths (Leach, 1970), much in the same way that *langue* determines *parole*.

Foucault, in contrast, would also turn to language, but oppose the essentialism of Lévi-Strauss's work. Foucault (Chomsky & Foucault, 2006) argues that 'life' to some extent functions as a term that designates and delineates what is acceptable scientific practice, to mark what the objects of certain scientific study are, and for scientific disciplines to be differentiated from one another. Foucault notes that in the 17th and 18th centuries, the term *life* was not used in the study of nature, but instead scientists were concerned with arranging objects in the natural world (living or non-living) such as minerals, animals and humans in an absolute and irrefutable hierarchal fashion. By the end of the 18th century developments in knowledge and technology created a new plethora of terms for use in scientific discourse, of which *life* was one. The term *life* here functioned to designate and delineate scientific practice, specifically to differentiate biology from other sciences or from disciplines such as history or theology. For Foucault, *life* is not a scientific term, but rather a term that indicates epistemic difference. Foucault sees the term 'human nature' as serving a similar function as *life*. The study of human nature, did not enable the 'discovery' of the structure of myths, but rather it signified epistemic difference – it delineated one discipline from another.

To clarify, the emergence of biology as a discipline or the 'discovery' of the structure of myths is not a manifestation of the underlying structure of reality on which signs are built, but rather it is the historicity and interplay of signs that provided terms such as *life* and human nature around which knowledge came to be organised. More recently, authors such as

Billig see studies utilising discourse analysis as indicative of an underlying human nature, while Parker takes an anti-essentialist stance (Parker, 2002).

Discourse Theory

As mentioned, there is no one definition or conceptualisation of what discourse actually is, and as such there is no one approach to discourse analysis that is agreed upon in the social sciences. Each of these approaches has varying underlying assumptions and tackles certain debates and issues around the nature of discursive theory differently. Because of this, and due to the large number of approaches to discourse analysis, I have placed these approaches into three broad categories. To discuss each approach individually would be largely ineffective and space does not warrant such a discussion. The three broad approaches are firstly, *conversational analysis* (see Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974) and *analysis of interpretative repertoires* (see Gilbert & Mulkay, 1984; Potter & Wetherell, 1987, 1995;), secondly, methods that utilise *psychoanalysis* (see Parker, 1997 and 2004; Billig, 1999; Holloway, 1984), and thirdly *critical discourse analysis* (see Parker, 1990; Fairclough, 1989).

I have grouped conversational analysis along with the analysis of interpretative repertoires as these seem to describe the social world and how language is used in a relatively descriptive fashion. Conversational analysis examines how people interact when talking, for example when buying a ticket to a film, boarding a bus, speaking to a doctor, how men and women speak to each other or a conversation between friends (Goar, 2009). It aims to find the enduring structures of interaction in talk that can be found across all cultures (Goar, 2009). Conversational analysis thus is more concerned with structures of language, such as grammatical laws and turn taking, rather than the content of interactions (Goar, 2009). It aims to uncover the ‘how’ of talking in interaction.

Potter and Wetherell (1987, 1995) provide a discussion of ‘interpretative repertoires’ which they define as the textual and interpretative codes people employ to make sense of objects in the world and to describe those objects. In this approach, language is used to construct meaning from existing resources. This approach then is concerned with how people use language to interpret objects in the world in specific ways or how speakers use linguistic resources as rhetoric strategies. In this method, patterns are first identified (interpretative repertoires) and then their effects and consequences are assessed. Gilbert and Mulkay (1984)

provide the example of how scientists may draw on 'empiricist' repertoires to explain their work as discovering the facts about reality, but may conversely draw on a 'contingent' repertoire which describes a shifting reality where facts are constructed. The former may be used to justify their own work and the latter may be used to dismiss the work of other scientists as being stupid, dogmatic or using inadequate procedure.

Following this comes the second broad category of discursive approaches that draw on psychoanalysis. Parker (2004, p. 142) states that, "[P]sychoanalysis is founded on the notion of the unconscious which, for Freud at least, is the home of those transgressive desires that cannot be represented in the domain of the symbolic, that cannot be allowed except in distorted and disguised forms, into the realm of culture." The manifestations of these unconscious processes as culture can be expressed through discourse and these discourses are still accorded a social origin and history. For example, a particular neurosis can develop in the individual as an aversion to a certain 'race' group. Not all subjects who reproduce racist discourses are necessarily neurotic. An analyst here, however, can identify an internal psychological process of a particular individual while acknowledging that the individual is embedded in a particular cultural matrix.

Third and finally is critical discourse analysis. The overarching focus of these types of analyses is on *power* with a view to change power relations. The idea here is that discourse is linked to power and to how society is structured, which is reproduced by text and talk. Fairclough and Wodak (1997 in van Dijk, 2001) note that discourse is constitutive of society. At the same time it should be noted that discourse is constrained by society in terms of social relations (Fairclough, 2000). For example, there are particular discourses that emerge in magazines aimed at women around gender. These discourses both are shaped by and shape the women who write the articles and to whom the articles are addressed.

Perhaps because discourse is linked to power, Van Dijk (2001, p. 352) remarks that, "Critical discourse analysts take an explicit position, and thus want to understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality". To this end, they hold that science is not value-free and is situated in a particular socio-political context (Van Dijk, 2001). And because of this, analyses of this type may situate themselves in particular critical traditions, these being Marxism, Feminism, Post-colonialism, post-structuralism and queer theory.

These critical traditions have their own historical developments prior to the turn to language (with the exception of queer theory) and serve as theoretical orientations which discourse analysts may draw on to achieve particular aims. They are not discrete entities and analysts may mix and match them. So it is thus possible to have a Marxist Feminism or a Post-structuralist Post-colonial Feminism, for example, which then may, in addition, be aligned with psychoanalysis or critical discourse analysis. It is also prudent to acknowledge that more critical traditions may emerge with the passage of time.

Situating the Paradigm

Considering these above types of discourse analyses and their implications, I shall now briefly situate this work with regard to the above. Following that this study rests on the work of Foucault and Butler, it is situated in a post-structuralist paradigm. As previously articulated, post-structuralism developed from structuralism, retaining its focus on language, but rejecting the premise that there is a stable underlying structure to language. “[W]hile structuralism posits that the language system can be described in an objective and scientific manner, post-structuralism suggests that such descriptions are themselves always highly contextual” (Radford & Radford, 2005, p. 61). As discussed earlier, for Foucault objects and subjects in the social world are constructed through language, through discourse. Discourses are not external markers that identify objects and subjects. Rather they construct that of which they speak. They are historically located and amenable to change.

More specifically, this study assumes that the gendered subject is radically constructed through discourse and is historically located. In this regard, this study is informed by feminist work. According to Kiguwa (2004, p. 279) feminist work examines the ways in which gender is used as a means for men to oppress women or have power over women, “and attempts to change those constructs and relations that are seen to reinforce women’s subordination to men.” Feminism is not one united theory, but differs according to the theoretical perspective that a particular group of feminists may take. This study takes a post-structuralist feminist approach, being influenced by Foucault’s work chartered by Butler, and hence focuses on how gender is constructed through discourse and how it is historically located. As discourse is linked to power, this study focuses on the multiple ways power relations may act to subordinate women.

Since this study focuses on power relations between men and women around the topic of abortion, critical discourse analysis is necessary as it focuses on an analysis of power relations. Given that there are a variety of critical discourse analysis methods, I shall use one of these methods that align broadly with the post-structuralist feminism influenced by Foucault and Butler.

Parker's Method

One of the criticisms of Butler is that her work is difficult to translate into a method for discourse analysis (Speer, 2005). Her work, however, is influenced by Foucault's and thus methods that follow a Foucauldian discourse analytic programme can be aligned with Butler's work. Parker's (1990) method of analysis broadly aligns with Foucault's work and heavily invests in Foucault's work on discourse and power. Parker provides seven criteria, as well as three auxiliary criteria, for the identification of discourse, and in this way they form a framework for discourse analysis. In addition to this, Parker's sixth criterion that discourse contains subject will be augmented by Davies and Harré's (1990) theory around subject positioning.

Parker's first criterion is a definition of discourse. Parker's (1990, p. 191) defines discourse as "a system of statements which constructs an object", which draws on Foucault's (1972, p. 4) definition that discourses are "practices that systematically form the objects of which we speak." Parker sees discourse as a system of meanings and statements, which can be grouped together and which make an object in a particular cultural context coherent. This does not necessarily mean that the discourses that form the object will be consistent and in this regard there may be competing discourses that form an object. While Parker's definition seems compatible with Foucault's definition, the latter draws more attention to materiality. A 'practice' is something bodies or people physically do, and in turn are linked to power relations. If someone complains of a physical ailment such as a headache, another person may perform certain actions by moving that person in particular ways or giving him or her certain things to ingest. The person responding to the ailment could then be a 'spiritual healer' or a 'doctor', the former providing herbs and instructing bodily prayer positions and the latter providing pills and taking that person to a hospital. This demonstrates that the discourses around 'ailment' and who can treat that ailment have material consequences. The person who responded to the ailment gains meaning in being identified as 'spiritual healer' or a 'doctor'.

Second, discourses are realised in texts. But text here does not simply refer to the written word, but also to any object in a given cultural matrix that may be converted to text or be given an interpretive gloss. Parker gives the example of a toothpaste box, or the box of a video game, as objects which could be converted to text and thus be a place where discourses are found. When doing the analysis, one should examine how discourses produce a text and how that text reproduces discourse. One can consider the body in this regard. The body exists outside of discourse, in that, for example, only certain types of bodies can give birth. Talk, however, around and about the body through science, sexuality or religion is something that has a textual reality and can be treated as text. It should also be noted that discourse transforms what bodies can do. The discourses around ‘mother’, ‘child care’ and ‘maternal healthcare’, for example, influence what particular bodies can possibly do.

It should be noted at this point that a variety of discourses can speak through a given text. In Parker’s toothpaste box example, he identifies a ‘medical discourse’ and a discourse around child care.

Third, Parker notes that a discourse reflects on its own way of speaking. This means that there are places in a discourse where it can be found to be commenting on the terms that it employs and the way in which it employs them. These are rhetoric utterances such as ‘for want of a better word’ or ‘don’t get me wrong’ which, to varying degrees, may disingenuously deny particular positions or worldviews. The analyst here should examine how the discourse refers to itself, how its contradictions are referred to and how another person employing this discourse would speak of these contradictions. Examining terms being used and how a discourse refers to itself also then involves a moral and political assessment by the researcher in reflecting on those terms. In South Africa, such a rhetoric device could be ‘I don’t mean to be racist but... [second part of statement about race]’. The researcher then would have to examine how that first part of that sentence relates to the second and how this relates to wider practices around race in South Africa.

Fourth, discourses are not discrete entities; they relate to other discourses. These could be either competing discourses or discourses that rely on or support each other. Examples of competing discourses are those around the foetus, as discussed in the previous chapter. Pro-life rhetoric rests on the discourse of foetal personhood, while pro-choice rhetoric aims to counter this by using the term ‘foetus’ instead of ‘unborn baby’.

Fifth, a discourse is about objects. Discourses attached to certain objects found in the earth, such as gold or diamonds, give those objects particular meanings and values to humans. The discourses here constructing gold and diamonds relate to how those objects enter a symbolic field and how they have meaning in those cultural matrixes. In this way the object gains a particular kind of reality in a particular kind of way in a certain context. The value we place on a diamond is not intrinsic to it; it is not an essential property; yet the value we place on it results in particular effects, such as mining or 'blood diamonds'.

This then leads to Parker's sixth criterion for discourse, that discourse contains subjects. Just as an object of the earth is called a 'diamond' and is valued by humans in particular ways, a certain human may be called a 'doctor' and be valued in certain ways. That person as doctor enters certain cultural field where talk is delimited in certain kinds of way. A doctor diagnosing a 'patient' enters a relational field which entails power relations and invokes kinds of knowledge, such as the doctor as expert. There are thus positions from which to speak through discourse and the subjects and objects that they construct.

Some clarification is necessary at this point. The criterion of objects does not necessarily relate only to material objects in the world and the criterion of subjects does not necessarily relate only to people. Humans may be the objects of discourse, such as the doctor acting upon a 'patient' to get certain results. And objects may take on subject status, such as through the discourse of foetal personhood, or religious discourses that see the earth as a living being. I will expand on Parker's sixth criterion later by drawing on Davies and Harré's (1990) theory around subject positioning.

Continuing the discussion on Parker's work, Parker's seventh criterion is that discourses are historically produced and located. It may seem as though discourses are closed systems of statements, but they are historically produced out of certain conditions, and just as easily as they occurred, they may vanish. The cover of Butler's *Gender Trouble* features a picture of her grandfather when he was a boy, wearing what we in the present call *girls' clothing*. This photograph was taken not even 100 years ago, and serves to illustrate the historically contingent nature of gender.

Those are the seven *necessary* criteria for discourse, and Parker goes on to identify another three which he calls *auxiliary* criteria. The first relates to institutions in that discourse

supports institutions. Medical discourses will support institutions such hospitals, clinics and medical schools. These will have different attached material practices, for example locating patients in particular places and treating them in particular ways.

Second, discourses are related to power. Discourses reproduce power relations, and so should be discussed with regard to these. How are objects, subjects and institutions produced by discourse and what do they entail? What positions do they delimit? What change do they allow or not allow? Parker (1990) notes that Foucault used the term power/knowledge, but that power and knowledge are not the exact same thing. According to Foucault (1978) discourse links knowledge to power. It does not, however, equate the two, and neither knowledge nor power is equated with discourse. Though discourses sometimes reproduce power, to assume that they always do so would lead to the idea that power is everywhere and thus nowhere (Parker, 1990). If we always identified discourse as producing power it would become difficult to identify how resistance challenges dominant power and in what ways it does so.

Third, discourses have ideological effects. Parker's ideas about discourse and ideology are very similar to his take on discourse and power. Though discourses do sometimes have ideological effects, one should not always see discourses as entailing ideology. To do so would result in seeing those that resist power as coming from an equally ideological position as those who support that dominant power. This then lapses into a kind of relativism, which is politically pernicious and which can serve to maintain the status quo. If one tried to determine which discourses were ideological and which were telling the 'truth', one evaluates ideology in terms of content or validity of content. One should rather examine ideology in terms of its effects and relationships in a particular context or period.

To illuminate and augment Parker's sixth criterion, that discourse contains subjects, I have drawn on Davies and Harré's (1990) theory around subject positioning. Davies and Harré's work aligns itself with that of post-structuralism in that the subject is constituted through language, as opposed to being a fixed or static entity. For Davies and Harré, the self is discursively produced and an individual may reproduce multiple and sometimes contradictory positions or affiliations. Just as there are multiple discourses that either support or compete against each other around a particular topic, there are multiple subject positions that can be occupied.

Davies and Harré (1990, p. 46) explain that when a subject position is taken up, “a person inevitably sees the world from the vantage point of that position and in terms of the particular images, metaphors, storylines and concepts which are made relevant within the particular discursive practice in which they are positioned”. But this does not mean that positions are crassly assigned to us by the discourses of our time and context. Davies and Harré also identify the notion of agency. In Salih’s (2007) wardrobe metaphor, discussed in an earlier chapter, we choose what clothing we decide to wear and how to wear them based on the options made available in our wardrobe or wardrobes. Similarly, there is some agency in reproducing our subject positions.

Davies and Harré’s work is relevant in my own in that there is an interactional aspect to subject positioning, as well as an investment by individuals in the positionings that they reproduce. Reproducing a subject position means participating in practices that assign meanings to terms such ‘man/woman’ or ‘mother/child’. To reproduce a particular subject position means to identify with a particular term and reject another. Thus, according to Davies and Harré, there is an investment in a subject position. They go on to say that not only will people position themselves, they will position others in relation to themselves. Thus a man may position himself as ‘father’ and position his pregnant partner as ‘mother’.

Research Questions

This research attempts to broadly examine how males in a range of circumstances talk about abortion. Specific research questions are:

- 4) What discourses do males draw on when talking about abortion?
- 5) In what ways do these discourses construct the topic of abortion?
- 6) How do these discourses position gendered subjects in relation to abortion and to each other?

Sample and Data Collection

This research utilised triangulation in data collection, and thus three sources were used. Triangulation is usually thought of as a process that uses different methods to examine a fixed object (Denzin, 2009). Denzin (2009) however, points out that there also exists data

triangulation in which data is collected from different sources and the same method is applied to them. Tobin and Begley (2004, p. 392) add that triangulation is a “means of establishing completeness in naturalistic inquiry, rather than confirmation.”

The three sources used in this research were focus groups, newspaper articles and transcriptions of internet forums. What these sources shared in common was that they all spoke around the topic of abortion, and the speakers could be identified as being male.

Focus Groups Interviews

Four focus groups were sampled, two from the general public of East London and two from Rhodes University. Co-researchers (see later discussion) were recruited through a method of snowball sampling, whereby people who had heard that I was conducting this study enquired if they could participate. I was careful not to use friends or people that I had known for some time. The interviews in East London were conducted in the homes of two of the co-researchers, and the interviews with Rhodes Students were conducted on campus. All co-researchers were above the age of 18 and below the age of 25. The two groups from East London were comprised of ‘white’ males^b, while the student groups were comprised of 2 ‘white’ male students and 2 ‘black’ male students in the first group, and 4 ‘black’ male students in the second. Each interview lasted between 45 and 60 minutes. The interviews were tape recorded and then transcribed.

Edwards (2003) points out that transcription convention will differ according to the theoretical paradigm and aims of the researcher. This study focuses on the content of language, so as to identify discourses, and not so much the way that language is articulated. Transcriptions of this type do not focus on pauses and emphases by speakers, but rather punctuation is deployed for the sake of structure (Edwards, 2003).

Vignettes (see Appendix 1) were used to provoke discussion. Since this research aimed to examine how discourses in the talk of males position male and female subjects respectively,

^b Following a post-structuralist theoretical paradigm, ‘race’ is considered to be a social construct imbued with power relations. Though my study does not focus on ‘race’, I have identified co-researchers by ‘race group’, not so as to reify the concept of ‘race’, but rather to acknowledge that the concept of ‘race’ has not yet been dismantled. To ignore that ‘race’ still exists is dangerous and contributes to the continuation of raced power understanding of context can be garnered for the reader and for future researchers in this area.

Vignette One is an imagined story of pregnancy where the male partner is known. Details in the vignettes are vague so as to let co-researchers create their own versions of stories. In this regard, the story did not initially mention abortion. The vignette was then extended in that the female makes the decision to have an abortion without consulting her partner. This was done so as to examine how males would exercise power in such a situation, and specifically in relation to females.

Following this, a brochure (see Appendix 2) that was developed specifically for this study was introduced to the discussion groups. This brochure explains the legal and medical facts of abortion in South Africa, primarily drawing on the Choice on Termination of Pregnancy Act of 1996. In addition to abortion, it discusses other forms of contraception as well as some aspects of pregnancy. It particularly highlights that a woman need not contact her partner or any male to get an abortion. This was purposefully done so as to provoke a reaction and thus become a point of discussion.

Parker (2005) notes that the qualitative research process involves power relations. These occur in the form of possible competing agendas between the researcher and co-researcher, the researcher's own cultural biases, and social conventions around what is thought to be acceptable behaviour in particular social interactions. While it is impossible to completely disassociate yourself from the culture within which you are embedded, taking into account the considerations discussed above is somewhat possible. This can be achieved by challenging the traditional ways that interviews are undertaken and by not affording the researcher the same type of status over the co-researcher that is usually granted via more traditional research paradigms. For this reason, Parker's (2005) focus group method became appropriate.

Parker's (2005) focus group method is made up of six strategies, which are by no means to be considered prescriptive. These strategies challenge the agenda of the researcher and the position afforded to the researcher as 'expert', while still being able to focus on the research question. In this way, one can "produce something that is not limited by the 'purposes' that have been initially determined by the researcher" (p. 61). It is in this sense that Parker refers to participants as 'co-researchers'. The term 'co-researcher' is the acknowledgement that both the researcher and the co-researcher contribute to research 'findings'. This disengages with

the assumption in more traditional research paradigms that the researcher acts externally to the ‘participant’ to produce an objective and value-free account.

Parker (2005) describes six strategies in this regard: “invite co-researchers to interview you” (p. 61) so as to make visible the researcher’s invisible assumptions; “invite co-researchers to interview each other” (p. 61) so as to enable co-researchers to be aware of issues they think are important; “ask co-researchers to focus on who this account is for” (p. 61) so as to make visible the invisible other that the co-researchers may be addressing; “ask co-researchers to speak in role” (p. 62) so as to further make visible who the co-researchers are addressing and what roles they are assuming in a situation; and “provoke co-researchers” (p. 62) so as to create disagreement and not produce “an interview that is banal and uncontroversial”; and “focus on the deadlock of perspectives” (p. 63) so as to “make differences of perspectives between interviewer and interviewee explicit” (p. 63).

Newspaper Articles

The Sabinet Database, SA Media, collection was used to locate articles around the topic of abortion in a five year period (2004 – 2009) as this was close to the time that the interviews took place (2009). Of the newspapers that this database searches, I selected the English language newspapers as I am not fluent in any other official South African languages. It must be noted that in South Africa it is difficult to determine if a speaker is male or female by their name. As a result, articles were selected based on the surety of male gender of the author. This meant including articles written by male columnists, and letters to the editor or articles by journalists which included a term that identified them as male, such as ‘father’, ‘brother’, ‘husband’, or ‘boyfriend’. Furthermore, any other biographical details of speakers such as ‘race’ or age could not be determined.

Of the articles surveyed, the following 66 were deemed suitable. The number of articles appearing in each year and each paper is tabulated here, as well as the totals for each year and for each paper:

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	Total
The Cape Argus				2			2
The Cape Times	2			1	1		4
The Citizen	2					1	3
City Press	1		2	1			4
The Daily Dispatch	2				3	1	6
The Daily News	2						2
The Diamond Fields Advertiser	4		2				6
The Express	1						1
The Herald				1	1		2
The Mail & Guardian	1				1		2
Pretoria News	1						1
The Saturday Star	1			1			2
The Sowetan	2						2
The Star	9		1	7	1	1	19
The Sunday Independent	1			2			3
The Sunday Times	2			1			3
The Sunday Tribune				1			1
This Day	3						3
Total	34	0	5	17	7	3	66

Table 1: Publication and Date of Articles

Internet Forums

A 'forum' is an on-line community of users. Users have discussions and post replies to specific topics. Other names that forums are known by are 'online message board', 'discussion board' or 'discussion groups'. They are mostly text based, but a small number of images do occur. A 'user' registers on an on-line forum with a pseudonym and then can reply to or start specific topics. Replies to topics are then listed in chronological order. Multiple users are thus

interacting with each other in the same way an “offline” conversation may occur, but now responses are recorded and archived.

Suler (2004) discusses “the disinhibition effect” that seemingly occurs online. People who are online express themselves openly and feel uninhibited. They reveal secret emotions, fears and wishes. There are two types of disinhibition: 1) Benign disinhibition which are unusual acts of kindness and generosity; 2) Toxic disinhibition which is anger, hatred, rude language, harsh criticism. Suler (2004) claims that because of anonymity, users assume no consequences for their actions, and they thus become less vulnerable to social repercussions that occur in ordinary social interactions. An extension of this is invisibility, whereby users do not have to face disapproving body language such as frowns or angry faces, which would make the individual uncomfortable. Forums are asynchronous: there can be minutes, hours or days between responses. This allows for disinhibition in that the user does not have to calculate the emotional risk of saying certain things which would be difficult in face-to-face interactions. In face-to-face interactions people may not be willing to say certain things, such as overtly racist or sexist remarks. This, however, is made possible on online forums. Suler claims that users thus have an “equal” voice.

Suler (2004) seems to be saying that the disinhibited self allows for a more ‘true’ or ‘real’ version of the self and that power relations can be eliminated on-line. Using an online forum, however, is a performance of a particular kind; it is a type of interaction that is not divorced from offline activity, but influenced by it. For example, a group comprising of people from different racial backgrounds may refer to race differently than they would if the group comprised of people from a similar racial background, due to social mores and a particular political climate. Individuals in these group contexts act according to what they see as socially appropriate, while still reproducing particular discourses. Similarly, individuals on an online forum will act in ways that they think are socially appropriate for that context, but still reproduce the discourses of the culture from which they (these individuals) emerge.

The advantages of an analysis of online forum discussions are that one can gain a unique picture of the social environment, due in part to the disinhibition effect. One can see how certain discourses vie for dominance in a way that is either invisible or at least not always easily accessible in other contexts, such as face-to-face interactions. An online forum is a unique site of conflict and power relations, and not as ‘equally voiced’ as may seem at first

glance. Most important to bear in mind is that just like in newspaper articles, the discussions available through online forums are a reflection of the social context from which the speakers originate.

For this research, the *Mail & Guardian* forums were used to locate discussions around abortion. This particular forum was chosen because, firstly, it is aimed at the general South African public as opposed to catering to a specialised group. Secondly, the *Mail and Guardian* print edition has a strong focus on issues of politics and government which is reflected in its online edition, thus making it a rich source for discussions around abortion.

The *Mail & Guardian* forums have discussions in two ways. Articles from the print edition are posted to the website and users may comment on these or users may start topics to which other users may respond. Topics and interactions were examined that were directly about abortion, but also topics that had as a matter of discussion included talk around abortion. The time period for sampling was similar to that used for the collection of newspaper articles discussed earlier, 2004 to 2009. As with the newspaper articles, it was difficult to determine the gender of the speaker, so once again articles were selected based on the surety of the male gender, such as the speaker identifying themselves through terms such as ‘father’ or ‘brother’. And once again, other aspects of biography of the speaker, such as ‘race’ or age could not be determined.

Reflexivity

Burman (1991, p. 328) defines reflexivity as a “self conscious attention to accounts and presentation, to context as well as content”. Under this discursive frame, the researcher is seen as having an effect on the collection of data, as well as the interpretation of that data. Parker (2005) notes in this regard that reflexivity is often seen as a confession on what the individual has done. While this may be a good starting point, there is also a need to locate the researcher in the historical, institutional and academic context from which the researcher originates (Parker, 2005). This also implies an examination of the power relations emerging from being positioned in particular ways through those contexts. Macleod (2002, p. 20) adds that “researcher reflexivity should address the interactional, relational and power dynamics of the research at hand, rather than focussing on a confession of emotional or discursive

positionings of the individual researcher.” Whilst recognising discursive positioning is important, it should not be the main or only focal point of the reflexivity process.

In this research important positionings I had in relation to co-researchers were those of male, assumed expert and researcher in psychology. I also take a pre-dominantly pro-choice stance toward abortion. While being a male speaking to other males may have benefited the interviews in that co-researchers were willing to say things that they might not necessarily say if there were females present, this may have influenced what was said due to social mores among men on what is considered appropriate talk. Co-researchers also assumed because I was conducting the research that I was an expert on abortion. This is strongly related to being a researcher in psychology, as this influenced the domain of knowledge of which I was assumed to be an expert. Although in one sense it is quite obvious that due to having to conduct this research I was better read on the topic of abortion than most men, statements I made could be construed as a ‘fact’. While it is only ethical that I gave full disclosure on my views on abortion when asked, I did try not to express my own opinions (as these may have been construed as ‘fact’) unless co-researchers asked or when I invited them to ask about my views.

Related to the interactions with my co-researchers, as well as the research a whole is my internal belief of pro-choice with regard to abortion. My stance, however, was only made explicit toward the end of the interview so as to minimise the effect of co-researchers knowing my stance. I describe my position toward abortion as pro-choice and it may be useful to make explicit what this means, especially with regard to the discussion around pro-choice and pro-life positions in the previous chapter. I am in complete agreement with South Africa’s Choice on Termination of Pregnancy Act. I think the reasoning behind the creation of the Act, power imbalances between genders, and its attempt to rectify these imbalances is necessary. It would only be sensible to assume that this would influence my analysis. This could be construed as a strength of the research, in that the aim was to examine power relations between men and women and I could thus draw attention to power imbalances. While post-structuralist research acknowledges that there is no ‘value-free’ social science, its aim is not necessarily to make ‘value judgements’. If done correctly, whatever stance I took on abortion, should not have necessarily affected my research, the aim was to describe discourses around the topic of abortion, not to evaluate them.

Ethical Considerations

Focus Groups

Permission was granted by the Rhodes Ethics Committee to allow students at Rhodes to participate in this study. Co-researchers provided informed consent (see Appendix 3). They were made aware that the research focus was around men and abortion and that they would meet in a group with other men to discuss abortion. Of importance was that I informed them they did not have to have had a partner who had an abortion, which made them feel more comfortable to be in the study and to let others know they were in the study. Since I used snowball sampling as a means of recruitment, co-researchers were aware that people other than me would know that they were going to be a part of the study. To ensure anonymity, the transcriptions of the interviews were numbered (G1 – G4) and co-researchers in each group were assigned numbers within the group (P1 – P4).

In addition to using the Choice on Termination of Pregnancy Act as a means to stimulate discussion, this also enabled any misinformation on the parts of co-researchers to be rectified. So whatever stance the co-researchers took, they would be fully informed about the Choice on Termination of Pregnancy Act, as well as the procedure for terminating a pregnancy.

Newspaper Articles

Newspaper articles are regarded as being in the public domain and therefore a variety of authors see it as ethically unproblematic to study them (see for example Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). The justification here is that individual authors expect that their work will be published and receive wide readership. The author is aware that these readers form a diverse audience (some of them researchers) who may potentially support or critique the author's writings.

Internet Forums

In one way texts published on the internet can be considered as public domain and thus are a viable site for research, much in the same way as newspapers (see argument in Porter & McKee, 2009). Regarded in this way, Kitchin (2003) argues that these sources allow the

researcher to be non-intrusive and not to disturb the functioning of the on-line group. But in order for this to be so, the texts being analysed have to be first justified as being a part of the public domain. The *Mail & Guardian* forums are publically accessible and free. There is no password required to view the forums. Users posting comments to the forum or to on-line articles acknowledge that what they post may be read by others, and that others may respond to their comments.

Conclusion

The central problematic of this work is power and this was discussed in Chapter 2 as being, according to Foucault, linked to discourse. For this reason, I began discussing what discourse was. This necessitated a discussion of Saussure's linguistics, which in turn led to a brief discussion on the ontological and epistemic differences of structuralism and post-structuralism. Outlining the various forms of discourse analysis, I discussed that critical discourse analysis was the most suitable mode of analysis for my research and that this study could be situated in a post-structuralist paradigm. Once I had located the method of analysis and paradigm of this study, I was able to discuss the 'mechanics' of the research, being data collection, interview style, reflexivity and ethical considerations. Now that the theoretical foundations that have been laid out in previous chapters have been turned into methodological directives, the following chapters can discuss the analysis.

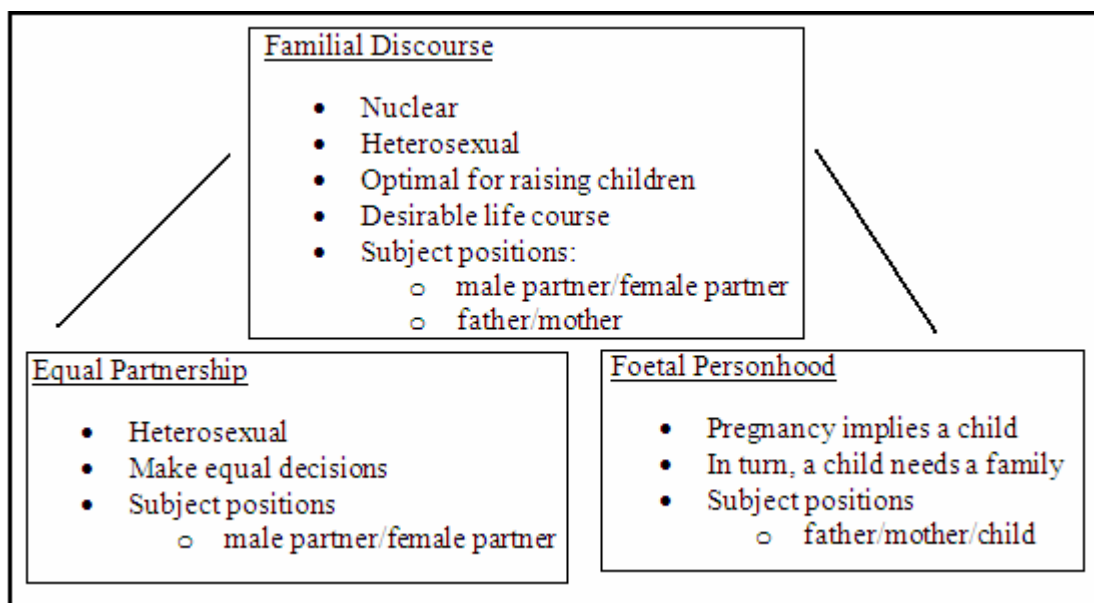
Chapter 6: Establishing the Family

Introduction

This is the first of two chapters in which I analyse my data. The first chapter deals with how the family emerges and is established in the texts surveyed. This is done through a ‘Familial Discourse’, a discourse of ‘Equal Partnership’ and a discourse of ‘Foetal Personhood’. These discourses support the formation of a heterosexual, nuclear family unit, and strongly align with and are shaped by Butler’s (1990) concept of the heterosexual matrix. The second chapter discusses how these discourses become disrupted by abortion. Because, according to Parker’s (1990) sixth criterion discourse contains subjects, I shall also discuss subject positions in these discourses.

It may be worthwhile at this stage to present a broad overview of the arguments to be discussed in this chapter. Diagram 6.1 is presented in this regard:

Diagram 6.1: The Heterosexual Matrix



Please note that all extracts are from interviews, unless otherwise noted. R1 refers to the researcher; G1 – G4 are numbers assigned to the four groups; and P1 – P4 are numbers assigned to co-researchers within each group.

'Familial Discourse'

The first discourse I would like to discuss is a 'Familial Discourse'. This discourse emerges in these texts as centring on a nuclear family, consisting of a heterosexual partnership between a man and woman, who are positioned as father and mother. Co-researchers invoking this 'Familial Discourse' describe the formation of a family unit as being a desirable life outcome and the family itself is seen as an optimal place to raise children.

The first part of Vignette 1 relates how X's partner, Y, has fallen pregnant and participants are asked about X's reaction and what possibilities X and Y have. The following is a sample of these responses.

Extract 1

G1P2 Another option which I mentioned earlier is that you say I love you. I want to spend the rest of my life with you. So you don't want to see something born out of wedlock. You can have a quick marriage and then tell your parents and then it can be perceived as a less negative thing. You should inform the parents. The parents can help out since they know how to do it.

Extract 2

G2P3 I think if they had a good and steady relationship it would all be fine. Then they would know that they would be together and they could have a family. Make things happen. Also if they both have good jobs and are fairly stable.

Extract 3

G3P1 Obviously the right thing to do is to settle down and try have the kid. Get enough money. Ask your family. See what's going on job wise.

These extracts illustrate a general response to pregnancy that co-researchers had and illustrate a kind of trajectory that the formation of the family takes. In Extract 1, G1P2 indicates the option of 'marriage' which is linked to 'love' and 'spend[ing] the rest of [his] life' with his partner. Similarly, in Extract 2 G2P3 states that if X and Y have a 'good and steady relationship it will all be fine'. In Extract 3, G2P3 states that 'Obviously the right thing to do is to settle down'. Thus when a pregnancy occurs, the family begins to form through the

establishment of a permanent or at least long-term relationship between the man and the woman. The strength of the relationship is also important here as indicated by G2P3's use of the term 'good and steady relationship' and G1P1's reference to the term 'love' and the longer phrase 'spend the rest of my life with you'.

The establishment of the relationship also entails acquiring the resources necessary for the formation of this family. As indicated in the above extracts these are centred on getting help from parents, finding jobs and acquiring money and these are made in specific reference to the formation of the family or the raising of a child. Thus in these texts, the family consists of a good and long-term relationship between the man and the woman who acquire the resources to raise a child.

Extract 4

G4P2 Yes we do live in unfair society. But it's our job to change that society. To protect the child from this society so that they can have an equal chance in the world. Things like rape happen and we should fight to change that. But even then a child needs a family. Someone to protect them and look after them.

In Extract 3 G3P1 states that the 'right thing to do is to settle down', but this is not only in reference to forming a long term relationship and a family, it is also in reference to 'try[ing] to have the kid'. Similarly in Extract 4, G4P2 states that 'a child needs a family' and this is made in reference to an 'unfair society' and providing the child with an 'equal chance'. So the family emerges as an ideal and necessary site to raise a child, one that is beneficial to the child. But not only is the family beneficial for the child, it is also beneficial for the relationship of the man and woman involved.

Extract 5

R1 So what advice would you give him?

G3P1 Just tell him to do his best to have the child. Like make a plan. Try to convince her to do the right thing. The thing is if she's already made the decision then they don't have a good quality relationship. Just tell him that you can make the relationship work if you just focus on the child. Get money saved and the whole thing could turn out a success. So I would convince the guy to just like stick it out for as long as possible and see what happens. Until it's a later stage for abortion and the whole process can strengthen the relationship it can work out for the best I guess.

Extract 6

G4P2 I don't think people won't help if you tell them what happened. It's a case of finding a way. Maybe their relationship isn't that strong. But if they have had sex they are at that stage where they can work out things together. And things will work out for the best. They can get ready to get married even if they aren't married. It will make their relationship better.

In Extracts 5 and 6, G3P1 and G4P2 say remarkably similar things. Both speakers direct X and Y to stay in their relationship and form a family unit. The reasons given for this are according to G3P1 that it will 'strengthen the relationship' and 'it can work out for the best' and for G4P2 that 'It will make their relationship better' and that 'things will work out for the best'. So as far as life decisions go, forming a family is seen as optimal and will improve the quality of the relationship between the man and the woman.

In either extract, however, the co-researchers acknowledge that there is a *small* possibility that things won't 'work out for the best', but this is quickly dismissed. In Extract 4 G3P1 states 'The thing is if she's already made the decision then they don't have a good quality relationship' but then espouses in much more detail how beneficial the formation of a family unit would be. Similarly, in Extract 6 G4P2 states much the same thing.

Extract 7

G1P2 It depends on the maturity. If two people come together have a most intimate act and create a life. That's positive. That's cool. We can't actually understand it until we face it. When you're young, you don't really think about it. I'm actually going to be a father.

Extract 8

It is commonly held view that the majority of single-parent men are irresponsible fathers. [...] This may be true of an older generation of men. I've argued in a previous article that it's my belief that a new generation of South African men are taking firm steps to be responsible partners, and in fact want to have children and be loving and committed fathers. (Column, The Saturday Star, 2007)

Extracts 7 and 8 serve to further embellish the position of the man in the family unit. These extracts make reference to the man as 'father'. In Extract 7, G1P2 refers to the creation of

'life' and how this is 'positive' and later follows this with the term 'father'. Extract 8 precedes the term 'father' with the phrase 'loving and committed'. So there is status accorded to the term 'father' if this father serves the duties of the family.

Subject Positions

If the man is positioned as 'father', then it is only logical that the woman should be positioned as 'mother'. In these texts, men and women are positioned differently; as mothers and fathers, which are not interchangeable terms – they don't signify the same thing. These positions will become more apparent when the texts surveyed make reference to abortion and how abortion disrupts these positionings. These will be discussed in the following chapter. A final and essential subject position to the family unit is that of the child. A mother is only a mother and a father is only a father in relation to a child. The nuclear family requires the existence of a child. The position of child will be discussed later through the discourse of 'Foetal Personhood'.

The idealised form of the family is presented as the nuclear family, which is heterosexual, invokes notions of love, and consists of a father who supports a mother, who in turn has as her vocation the raising of children (Thorne, 1982). Furthermore, this idealised family is seen as natural or biologically determined (Hooyman & Gonyea, 1995; Moghadam, 2003). The nuclear family, however, has not always existed and has emerged as a matter of history (Thorne, 1982; Hooyman & Gonyea, 1995; Moghadam, 2003). The idea that the family is natural or biologically determined has led to reductionist and functionalist explanations of the family (Moghadam, 2003). Talcott Parson's functionalist explanation of the family, for example, sees the family as the site where children are socialised and where the man or head of the household is provides a protective environment from the difficulties of the outside world (Moghadam, 2003). The woman, as wife and mother, provides nurturance, while the man, as the head of household and father, provides money and maintains obedience.

This view of the family will become important in the following chapter. It is now necessary, however, to discuss discourses that support the 'Familial Discourse', these being firstly a discourse of 'Equal Partnership' and secondly a discourse of 'Foetal Personhood'.

'Equal Partnership'

Earlier I discussed how the family is viewed by co-researchers as being formed through the occurrence of a pregnancy and the man and woman settling into a life-long or long term relationship to raise a child. The nature of the heterosexual relationship in forming this nuclear heterosexual family is demonstrated when talk around pregnancy occurs.

Extract 9

G1P2 It depends on the maturity. If two people come together have a most intimate act and create a life. That's positive. That's cool. We can't actually understand it until we face it. When you're young you don't really think about it. I'm actually going to be a father.

Extract 10

G3P1 I mean you can't deny the guy has a part. It's fifty-fifty.

Extract 11

G3P2 It depends on whether they love each other or not. Do they have a good relationship and do they want this to happen? Because having a child is a big decision.

In Extract 9, G1P2 specifically mentions that 'two people' are required to 'create a life' and similarly in Extract 10, G3P1 states that the 'guy has a part' and that 'it's fifty-fifty' in reference to the pregnancy. In Extract 11, G3P2 uses the term 'love' when referring to the man and woman, and in Extract 4 G1P2 refers to the act of 'creat[ing] a life' as requiring an 'intimate act' and that it is 'positive' and 'cool'. This indicates that not only are a woman and man seen as equally responsible for the pregnancy, but that it is viewed in a positive light. It is not only pregnancy that is viewed as being equally caused by the man and woman as something positive, it is the relationship itself.

While biologically it is true that conception (barring technological advances) requires both a man and woman, drawing attention to this fact is not quite a justification for an equal partnership. Nor does it necessarily follow that the act of conception resulted from or will result in an equal partnership. But this is precisely what the discourse of 'Equal Partnership' does. It draws attention to the fact that heterosexual intercourse leads to conception and

concludes that this implies an equal partnership. Moreover, it not only views a relationship that results in conception as positive, it views a *heterosexual* relationship that results in conception in a positive light.

Extract 12

G1P4 There's fear. Because it's a life changing occurrence for him. For someone who is 23 unless he is married it will shape the rest of his life. He will have to make important decisions very quickly and unfortunately being 23 and not being married he only has certain options. From my perspective it means supporting what your partner ultimately wants. But being a partnership you have to discuss it, but you kind of just have to respect her.

Extract 13

G2P2 I think I would want to say to her that I want to support you whatever you do. I don't know if that's what I would do, but that's what I would want to do. That's the right thing to do.

In Extract 12, G1P4 states that one has to '[support] what your partner ultimately wants', but since there is a 'partnership you have to discuss it'. In Extract 13, G2P2 states that 'the right thing to do' is to say to his partner 'I want to support you whatever you do'. At this point it seems that the men in these texts are saying that the choice to abort is ultimately up to the woman, and the man's role is to support that decision. Support at this point seems to be a fairly benign act.

Extract 14

G3P4 It is kind of strange that she would make that decision without him.

R1 Why would you say that it's strange?

G3P4 A relationship is meant to be equal parts. What is it about their relationship that isn't right? What don't we know? I mean the story doesn't really tell you that. I mean if everything was okay would they even think about abortion?

In Extract 14, G3P4 states that 'A relationship is meant to be equal parts'. He then goes on to ask in reference to the abortion decision 'What is it about their relationship that isn't right'? This is because the woman in the relationship in the above extract has decided to have the abortion without her partner's consent. This highlights the aforementioned point that

pregnancy is considered to be equally caused by the man and the woman, but also that any decisions regarding the pregnancy should be made in the context of an equal partnership between the man and the woman. This extract demonstrates that abortion could potentially disrupt this equal partnership. I shall return to this in the following chapter.

Extract 15

- R1 Y has told X that she has decided to have an abortion. How do you think he is going to react?
- G2P2 I think I would want to say to her that I want to support you whatever you do. I don't know if that's what I would do, but that's what I would want to do. That's the right thing to do.
- G2P1 That's what I did. I supported her. I still don't agree with it. But that's what happened.

Extract 16

- R1 Y asks X to come with him to the Termination of Pregnancy Clinic. Should he go with her?
- G1P1 You should go. You have to support your partner. Show her that you love her during this trying time. It's going to be a traumatic experience and you should go.
- R1 What if you don't agree with her decision?
- G1P2 It is ultimately her decision. But it's just a horrible thing not to support someone seeing as it's so traumatic. You were a part of it. You were also to blame. To just abandon her now and give up your responsibility isn't good.

Extracts 15 and 16 make reference to the man providing support to the woman once the decision to abort has been made. In Extract 15, G2P2 refers to providing support as 'the right thing to do'. And in Extract 16, G1P2 refers to the man in the partnership as having a 'responsibility' to provide support. In this same extract, G1P2 also states that 'You were a part of it. You were also to blame'. This then goes back to that conception requires two individuals who are seen to be in an equal partnership. The partnership doesn't end if the pregnancy is terminated. It becomes the duty of the man to support his partner if this is the case. In the following chapter I shall demonstrate how the notion of 'support' is not as benevolent as it first seems, and actually serves another purpose.

Subject Positionings

For the male in the partnership, he is expected to be supporting (Extract 12), respectful of his partner (Extract 12), loving (Extract 16) and responsible (Extract 16). This is the right thing to do (Extract 13).

The second discourse that supports the 'Familial Discourse' is that of 'Foetal Personhood', which has been somewhat articulated in a previous chapter. A family is made up of a man and a woman who form an equal partnership. When a pregnancy occurs the foetus is framed as a child so that the man and woman assume the positions of father and mother.

'Foetal Personhood'

As discussed, 'Foetal Personhood' is the construction of the foetus as an 'unborn child' or as a human already present in utero. It is important that the foetus is framed in this way, because if it was not then there would be less impetus for the formation of a family unit.

Extract 7

G1P2 It depends on the maturity. If two people come together have a most intimate act and create a life. That's positive. That's cool. We can't actually understand it until we face it. When you're young you don't really think about it. I'm actually going to be a father.

Extract 17

G2P2 It depends on whether it was someone I thought I was going to marry. Especially if I wanted a child or not. I would tell my parents. Try make a plan to keep the baby. Get a job that kind of thing. See if I can't get family involved in trying to support the kid.

In Extracts 7 and 17, when it is announced that Y is pregnant there is already an assumption that this will result in the birth of a child, but there is also the assumption that the foetus is already a child. In Extract 7, G1P2 specifically refers to the creation of a 'life', but it is not the outcome of a pregnancy, which could result in the birth of a child, it is the pregnancy itself which signifies 'life'. In Extract 17 the terms 'child', 'baby' and 'kid' are all used.

Extract 18

- G2P3 Actually another thing now that I think about it. It depends on how far you are into the pregnancy. It depends on when you define when life begins. Some people think life begins at conception. Others think it takes some time. So if it was early on maybe they wouldn't care too much if it was an abortion.
- G2P1 But you can't take away from that it would result in a child. Whether you say life begins on the first day or even in nine months time. *If nature had its way it would always result in the birth of a child.* [My emphasis added]

Extract 19

- R1 We have been making references to the pregnancy using terms such as child or kid. How do you respond to people who use the term foetus instead? Maybe specifically pro-choice advocates.
- G4P3 I did medicine for a while. And when you think in that line of work you refer to things as ovum and spermatozoon. Then you call it an embryo. But those are just words. When you see pictures of the thing that small it's real. If you have seen pictures of aborted babies and you come face to face with it you realise just how real it is. Those are the scientific terms. But they are only guidelines in the end that will become a child and you can't deny that.

Extracts 18 and 19 expand on the point that the pregnancy itself signifies the beginnings of life. Speakers in these extracts draw on the discourse of 'Foetal Personhood'. In Extract 16, G2P3 and G2P1 argue around when the foetus should be considered a 'life', with G2P1 rhetorically responding with that 'If nature had its way it would always result in the birth of a child'. Similarly in Extract 19, G4P3 in reference to medical terms states that 'those are just words' and goes on to say that 'in the end that will become a child and you can't deny that'.

These extracts demonstrate how the discourse of 'Foetal Personhood' defends itself. This is done by invoking a 'natural reality' outside of human intervention. In either extract when a co-researcher attempts to establish the legitimacy of 'Foetal Personhood' he rhetorically dismisses anything that would name the foetus as anything other than a child as due to human intervention, which in turn is positioned as opposing an externally true reality. In Extract 18 G2P1 is saying that regardless of human attempts at naming when life would begin, nature's intent is the birth of a child. In Extract 19 G4P3 dismisses science (which is a human endeavour) as not accurately capturing the reality of the foetus as child.

The discourse of 'Foetal Personhood' rests very much on a kind of potentiality, the potentiality that the cell formed at conception is going to reach birth, that it will grow up and be afforded life that as all other humans at birth. This is of course with the disclaimer that there is no 'unnatural interference', as G2P1 says 'If nature had its way it would always result in the birth of a child'. But an embryo does not always result in birth, and of those births there are sometimes complications. When I refer to complications I explicitly mean those that would occur as a matter of biology. This is important to note, precisely because of the fact that in the texts surveyed there were no mentions of it, except where specifically raised by the researcher.

Extract 20

R1 Not all pregnancies lead to birth though.

G4P3 That's very true. But you still can't be an extra variable. You can't decide to take that life yourself. You should rather let things play out.

In Extract 20, when G4P3 refers to the 'extra variable' he is talking about any non-human factor that may compromise the pregnancy being brought to term. Human beings should not intervene in any way that may compromise the pregnancy being brought to term, as G4P3 states 'You can't decide to take that life yourself'. To properly understand this we should think of a child or an adult. A child or adult may die as a matter of biology, for example by contracting a fatal disease, but it is considered wrong to intervene in that life. Similarly, the foetus is already considered a person or a human, and thus there should be no intervention upon it that would compromise the pregnancy being brought to term. This links to the discussion earlier about how the discourse of 'Foetal Personhood' defends itself by invoking a 'natural reality' outside of human intervention. Although not all pregnancies lead to birth, for humans to compromise the pregnancy is an 'extra variable' attempting to meddle with a 'natural reality'.

The discourse of 'Foetal Personhood' in some ways deflects the material realities of conception and birth, that conception does not always necessarily lead to birth. Statements such as 'If nature had its way it would always result in the birth of a child' demonstrate that the process from conception to birth is still viewed as uncomplicated. And as long as this process is viewed as uncomplicated, any actions that disrupt that process can be framed as an

interference of the natural order. But it is only human interventions that are seen as interferences upon the natural order, not any ‘extra variable’.

Because the foetus is constructed as being already a child, abortion or attempts to compromise the pregnancy are seen as being akin to murder. I will discuss this in more detail in the following chapter. Right now, I would like to discuss how the foetus is constructed as being a separate and unique subject to the pregnant woman.

Extract 21

The “right” to abortion is predicated on the constitutional right to make decision concerning reproduction and to control one's body. This is erroneous as reproduction has already occurred with the implantation of the embryo. The baby has a separate DNA, and later on blood. The baby is not a part of the mother's body.
(Letter to the Editor, The Star, 2007)

Extract 22

She ought to know that the unborn baby also has rights and, if it does not, why does the new born baby suddenly have rights? To say abortion is a woman's choice is an oversimplification.
(Letter to the Editor, The Daily Dispatch, 2004)

Extract 21 clearly articulates how the foetus is constructed as a separate entity to the pregnant woman, using very scientific terms. Extract 22 assumes that the foetus is already a separate subject to the pregnant woman that should be accorded rights. To properly understand this, one should think of a child being murdered by his parent or parents. The parents may have ‘created’ the child, but they have no right to murder that child. The child has a separate body to his parents and should be afforded his own rights. Similarly, through the invocation of the discourse of ‘Foetal Personhood’, the foetus is considered as being a separate person, with a separate body to the pregnant woman and worthy of being afforded its own rights. Infringing on these rights is thus not viable and in fact infringing on an autonomous being’s right to life or to a body is constructed as ‘murder’.

At this point it is useful to refer back to Solinger’s (2005) remarks around sonograms. A sonogram allows one to view the foetus, but not the pregnant woman. You can only see one, not both. Similarly, in Extract 19 G4P3 states ‘When you see pictures of the thing that small

it's real. If you have seen pictures of aborted babies and you come face to face with it you realise just how real it is.' The speaker only sees the foetus, not the pregnant woman. And because the discourse of 'Foetal Personhood' is in play, these images are constructed as 'babies' and in turn the foetus now as a subject's rights come to trump the pregnant woman's rights as a subject by making her invisible. In Extract 22 states 'To say abortion is a woman's choice is an oversimplification'. Thus in turn, a woman's right over her own body comes to be trumped through the discourse of 'Foetal Personhood'.

Extract 23

- R1 What do you think of that these [laws around abortion] were passed in order to protect the woman from a difficult or unjust society like in the cases of rape or incest?
- G4P2 Yes we do live in unfair society. But it's our job to change that society. To protect the child from this society so that they can have an equal chance in the world. Things like rape happen and we should fight to change that. But even then a child needs a family. Someone to protect them and look after them.

In Extract 23, G4P2 alludes to that there is no reason for an abortion. When R1 refers to pregnancy through rape, G4P2 answers that 'even then a child needs a family'. The foetus as child is constructed as needing a family. This is the point where the discourse of 'Foetal Personhood' links with the 'Familial Discourse'. When a pregnancy occurs the foetus is constructed as needing a family, and so the partners that conceived need to form that family.

Subject Positions

The obvious position in this discourse is that the foetus is constructed as child. The foetus as child resides in the pregnant woman's body and is seen as a separate entity, with a separate DNA (Extract 21) and as having its own rights (Extract 22). In relation to the foetus as child, the pregnant woman is positioned as mother. The pregnant woman's rights are trumped by the foetus as child and her duty is to bring the pregnancy to term. Furthermore, the foetus is positioned as needing care, which comes in the form of the family. With the child, the family is made up of a father and mother. The father's duty is to take care of the foetus as child as well as the mother. I shall discuss this in the following chapter.

The Heterosexual Matrix Revisited

In an earlier chapter I discussed Butler's (1990) concept of the heterosexual matrix. I then extended this to include reproduction. To recapitulate briefly, within the heterosexual matrix, men and women are distinct and their roles are to desire one another. Both gender and desire follow from sex, which is cast as being pre-discursive. Desire results in intercourse, which (sometimes) results in reproduction. One can thus trace reproduction directly back to sex cast as being pre-discursive. There are two distinct sexes, which follows onto that there are two distinct genders. The role of these two distinct genders is to desire one another. Desire results in intercourse. Intercourse results in reproduction. But it is not that reproduction is merely the final optional stage in the heterosexual matrix, it is present from the very beginning and at all points. Reproduction in humans *requires* the existence or rather presence of two sexes. In the heterosexual matrix, that there are two genders, that they desire one another, that they have intercourse is predicated on that there exist two sexes for the function of reproduction.

Butler's concept of the heterosexual matrix can be strongly related to the discourses discussed in this chapter. In Extract 10, G3P1 states 'I mean you can't deny the guy has a part. Its fifty-fifty'. The fact that the existence of two sexes is required for reproduction relates to the discourse of 'Equal Partnership'. Here, the biological function of two sexes required to reproduce has been translated into a particular kind of social relation, where the man and the woman are viewed as being equal. They have an equal role to play in the act of reproduction, and thus are viewed as equally responsible when a pregnancy is brought to term to raise the new born child.

This in turn segues into the discourse 'Familial Discourse'. Since two sexes engage in reproduction in the context of an equal partnership, they form a family unit to raise the new born child. Earlier, I discussed how there are societal pressures for a woman to become a mother and that becoming a mother is seen as a natural process (Braam & Hessini, 2004). Because it is only women who can give birth, being a mother or motherhood is seen as natural and pre-discursive. Since a woman is a mother, a man is a father and both these positions are seen as natural. The heterosexual matrix is thus strongly tied to the 'Familial Discourse' and the discourse of 'Equal Partnership' which supports it.

Another way that 'Familial Discourse' relates to the heterosexual matrix is through the regulation of sexual intercourse. In the heterosexual matrix reproduction is framed as being pre-discursive. In the following extracts intercourse is linked to reproduction and the 'natural' process of forming a family.

Extract 24

G2P3 Look its obviously going to be tough. At least I mean at least for the first few months or so. Maybe even after that. Years after this thing can effect them. Whether they are still together or not. I suppose if they have a really good relationship they can make it work. But I don't know if it would. I don't know if I would be able to. Because you would constantly looking at her and thinking about what happened. She would be a reminder of what you did. For a while you wouldn't want to have sex.

Extract 25

G1P2 If you're mature enough to have sex you're mature enough to accept the responsibility to have a child. That's what it's all about. You have to accept the consequences of your actions.

Extract 26

Abortion is wrong and a woman who falls pregnant in this day and age with the pill and condom without any sort of assurance of a lasting relationship are simply just being plain ****ing stupid or at worse a skank.
(Post on On-line Forum Discussion)

In Extract 24, G2P3 in talking about the trauma around abortion states that 'For a while you wouldn't want to have sex'. In Extract 25, G1P2 states that one has to be 'mature' to have sex, and that one has to 'accept the consequences of your actions'. These extracts claim that intercourse cannot happen without the understanding that it may potentially result in pregnancy. But it is not only that intercourse leads to pregnancy, these extracts invoke the discourses discussed in this chapter. In Extract 24, G1P2 states in reference to sex that one must 'accept the responsibility to have a child'. In Extract 26, the speaker references pregnancy in relation to the 'assurance of a lasting relationship'. So these extracts invoke the discourse of 'Foetal Personhood' and the discourse of 'Equal Partnership' respectively. But they also invoke the 'Familial Discourse'. Intercourse in these extracts is linked to reproduction. As discussed, the fact that there are two sexes for the function of reproduction

is tied to that a man and woman engage in an equal partnership for the formation of a family unit. So if reproduction is tied to the formation of the family unit, and if intercourse is linked to reproduction, then intercourse is linked to the formation of the family unit.

Conclusion

This chapter formed the first of two parts in which I analysed my data. To this end I introduced a 'Familial Discourse', a discourse of 'Equal Partnership' and a discourse of 'Foetal Personhood'. I discussed how they emerged in the texts as 'ideal' forms. That is to say, these discourses were invoked as 'ideals' by speakers. Ideally, when there is a pregnancy, an equal partnership forms the basis of the formation of a family unit, which is where the new born child ideally should be raised. I then related this process of the formation of the family to Butler's concept of the heterosexual matrix, thereby rendering the formation of the family as a pre-discursive or natural process.

In introducing these discourses, for the most part, I did not relate them to abortion. In the next chapter I shall expand on these discourses by demonstrating how abortion disrupts them, and thus disrupts the natural order. I also introduce the concept of the patriarchal family to understand these discourses.

Chapter 7: Abortion as Disruption

Introduction

In the preceding chapter I presented the first part of my analysis which discussed a 'Familial Discourse', a discourse of 'Equal Partnership' and the discourse of 'Foetal Personhood'. I then related these discourses to Butler's (1990) concept of the heterosexual matrix, establishing these discourses as natural or pre-discursive. In this chapter I expand upon these discourses in reference to abortion, to show how abortion disrupts these discourses. Abortion is talked about as not only being dangerous for the individuals involved, but also to society at large. As will be demonstrated, these discourses relate to the discourses discussed in the preceding chapter.

It is first necessary, however, to revisit the concept of patriarchy. This will enable a deeper understanding of how these discourses operate and demonstrate how they position men and women in relation to abortion.

Patriarchy and the Family

In an earlier chapter it was discussed that Millett (1970) shifted the meaning of patriarchy from referring to societies where men were heads of households and responsible for the family unit, to referring to societies in which men have power over women. She named patriarchy as being reproduced through social institutions, such as the family, which enable men to have more power than women. The view that the family is a site of unequal power relations between men and women is still supported by more recent authors (see Somerville, 2000). Many authors still view the family as "the fundamental unit of patriarchy" (Hooyman & Gonyea, 1995, p. 27). In this regard, Gittins (1993, p. 35) notes that the original meaning of "family, in use until the eighteenth century, referred to the authority of the paterfamilias over all others in a household". Gittins goes on to say that in the modern family the 'father' or 'husband' is seen as the head, as having power over all others in the family.

The 'Familial Discourse' aligns to how the above authors have described the patriarchal family. This discourse, as well as the supporting discourses of 'Equal Partnership' and

'Foetal Personhood', become disrupted by abortion then, because they violate the formation of the family unit, but more specifically, because they violate the patriarchal family. In the proceeding discussion I discuss each of these discourses respectively and link them to the patriarchal family.

Abortion Disrupting the Family

Extract 1

G3P1 Obviously the right thing to do is to settle down and try have the kid. Get enough money. Ask your family. See what's going on job wise.

Extract 2

G2P3 I think if they had a good and steady relationship it would all be fine. Then they would know that they would be together and they could have a family. Make things happen. Also if they both have good jobs and are fairly stable.

Extracts 1 and 2 are meant to illustrate what has previously been discussed in the preceding chapter. In Extract 1, G3P1 states the 'obvious' and 'right thing to do' is to 'settle down' and this is in reference to forming a family unit. In Extract 2, G2P3 states that X and Y 'could have a family' in reference to terms such as 'good and steady relationship', 'good jobs' and being 'fairly stable'. Already the talk is arranged around the formation of a *potential* family unit. The following discussion centres on what will happen if the formation of that potential family unit is disrupted.

Extract 3

R1 How do you think they would react to all of this? The events that happened.
G2P3 Just the thing I said I think. Feeling guilty. Not wanting to have sex. This kind of thing can affect you years after. Every time you see a child. Or the next time you think I want to have a family or something like that.

Extract 4

G2P2 Well if it was me I would discuss can we have a kid and maybe abortion would be an option. If you're young you're not really mature enough to handle this kind of thing. I

wouldn't want to have an abortion though. If I did I would probably worry about it for the rest of my life. And then if I had other kids later I would also feel like I had lost one.

In Extract 3, G2P3 states that after the abortion there are effects 'years after' which will be felt 'Every time you see a child' or anytime one thinks about 'hav[ing] a family or something like that'. In Extract 3, G2P2 states that he would rather not have his partner go through an abortion as he 'would probably worry about for the rest of [his] life' and that if he later decided to have children he 'would also feel like [he] had lost one'. These speakers identify negative feelings such as 'guilt' or 'worry' and this is in reference to forming or rather failing to form a family.

Extract 5

G2P3 [Adoption] would be better to do than abortion. But it would suck big time knowing you have a kid out there. I dunno.

G2P4 Well I don't know if I want to put it up for adoption either because I don't want to have kids that I don't know.

Extract 5 demonstrates that once a pregnancy is announced there is a strong sense that a family unit must be formed. So while, according to G2P3, putting up a child for adoption 'would be better to than abortion' it would 'suck big time knowing you have a kid out there'. In the preceding chapter I identified the man as 'father' in the context of the family unit. In the above extract both G2P3 and G2P4 use the term 'have' in relation to 'kid' or 'kids'. Through the 'Familial Discourse' they have already assumed the position of 'father'.

Extract 6

G1P2 My girlfriend had an abortion with her previous boyfriend and she went through it by herself unsupported because the boyfriend concerned was not here. Through this traumatic experience because she thought that she could not go through with it now. And two years later she is fine with it. But as soon as she had alcohol or she saw children she broke down. And I think she experienced a bond with her ex that she couldn't experience with anyone else including myself. They never lose that bond of creating something together. But she never sought counselling after and as a result I can't experience the trauma and pent feelings and guilt that manifested in her. There is only so much I could do. This was deep seated trauma.

In Extract 6, G1P2 states that his girlfriend had an abortion, and as a result of this whenever she has 'alcohol' or sees 'children' she '[breaks] down'. She also 'experienced a bond with her ex that she couldn't experience with anyone else' including G1P2. The negative feelings that G1P2's girlfriend felt were experienced in one sense due to the discourse of 'Foetal Personhood'. Whenever G1P2's girlfriend sees children she is reminded that she potentially could have had a child and that she may have harmed her 'child'. In another sense, G1P2's negative feelings are experienced through the 'Familial Discourse'. The 'Familial Discourse' positions a pregnant woman as a 'mother', and by having an abortion G1P2's girlfriend has rejected motherhood at this specific instance (Boyle, 1997). By rejecting motherhood, she has rejected the position assigned to her through the 'Familial Discourse'. She has rejected the formation of a family unit. The 'bond' that G1P2's girlfriend experienced was because of that potential family that she could have formed with her ex-boyfriend. This ties in to what speakers have stated in Extracts 3 and 4. Thus violating the formation of the family unit causes individual harm to the man and woman who had an abortion.

Extract 7

G1P1 [After an abortion] The relationship may deteriorate. Like it's your own emotional state your own psychological state it may just deteriorate. Although you still love them unconditionally. You have to for a very selfless reason. You have to let it go because it's destructive.

G1P2 That's kind of the self preservation vibe.

Extract 8

G2P3 Look, it's obviously going to be tough. At least I mean at least for the first few months or so. Maybe even after that. Years after this thing can affect them. Whether they are still together or not. I suppose if they have a really good relationship they can make it work. But I don't know if it would. I don't know if I would be able to. Because you would constantly be looking at her and thinking about what happened. She would be a reminder of what you did. For a while you wouldn't want to have sex.

In Extract 7, G1P1 states that after the abortion 'The relationship may deteriorate'. In Extract 8, G2P3 states that 'if they have a really good relationship they can make it work. But I don't know if it would'. In these extracts a relationship that attempts to continue after violating the formation of the family unit experiences difficulty and failure. So it is not only that abortion has a negative effect on the man and the woman as individuals through feelings such as

'guilt' or 'worry', but it also has a negative effect on the relationship between them. A relationship that violated the formation of the family unit is unlikely to succeed. This must be compared to, as discussed in the preceding chapter, that a relationship that forms a family unit is strengthened.

Extract 9

- R1 What do you think of that these laws were passed in order to protect the woman from a difficult or unjust society like in the cases of rape or incest.
- G4P2 I don't think that that's the child's fault. Yes we do live in unfair society. But its our job to change that society. To protect the child from this society so that they can have an equal chance in the world. Things like rape happen and we should fight to change that. But even then a child needs a family. Someone to protect them and look after them. Abortion isn't the right thing to do. It just allows an unfair society to continue. To say look these things happen and we are rather going to sweep them under the carpet.

Extract 10

Fornication, prostitution, abortion, homosexuality and same sex marriages are scourges that we live with. This doesn't mean that it's morally correct to be a prostitute, but to rubber stamp it as a norm will wreck the moral fibre of the nation.
(Forum Comment on on-line Mail & Guardian Article)

In Extract 9, G4P2 states that 'Abortion isn't the right thing to do. It just allows an unfair society to continue'. He goes on to say that condoning abortion is like saying 'look these things happen and we are rather going to sweep them under the carpet'. Not only is abortion a social ill in itself, but it allows other social ills to be perpetuated. This is because it violates the formation of a family unit, as G4P2 states 'even then a child needs a family'. In Extract 10, the speaker names certain social ills, including abortion, and states that to accept prostitution as 'a norm will wreck the moral fibre of the nation'. This again invokes the 'Familial Discourse'. Each of the social ills that the speaker names 'Fornication, prostitution, abortion, homosexuality and same sex marriages' violate the formation of the nuclear heterosexual family unit. They do not entail a long term relationship between a man and woman who go on to reproduce and raise children. It is interesting to note that in these extracts the family is seen as a protective environment to a dangerous society, to which it is placed in an adversarial position. This seems to tie to Talcott Parson's functionalist

perspective of the family which sees the family as a safe haven from an alienating society (see Moghadam, 2003).

A part of abortion disrupting the 'Familial Discourse' is that the relationship between the man and the woman is put under strain. This is also in due part to the supporting discourse of 'Equal Partnership'.

Abortion Disrupting the Equal Partnership

As discussed in the previous chapter, the discourse of 'Equal Partnership' is tied to the heterosexual matrix. The fact that the existence of two sexes is required for reproduction is translated into that the man and woman are seen as forming an equal partnership in bringing the pregnancy to term and raising the new born child.

Extract 11

R1 What if she makes the decision to abort by herself

G1P3 Wow. Its a bit of a cop out.

G1P1 Sometimes you may start questioning relationships. Is she willing to do this without consulting someone else? Without her partner without you? That's quite shocking

In Extract 11, when Y decides to make the decision to abort without including her partner, G1P3 calls this 'a cop out' and G1P1 states 'That's quite shocking' in relation to Y making the decision 'Without her partner'. In the discourse of 'Equal Partnership', a woman does not have the right to seek an abortion without her partner's mutual consent, because if she does it disrupts the equal partnership.

So, when a woman enters into a sexual relationship with a man, through conception she loses control over her body. This is because if conception occurs, a woman cannot make the decision by herself over what to do with her body. The man in the relationship has a say over her body. The man acts as an agent of patriarchy to direct the woman on what to do with her body. By making the decision to abort by herself, she violates patriarchy, and as a result she is seen as the one who violates the relationship between her and her partner.

Extract 12

G2P1 This is a bit extreme. I think if someone wants to have an abortion she should tell someone. I mean her partner should know. You were a part of it. It couldn't happen without you. But now it's like you are not equal. You should also tell someone. How can you go through this alone?

Extract 13

G2P1 If I wanted the child and she aborted it, I would say you killed my child. I couldn't be with her. I mean you are meant to be an equal partner so you have an equal say. But unfortunately you can't force the woman. So it's not equal. And the weight of the child is going to be there. I wouldn't want to be in a relationship like that.

In Extracts 12 and 13, G2P1 and G2P1 respectively state 'But now its like you are not equal' and 'So it's not equal'. Here the discourse of 'Equal Partnership' has been disrupted and because men have not been included in the decision to abort or whether to go through with the pregnancy they see themselves as not equal to their partners, not equal to *women*.

Because of conception, men see themselves as having an equal say in the pregnancy (which takes place in the woman's body) and over the decision to abort. The man thus emerges as an agent of patriarchy who has control over the pregnancy, the woman's body and the foetus as child. In Extract 13 G2P1 states about the foetus 'you killed my child'. The man is already acting in the role of the patriarchal father – it is his duty to take care of the child, and this entails having some control over the woman's body in the form of having control over the decision to abort. The woman, by making the decision to abort without her partner's consent violates the equal partnership, violates her partner's 'rights' as patriarch, and violates patriarchy itself. Furthermore, by doing this she is made to be seen as at fault for the breakdown of the relationship. In Extract 13 G2P1 states 'So it's not equal... I wouldn't want to be in a relationship like that.' There is no sense, however, that by assuming the position of patriarch, that the man contributed to the breakdown of the relationship. If the woman does not take into consideration the man positioned as patriarch's wishes, then she has doomed the relationship.

Extract 14

G2P3 But it also depends on the kind of person she is. Is she more open to listening and talking? Is she willing to hear you out or is she just going to do what she decides regardless?

Extract 15

G2P1 Yeah you're saying they can talk about it. But it's not always like that. If the girl makes a decision there's really nothing you can do about it. If you want to keep the child she can just sneak off and have an abortion. Or tell you straight that she's having an abortion. You can't stop her.

R1 So is there no sense that you can talk to her about it.

G2P1 Obviously you can try talk to her about it. Try convince her. Tell her that these are the options and that kind of thing.

In Extracts 14 and 15, speakers state that it is possible for a man to speak with his partner about the abortion decision. If, however, a woman is not 'open to listening and talking' (Extract 14) then the man 'can't stop her' (Extract 15). In these texts, the man is positioned as the rational thinking patriarch offering directives, and the woman can either follow these directives or 'do what she decides regardless' (Extract 14). The man is also positioned as doing the right thing and acting as the benevolent patriarch. In Extract 15 G2P1 states that if he wants to 'keep the child' the woman in a more malevolent sense can 'sneak off and have an abortion' or more severely than doing this behind the man's back, she can be open about her decision and 'tell you straight'.

It is interesting then that men see themselves as being 'powerless'. Why would a woman have to 'sneak off and have an abortion' or more brazenly tell a man about this decision, if there was no one for her to answer to? Why is this such a significant event? If a woman makes the decision to abort without consulting her partner, she does not render her partner 'powerless', rather she visibly demonstrates that there is some expectation that her partner already has a say over her body. By making the decision to abort without consulting her partner, she is resisting the power her partner has over her body.

Support and the 'New Man' Discourse

In the previous extracts, men discussed that they would not like to be in a relationship where the woman makes the decision to abort. Another option is that men can choose to stay in the relationship, despite this, and offer support to their partners. From this point, a 'new man' emerges.

Extract 16

G1P2 Essentially it's like looking at someone with HIV or an STD. You start thinking it's not your problem. So to a certain degree I think men can't understand. They'll never have to experience that in the same way. But in terms of your relationship things will change dramatically. I found that she was sexually inhibited. When it comes to being understanding that can put a lot of pressure on the relationship. You can only be so understanding until you're banging your head against the wall saying what can I do what can I do. How can I take this pain away and you can't. In some instances a man says let me get out I want to get out. She's made a decision and I can't help it.

G1P1 The relationship may deteriorate. Like it's your own emotional state your own psychological state it may just deteriorate. Although you still love them unconditionally. You have to a very selfless reason you have to let it go because it's destructive.

G1P2 That's kind of the self preservation vibe.

Extract 17

For these men, contrary to popular mythology, their partner's abortion is experienced as psychologically traumatic. I have seen four such men in the past few months, all in their late 20s or early 30s. Interestingly, they came for therapy only after a break-up with their partners. None of them came because of the abortion. As therapy progressed it emerged that their partner had had an abortion some time previously. Two of them had said "whatever makes you happy, honey" when their partner had suggested the abortion, one had vehemently opposed it and one had found out only later.

(Column, The Saturday Star, 2007)

In Extract 16, G1P2 seems to be trying to offer support to his partner, but realises that ultimately he cannot. He states that he asked 'what can I do what can I do' and 'How can I take this pain away', but ultimately 'you can't'. He goes on to say that his partner has 'made a decision and [he] can't help it'. In response, G1P1 in reference to his partner and their relationship states 'Although you love them unconditionally [...] you have to let it go because it's destructive'. In Extract 17, the speaker states that two men had told their partners in reference to the abortion decision 'whatever makes you happy, honey' and that they had gone

to therapy ‘only after a break-up with their partners’. The underlying story in both of these extracts is that despite these men’s effort to try support their partners, after the pregnancy had been terminated, the relationship did not survive.

Extract 18

- R1 Y asks X to go with her to the termination of pregnancy clinic. Do you think that he should go?
- G3P2 Definitely. He has one last chance I think to convince her. Because it will be different being there than actually thinking about it. Saying that you want to do something and then getting there and realising this is actually what we're doing.
- G3P1 It could spark off something and maybe they would want to keep the child. It could be painful for the guy but maybe it’s his last chance to have the kid. One of them might change their mind. It certainly could change when they confront it. Its easy to say let's go climb a mountain until you're faced with it.

Extract 19

- R1 Earlier we spoke about supporting your partner. Do you think in this case it would be a good idea?
- G1P1 You can support her. But only to an extent. Not if she’s doing something that’s wrong. I mean I can help her through it but I’m not going to be a part of it. Especially if I tried to talk her out of it tell her this is wrong. But in the end it is her decision.
- G1P3 I would hope that I could go. But I don’t know if I would. I would want to support her but I don’t know if I could.

In Extract 18, when presented with whether X should accompany Y to the termination of pregnancy clinic, G3P2 states that he should as he has ‘one last chance to convince her’ and G3P1 adds ‘it could be painful for the guy but maybe its his last chance to have the kid’. In contrast, in Extract 19, G1P1 states that he would not go as it is his partner’s ‘decision’. In response R1 brings up the notion of support to which G1P1 replies that a man should support his partner ‘but only to an extent’. He goes on to say that this is especially so if he ‘tried to talk her out of it tell her this is wrong’, but then adds ‘in the end it is her decision’. In these extracts, support occurs again, but in the form of men trying to convince their partners not to go through with an abortion, or that abortion is wrong.

In these extracts men are positioned as necessary support givers and for a man to provide support for his partner is spoken of as ‘the right thing to do’. This, however, is not as benign as first appears. In Extracts 16 and 17, despite men attempting to provide support, the

relationship cannot continue, the act of abortion has disrupted the relationship. But it is the nature of the support provided that contributes to the deterioration of the relationship. Support is only provided if abortion is already constructed as a traumatic event. Put another way, knowing that the act of abortion will have negative consequences for the woman, the man attempts to provide support to her. So each time support is given, it is under the premise that abortion has negative consequences. In this way, the act of giving support reasserts that abortion has negative consequences. This is more explicit in Extract 18 where speakers state that they must accompany their partners to the termination of pregnancy clinic. These speakers attempt to provide support for their partners in reasserting that abortion is wrong and getting them to instead form a family unit. If there are any negative consequences to abortion, it is because the formation of the family unit has been violated, and the function of support is to reassert this fact. The notion of support must be related to the 'New Man' discourse.

Extract 20

It is a commonly held view that the majority of single-parent men are irresponsible fathers. [...] This may be true of an older generation of men. I've argued in a previous article that it's my belief that a new generation of South African men are taking firm steps to be responsible partners, and in fact want to have children and be loving and committed fathers. (Column, The Saturday Star, 2007)

In Extract 20, the speaker refers to a 'new generation of South African men' who are 'responsible partners, and in fact want to have children and be loving and committed fathers'. This relates very strongly to what is referred to in the literature as the 'New Man'.

The 'New Man' is constructed as "sensitive, emotionally aware, respectful of women and egalitarian in outlook" (Gill, 2003, p. 37). This 'New Man' is attentive to his partner and to his children (Singleton & Maher, 2004; Doty, 1993). This man emerged as a response to second wave feminism, which characterised men as emotionally detached with regard to their partners and children (Singleton & Maher, 2004; Doty 1993). This in turn prompted recourse to what are seen as traditional family values (Henwood & Procter, 2003). The reasoning here is that men will act responsibly and take care of partners and children, but *very narrowly* in the context of the nuclear family. In other words, to be responsible and caring requires the nuclear family wherein men are positioned as heads of the household. According to Chapman (1988 in Benwell, 2004) constructions of masculinity such as the 'new man' are patriarchal in

nature, with only a superficial change so as to give the impression of a positive transformation in light of feminist critique.

In the above extracts, speakers already position the man as the head of the family through the 'Familial Discourse'. In these texts, it is the duty of the man to be attentive towards his partner's needs and to protect her. In what appears to be a highly paternal act, a man must provide support in trying to convince his partner not to abort, to not violate the formation of the family unit, for which there could be dire consequences. Failing this, a man needs to support his partner's negative emotional state due to her having had an abortion. He needs to reassert to his partner that what she did was wrong.

Toerien and Durrheim (2001) note that the 'new man' relies on knowledge over any kind of physical force or strength. The 'new man' has knowledge of women, which enables him to manage them. In the above extracts, men use knowledge of the negative consequences of abortion to guide women, as opposed to physically stopping them from going to clinics. These men discuss with their partners what can be done, positioning themselves as external arbitrators of reason, to a woman who potentially might not have such faculties. Whether by physical strength or by reason (either of which men are seen as having more of) men direct women on what to do, limiting their autonomy.

Moreover, by directing women to have children are these 'new men' not merely reproducing the patriarchal construction that women are ineffably tied to the act of childbearing? These 'new men' may not use physical force, like the patriarchs of past times, but the outcome is the same: the formation of a nuclear heterosexual family where the man is positioned as head of the household (here through superior knowledge or reason) and the woman is positioned as bearer of children.

Equal Partnership and Men's Rights

The discourse of 'Equal Partnership' reproduces patriarchy. This discourse positions men and women as being equal, thus masking inequality. When this inequality is attacked, speakers may invoke the discourse of 'Equal Partnership' to rhetorically state that men and woman are *already* equal. Thus attacks on the status quo are seen as attacks on men's rights, one that entails women gaining an unfair advantage over men. In this way, the discourse of 'Equal

Partnership' maintains itself. In this way, the discourse of 'Equal Partnership' maintains gender inequality and thus reproduces patriarchy.

Extract 11

R1 What if she makes the decision to abort by herself?

G1P3 Wow. It's a bit of a cop out.

G1P1 Sometimes you may start questioning relationships. Is she willing to do this without consulting someone else? Without her partner without you? That's quite shocking.

Extract 21

G2P1 A woman has the control. She gets to decide. Even if a man doesn't want it. She's going to do it. A man can't force her to do it. A man should have a say but he doesn't necessarily have a say. Here it is. I really don't agree with it. But there's nothing you can do.

Extract 11 demonstrates the discourse of 'Equal Partnership'. When the possibility that Y made the decision to abort without consulting X, G1P1 and G1P3 express disbelief. For G1P1 and G1P3, the assumption is that the man and woman already have an equal say over the woman's body. So when a woman makes the decision to act over her own body without consulting a man, G1P1 and G1P3 are shocked. It is clear then that talk indicates that women should not have this right. For a woman to have or to exercise this right is in itself shocking. A woman should not act without the presence of the man positioned as patriarch.

In Extract 21, G2P1 states that with regard to the abortion decision 'A man should have a say but he doesn't' and that 'A woman has the control'. In contrast to the speakers in Extract 11 expressing disbelief that a woman can act upon her body without a man, for the speaker in Extract 21 that a woman acts this way is more akin to a cold, hard fact. Because the woman is positioned as having 'the control', the man is positioned as having 'no control'. The man is thus positioned as being powerless and having no rights. This is further compounded by statements such as 'A man can't force her to do it' and 'there's nothing you can do'. A woman acting upon her own body without consultation with a man is thus for this speaker demonstrative of the ultimate disempowerment of men.

Extract 22

G3P1 I mean you can't deny the guy has a part it's fifty-fifty. I don't think there are enough rights. I think generally women are given enough rights.

Extract 23

Legally speaking, unmarried men don't have any rights regarding their unborn children and they are completely at the mercy of their partners.

(Column, The Saturday Star, 2007)

Extracts 22 and 23 provide an explicit demonstration of men's perception that women have more rights than men. In Extract 23 the speaker states that 'men don't have rights regarding their unborn children'. The use of the term 'unborn children' indicates the invocation of the discourse of 'Foetal Personhood' and the use of the term 'their' in relation to this indicates a kind of fatherly possession over offspring. That men's rights are invoked alongside the discourse of 'Foetal Personhood' indicates how the discourse of 'Foetal Personhood' is easily used in the service of patriarchy.

Rhode (1997 in Digby, 2003) notes that men have difficulty in seeing inequality. Men being in a position of privilege cannot see inequality. So when this privilege is removed, men see this as an attack on their rights as equals to women. Men's Rights movements arose in response to feminism (Doty, 1993). In these movements it is assumed that women have already achieved liberation. Thus efforts by feminism to change the status quo are seen as women being unfairly advantaged while men are being unfairly disadvantaged (Digby, 2003).

Abortion Disrupting Foetal Personhood

In the previous chapter I discussed how the discourse of 'Foetal Personhood' constructs the fetus as a child, existing within the pregnant woman, but as a separate entity with its own set of rights. One obvious way then, that abortion is spoken about through the discourse of 'Foetal Personhood' is as 'murder'. Here I discuss how this occurs in the texts surveyed.

Extract 24

"Murder is murder even if it is in the womb"
(Letter to the Editor, The Star, 2007)

Extract 25

G4P1 Yeah but some people would consider it. It's their choice. You should still have the option.

G4P2 The way you're saying that. As if it's just a mere choice. But you are making the choice for the child. Would the child say, "Hey it's okay if you kill me". We mentioned adoption so maybe that's a good thing. I don't think anyone would say I'd rather not live. Kill me now. At least not a child when they're that young.

G4P1 Yeah but you can't exactly speak on behalf of someone else. You're saying speak for the child. But how do you know? I mean you have to have fundamental freedoms and you are speaking for something you can't know

Extract 26

G3P3 I would also think abortion. You have that choice

G3P2 There's also a general thing that they're doing about their life. What do they want to do with their life. Making a choice. Bring a life into the world or making a choice. A choice to kill.

G3P3 But you still have the choice. It's still an option.

That abortion is akin to murder is explicitly stated in Extract 24, and similarly in Extracts 25 and 26 the term 'kill' is invoked. The discourse of 'Foetal Personhood' becomes difficult to escape for speakers in Extract 25 and 26. In Extract 25, G4P1 mentions abortion as a 'choice' and an 'option', to which G4P2 replies that this is 'making the choice for the child'. While G4P1 asserts this right to 'choice' and later 'fundamental freedoms' he cannot escape speaking about the foetus as a person and states 'you can't exactly speak on behalf of someone else'. In Extract 26, G3P3 also invokes the notion of 'choice' which G3P2 calls a 'choice to kill'. In response, G3P3 states that regardless one 'still [has] the choice. It's still an option'.

Rhetorically, neither G4P1 nor G3P3 can negate that the foetus is already a child. Rhetorically, it becomes difficult to defend the choice to abort, as 'choice' becomes collapsed with 'kill'. The debate around abortion is often framed around the pro-choice/pro-life binary and this becomes relevant here. In Extract 26, the discussion between G3P2 and G3P3 falls

back on this binary. Through the discourse of 'Foetal Personhood', however, the debate is shaped more closely by pro-life rhetoric. The opposite of 'life' is 'choice' and 'kill', terms which become collapsed. Advocates of 'choice' however have no term to collapse life against in a similar rhetoric fashion. That the foetus is already a child and that the opposite of 'life' is 'kill' enables the pro-life position to set the terms and demarcate how the debate proceeds.

In Extract 18 of the previous chapter, G2P1 had stated 'But you can't take away from that it would result in a child. Whether you say life begins on the first day or even in nine months time. If nature had its way it would always result in the birth of a child'. This relates to G4P1 and G3P3's inability to rhetorically argue against that the foetus is already a child and the discourse of 'Foetal Personhood' very much demonstrates its power here. The logic is that conception leads to childbirth, therefore the cell formed at conception, the embryo, is *already* a child. Subjects who wish to argue that conception is not necessarily life need to grapple with the question of along what stage in pregnancy should an embryo or foetus be considered a child. Such a question is only possible where the discourse exists that already names the foetus a child. Questioning when a foetus can be called a child already rests on the internal logic that states a foetus can be called a child. To even engage with such a question is to have to fall back on the rhetoric of foetus as child. Thus when terms such as 'choice' or 'option' are invoked, they are in relation to taking a 'life', and the 'choice' to abort is the decision to 'murder'.

There are, however, circumstances under which abortion, still framed as 'murder', becomes 'justified homicide'.

Extract 27

To believe in capital punishment (the killing of the guilty) but be against abortion (the killing of the innocent) could be justified. But it requires the most macabre moral contortion to believe it is wrong to kill the guilty but right to kill the innocent. In certain special circumstances, such as rape, I should allow abortion. I admit this is the taking of human life but we allow homicide in special conditions, such as war and self defence, and I should extend these to abortion in very strict conditions.
(Column, The Herald, 2008)

Extract 28

And Judaism allows abortion in cases where the mother is threatened either physically or mentally for precisely the reason that in those cases it is a case of self-defence since the mother is threatened and therefore it is not murder. Thus rabbinic permission for an abortion after a rape is easy to obtain since the mother's well being mentally is often threatened by having such a child- and it is ok at any point of the pregnancy since the baby is only considered equal to the mother when it crowns.

(Forum Comment on on-line Mail & Guardian Article)

In Extract 27, the speaker states that in 'certain special circumstances, such as rape, I should allow abortion'. He goes on to say that this is still 'the taking of human life' but that 'we allow homicide in special conditions'. In this extract the speaker reproduces the discourse of 'Foetal Personhood' in constructing the foetus as a human, but here is identifying a scenario in which terminating the pregnancy becomes 'justified'. In Extract 28, the speaker states that the 'mother' may abort where she is 'threatened either physically or mentally' and 'therefore it is not murder'. The speaker identifies 'rape' as an instance where she could be 'threatened by having such a child'. This speaker draws on the discourse of 'Foetal Personhood' in identifying the foetus as 'child', and implicitly sees abortion as murder by identifying cases such as rape where abortion is 'not murder'.

In the preceding chapter I linked the 'Familial Discourse' to the heterosexual matrix, thereby establishing the formation of the family as a part of the natural order. Rape presents a disruption to this natural order. Rape does not entail an equal partnership nor will a family unit be formed as a result of rape. Here the 'Familial Discourse' is used is used to trump the discourse of 'Foetal Personhood'. This is interesting as 'Foetal Personhood' is used to support the 'Familial Discourse'.

What occurs then are two permutations of the 'Familial Discourse'. Rape, framed through the 'Familial Discourse', is constructed as a violation of the natural order and the formation of a family unit. Thus abortion becomes 'justifiable murder'. Speakers, however, can also draw on the 'Familial Discourse' as a means to argue against abortion in the case of rape. This can be seen in the following extract.

Extract 29

- R1 What do you think of that these laws were passed in order to protect the woman from a difficult or unjust society like in the cases of rape or incest.
- G4P2 I don't think that that's the child's fault. Yes we do live in unfair society. But its our job to change that society. To protect the child from this society so that they can have an equal chance in the world. Things like rape happen and we should fight to change that. But even then a child needs a family. Someone to protect them and look after them. Abortion isn't the right thing to do. It just allows an unfair society to continue. To say look these things happen and we are rather going to sweep them under the carpet.

In Extract 29, G4P2 states that in reference to rape and incest that 'I don' think that's the child's fault' and later that 'even then a child needs a family'. In this extract, G4P2 invokes both the discourse of 'Foetal Personhood' and the 'Familial Discourse'. The speaker in this extract uses the 'Familial Discourse', because of the fact that a rape occurred, to resist 'an unfair society' and to resist abortion. As G4P2 states 'a child needs a family' and '[abortion] allows an unfair society to continue'.

What Extracts 27, 28 and 29 share in common is a recourse to the nuclear heterosexual family. In Extracts 27 and 28 rape is seen as a violation of the natural order and thus to form a family unit is to maintain that violation. In Extract 29 despite that a rape occurred, a family unit must be formed so as to resist the violation of rape or of an 'unfair society'. In all three of these extracts, the violation and cure to the violation is rooted in the 'Familial Discourse'.

In Extract 28, the speaker refers to abortion being acceptable in the case of rape due to the woman's well being. It may be the case, however, that against the 'Familial Discourse' and the discourse of 'Foetal Personhood' that the woman seems to be losing autonomy over her body. Against the 'Familial Discourse' and the discourse of 'Foetal Personhood' the pregnant woman is positioned as a reciprocal on which to operate. She is accorded no agency of her own. If conception occurs as a result of rape, her own intentions over what to do with her body are not necessarily taken into consideration. Instead the family or violation of the formation of the family unit and the foetus as child is referred to. If abortion is seen as justifiable in the context of rape, it is because of the violation of the formation of the family unit, and not always because of any concerns of the woman or her well being. If abortion is unacceptable given the circumstance of rape, it is because the foetus as child needs to be taken into account or provided with a family. Once again, the woman's concerns or welfare

are undermined. When abortion is spoken about in relation to rape it is through the 'Familial Discourse' and discourse of 'Foetal Personhood' which act to subordinate the woman in question.

Foetal Personhood and the Voice of Patriarchy

Because the foetus is constructed as a separate human to the pregnant women, it is accorded a voice, it can speak. But whenever the foetus is accorded a 'voice' in these texts, its welfare supersedes that of the pregnant woman. Whenever speakers draw on the discourse of 'Foetal Personhood' it is to ensure that the pregnancy is brought to term. In this way the pregnant woman loses control over her body. The foetus as a person is, as Bordo (2000 in Solinger, 2005) calls it, a super subject whose rights take precedent over the pregnant woman.

Extract 30

The "right" to abortion is predicated on the constitutional right to make decisions concerning reproduction and to control one's body. This is erroneous as reproduction has already occurred with the implantation of the embryo. The baby has a separate DNA, and later on blood. The baby is not a part of the mother's body.
(Letter to the Editor, The Star, 2007)

Extract 31

- R1 How do you respond to feminists who are saying that you are not speaking on behalf of the child but you are speaking for them? You are telling them what they can and can't do with their bodies. They're the ones who have to go through the pregnancy.
- G4P2 The woman has to carry it but it's still a separate entity. The child is residing there momentarily. It's a separate human being to the woman. I am still my parent's child but I have a separate life to them.

In Extract 30, the speaker states that in reference to abortion being 'predicated on the constitutional right to make decisions concerning reproduction and to control one's body' that 'The baby is not a part of the mother's body'. In Extract 31, in reference to R1's statements around feminists and 'telling them what they can and can't do with their bodies', G4P2 responds that 'It's a separate human being to the woman'. But by stating that the foetus is a separate entity to the pregnant woman, the pregnant woman becomes invisible. She cannot speak. Just as the sonogram allows only foetus or pregnant woman to be viewed at one time,

giving the foetus status as a human and according it a voice allows only one voice to be heard at a time.

Positioning the foetus as child acts to silence the pregnant woman, as the foetus's rights come to supersede her own. Once the foetus is positioned as child, the 'Familial Discourse' is invoked which positions the pregnant woman as 'mother'. The discourse of 'Foetal Personhood' not only elides a woman's control over her body, it places that body within the constraints of the family by supporting the 'Familial Discourse'. Through these two discourses, the foetus is given a 'life' and rights, and it is given a voice. And when the foetus speaks, it is the voice of patriarchy.

Conclusion

In this chapter I discussed how abortion disrupts the 'Familial Discourse' and the supporting discourses of 'Equal Partnership' and 'Foetal Personhood'. A discussion of patriarchy illuminated an understanding of these discourses, by linking these to the patriarchal family as a nuclear and heterosexual endeavour. Abortion is constructed as being detrimental to the man and woman concerned, precisely because it violates the family. The man is positioned as patriarch directing the woman on what to do with her body. If she fails to comply with this, men perceive themselves as 'losing rights' to a woman who has 'too many rights'.

A relationship that has been through an abortion and thus disrupted the formation of a family unit cannot survive. The man is positioned as having to 'support' his partner which consists of him reasserting patriarchal values. A society that condones abortion is dangerous. Abortion, however, may be utilised in cases of rape where the family unit has already been violated. Almost paradoxically, the 'Familial Discourse' may be invoked to resist abortion. In either case, the woman's own concerns and welfare are superseded by the foetus as child and the formation of the family unit.

These two chapters present my analysis or readings of the texts I surveyed. In the concluding chapter I will present an overview of my work.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

Brief Overview of the Research Process

The impetus for this research was born out of the recognition that men play a critical role in women's reproductive practices and that there is thus a need for an examination of gendered power relations in this area (Hussain, 2003). With regard to abortion, there is a dearth of research concerning men in this area.

As the focus was now on power relations, Foucault's (1978; 1982) work around power became relevant. Foucault's work here focuses on how objects in the social world have a history and how power emerges in multiple ways and from multiple sources to construct those objects in the social world. Foucault's work links discourse to power and shows that the subject is constructed through discourse. As Foucault did not directly discuss gender, the work of Butler (1990, 1993) was examined. Butler's work takes up Foucault's around discourse and power and applies it to gender to show the radically constructed nature of both gender and sex. In this regard, Butler discusses the heterosexual matrix, which proved useful to the study of abortion and gendered power relations.

This enabled an examination of masculinity and how it could be deployed in this study. Following the work of Foucault and Butler, masculinity was discussed as being constituted through discourse and imbued with power relations. In this regard, the concept of patriarchy became relevant to show how the construct of masculinity gained dominance over that of femininity. The concept of phallogocentrism and how it occurred in masculinity studies provided methodological directions on how to approach the data.

Following this, an examination of the current literature on abortion was possible. This involved tracing the history of abortion practice in South Africa, as well as the legislation regarding abortion. Also discussed were the practices surrounding foetal personhood and motherhood, as well as past research on men and abortion.

Drawing on this theoretical orientation, this research broadly aimed to analyse the discourses of abortion in the talk of men. It aimed to find what discourses emerged surrounding the topic of abortion, how these discourses constructed abortion and how they positioned men and

women. This required a discussion of methodology and how discourse was conceptualised. For this study, Parker's (1990) method was selected and then augmented by Davies & Harré's (1990) ideas around subject positioning.

Data were then collected from three sources: focus group interviews, newspaper articles and on-line forum comments. The focus group interviews were made up of men who discussed the topic of abortion through the use of a vignette and an informational brochure. Newspaper articles around abortion by men were collected over a five year period (2004 – 2009). On-line forum comments around abortion made by men were collected. Data were then analysed using Parker's (1990) method as it aligned itself with Foucault's work around discourse and power and Davies and Harré's (1990) work on subject positionings.

The Heterosexual Matrix

In doing the analysis, Butler's (1990) concept of the heterosexual matrix proved to be most useful to this research, as it was then related to reproduction. In the heterosexual matrix, gender only makes sense through heterosexual desire and it follows as such: 1) men and women are distinct; 2) the role of men is to desire women and vice versa; 3) desire follows from gender, which follows from sex. So 'male' and 'masculinity' mean a desire for women, and 'female' and 'femininity' a desire for men. Both gender and desire follow from sex. Desire here is made to be heterosexual and brings with it the oppositions of masculine/feminine which in turn are thought to be expressions of male/female.

Following the heterosexual matrix, one can add the aspect of reproduction. There are two distinct sexes, which follows onto that there are two distinct genders. The role of these two distinct genders is to desire one another. Desire (sometimes) results in intercourse. Intercourse results in reproduction. But it is not that reproduction is merely the final optional stage in the heterosexual matrix, it is present from the very beginning and at all points. Reproduction in humans *requires* the existence or rather presence of two sexes. That there are two genders, that they desire one another, that they have intercourse is predicated on that there exist two sexes for the function of reproduction.

Through the heterosexual matrix, sex and gender are rendered as pre-discursive or natural. Similarly, when reproduction is linked to the heterosexual matrix, practices around

reproduction are rendered as pre-discursive or natural. This has implications in the texts surveyed and the discourses emerging from them.

In the 'Familial Discourse' the idealised form of the family is presented as the nuclear heterosexual family. This is made up of a heterosexual partnership between a man and a woman who are positioned as father and mother, respectively, to a child or children. In the texts surveyed this is seen as natural or biologically determined. Through the heterosexual matrix, certain practices around reproduction are rendered as natural, and this is extended to include the formation of a heterosexual, nuclear family. The 'Familial Discourse' is supported by a discourse of 'Equal Partnership' and a discourse of 'Foetal Personhood'.

In the 'Equal Partnership' discourse, men and women are positioned as being equal to one another and equally responsible for the pregnancy. This, again, relates to the heterosexual matrix. That there exist two sexes, which are required for the act of reproduction, is translated into that men and women are equal to one another and equally responsible for the pregnancy. This discourse strongly supports the 'Familial Discourse' in establishing an equal heterosexual partnership as necessary for reproduction and the formation of a family.

In the 'Foetal Personhood' discourse, the unborn foetus is positioned as a child and separate entity to the pregnant woman, who is positioned as mother to the child, and the man is positioned as a father to the child. In this discourse, the foetus is positioned as a child in need of protection and support, which comes in the form of family. This thus supports the familial discourse.

Disrupting Patriarchy

Following the discussion of these discourses, I discussed how abortion was seen to disrupt them. This necessitated a discussion on patriarchy and how it related to the heterosexual nuclear family. In this regard, men are positioned as the heads of household and as having power over all others in the family (see Gittins, 1993). The 'Familial Discourse' aligned with this view of the patriarchal family. It and the supporting discourses of 'Equal Partnership' and 'Foetal Personhood', become disrupted by abortion as it disrupts the formation of a patriarchal family,

The 'Familial Discourse' constructs the formation of a family unit as being favourable to the individuals involved. If, however, this is violated through abortion, there are negative psychological affects for the individuals involved. Whereas a relationship in which a family unit is formed is strengthened, a relationship that disrupted the formation of a family unit cannot survive.

That the relationship is put under strain, or that it cannot survive is also constructed through the 'Equal Partnership' discourse being violated. In this discourse, men and women are positioned as being equal to one another, and abortion is constructed as disrupting this. When a woman makes the decision to abort, she is seen as violating the equal partnership wherein she should have consulted with her partner. Men thus perceive themselves as 'losing power' to a woman who has 'too many rights'. The discourse of 'Equal Partnership' acts in the service of patriarchy by establishing the man as having power over the woman's body. If a woman makes a decision regarding her own body, she disrupts the equal partnership, disrupts the formation of a family unit and in turn disrupts patriarchy.

From this point, the 'New Man' discourse emerges. This man is constructed as being emotionally aware and respectful of women, in response to second wave feminism which saw men as emotionally detached with regard to their partners and children. This new man, however, represents only a cosmetic change to the man that second wave feminists were criticizing, and really supports patriarchy. In the texts surveyed, the new man acts from the position of patriarch in the family. Already positioned as father, the man must support his partner through the pregnancy, directing her away from abortion and toward the formation of a family unit. If the pregnancy is taken to term, the man is positioned as head of the household in the patriarchal family. If there is an abortion, the man must act as supporter to his partner, because she is constructed as having negative psychological effects due to having had an abortion.

Since the foetus is constructed as a child and as a separate entity to the pregnant woman in the discourse of 'Foetal Personhood', abortion is constructed as murder. The 'Familial Discourse' can be invoked, in this regard, as the foetus now constructed as child, is seen as needing a family. On the other, if no family unit can be formed, as in the case of rape, the 'Familial Discourse' can be drawn upon to justify abortion. In either situation, it is the foetus and the family that are taken into consideration, and not the welfare of the pregnant woman.

In this way, the discourse of 'Foetal Personhood' silences the pregnant woman and thus acts in the service of patriarchy.

Limitations of this Study

The limitations of this study lie in the very thing that it aims to investigate, that being gender. Although being a male researcher and interviewing men gave the opportunity to access a unique context and set of social relations, which may have not been privy to a female researcher, likewise this could have also put limits on the research. When men are talking to men, they may say different things to when they are talking to women. So while, being a man may have yielded one kind of interview, a woman researcher may have yielded a different kind of interview. Thus it would be interesting to conduct this research with a woman leading the focus group interviews.

Still regarding gender, the discourses that emerged from the texts surveyed should be 'evaluated' by women. What I mean by this is that these discourses represent a male's perspective and were analysed by a male. How would a woman 'evaluate' these discourses? How would women react to the analysis? What insight would be yielded had there been woman co-researchers? Part of this limitation is that this study is a master's study, and including women in this way could prove to be difficult or unfeasible.

Implications and Suggestions for Future Research

The aim of this study was to address the dearth of research around men and abortion. So suggestions for future research would be to extend this study. One way to do this would be to have a more narrow focus on demographics, such as whether or not the sample consisted of married or unmarried men, or a focus on age.

Read through the heterosexual matrix and patriarchal family, not only do the research findings become more clear, but so too their implications. Historically, as discussed previously, South African law as well as public sentiment was positioned against abortion. This was achieved through ideas around race and population control, but also through patriarchal discourses such as that of 'foetal personhood'. What is clear from this research is that despite the CTOP Act of 1996, abortion is still constructed as a negative act that brings

with its harmful consequences to both individuals and society as a whole. Linking discourses around abortion to the heterosexual matrix and the patriarchal family will have implications for a greater understanding of abortion, in addition to understanding how it is historically constructed.

Future research can thus focus on three areas, further research on the family, on masculinity, and on heteronormativity. With regard to the family, research should be conducted according to the positions that men and women have in the formation and maintenance of the family unit, as well as interviews with partners who did not decide to terminate a pregnancy and instead formed a family. Research on men and masculinity studies should examine how men position themselves within the heterosexual matrix and how seemingly benign acts such as support reinforce patriarchal values. Finally, this research explains how the heterosexual matrix views reproduction and the formation of the family as natural consequences of its authority, casting them as being pre-discursive. Research around homosexuality can thus focus on how society negatively constructs homosexuality with regard to issues of reproduction and where homosexuals want to raise children, or start a family.

In conclusion, lol.

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Appendix 1: Vignette for Focus Group Interviews

X is a 23 year old man. He has been seeing his girlfriend _Y_ for some time and they are sexually active. Recently, his girlfriend has told him that she is pregnant.

1. What do you think _X_ is experiencing? What is _X_ feeling?
2. What kind of conversations do you imagine _X_ and _Y_ will have?
3. What are some of the possible things that _X_ can do?

Y has told _X_ that she has decided to have an abortion.

4. How do you think _X_ reacted to this?
5. _X_ has told you about this. What advice would you give him? Why would you give this advice?

Y asks _X_ to accompany her to the Termination of Pregnancy Clinic.

6. Should _X_ accompany _Y_ to the clinic? Why?
7. What do you think _X_'s experience of accompanying _Y_ to the clinic would be like?

After the abortion _X_ and _Y_ continue to live together.

8. What do you think their relationship would be like?
9. How do you think _X_ and _Y_ would react to the recent events in their lives?

Appendix 2: Brochure Used During Focus Group Discussions

Termination of Pregnancy

A Termination of Pregnancy or TOP “means the separation and expulsion, by medical or surgical means, of the contents of the uterus of a pregnant woman”.

Who can have a TOP?

In South Africa, TOP is legal as of 1996.

A woman may get a TOP by request if she is less than 12 weeks pregnant. If she is between 13 and 20 weeks pregnant, she can request a TOP if a medical practitioner is of the opinion that:

- a) The woman’s physical or mental health is at risk
- b) The foetus will have severe mental or physical abnormalities
- c) The woman is pregnant because of incest and rape
- d) The continued pregnancy would significantly affect the social or economic circumstances of the woman

If a woman is more than 20 weeks pregnant, she may only get a TOP if two medical practitioners or a medical practitioner and a midwife are of the opinion that the continued pregnancy:

- a) Will endanger the woman’s life
- b) Will result in a severe malformation of the foetus; or
- c) Will pose a risk of injury to the foetus

A woman does not have to consult her partner or anyone else before requesting a TOP except for medical practitioners when she is over 13 weeks pregnant.

A woman under the age of 18 does not need to consult her parents, guardians, family members or friends before requesting a TOP. A medical practitioner or midwife will however advise her to consult parents, guardians, family members or friends. If the woman decides not to consult anyone, she may still request a TOP.

If the case is that the woman is:

- a) Severely mentally disabled to such an extent that she is completely incapable of understanding and appreciating the nature or consequences of a TOP
- b) In a state of continuous unconsciousness and there is no reasonable prospect that she will regain consciousness in time to request and to consent to a TOP

a TOP may be performed upon the request of a spouse or legal guardian. If such persons cannot be found a TOP may be performed upon the consent and request of the curator personae and with the consent of two medical practitioners or a medical practitioner and a midwife.

How will you know if someone has a TOP?

A TOP is confidential. Health workers are not allowed to tell anyone if a woman gets a TOP. A woman does not have to tell anyone that she has had a TOP.

Where can you go to get a TOP?

Only certain clinics and hospitals can perform a TOP. If a clinic does not have a TOP service, they are required by law to refer you to a clinic or hospital that can. Only qualified health workers such as a doctor or nurse should perform a TOP.

How does a woman know if she's pregnant?

Clinics can perform pregnancy tests for free. These are confidential. Home pregnancy tests are available from pharmacies and are 99% accurate. These can range in price from R15 to R90.

Where can you get counselling?

Places that offer TOP are required to provide counselling before and after TOP. A woman does not have to seek counselling if she doesn't want to. If you don't want to have a TOP, you may also seek counselling at a clinic.

How much does a TOP cost?

A TOP is free and paid for by the government. If you go to a private clinic you will have to pay to have a TOP. This may cost around R1600.

How safe is a TOP?

Like any medical procedure there is a small risk after having a TOP. A woman can still get pregnant after having a TOP. Having a TOP will not lead to infertility.

What are methods of contraception?

The following methods of contraception will prevent pregnancy, but not stop sexually transmitted infections, such as HIV/AIDS:

- a) Pills which a woman takes once a day
- b) Contraceptive injection which a woman gets given every 2 – 3 months
- c) Intrauterine device or IUD which is placed in a woman's uterus by a health worker
- d) Emergency contraception pills or the morning after pill which a woman can take up to 72 hours after sex so as to prevent pregnancy

Both men and women may receive sterilisation which prevents pregnancy from ever occurring, but this does not protect against sexually transmitted infections. There is still a small risk that pregnancy may occur.

Male condoms and female condoms protect against unwanted pregnancy as well as sexually transmitted infections.

Important phone numbers

AIDS Helpline 0800-012-322

Appendix 3: Participant Consent Form

RHODES UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY
AGREEMENT
BETWEEN STUDENT RESEARCHER AND RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

I _____ agree to participate in the research project of Jateen Hansjee provisionally titled “Discourses of Abortion in the Talk of Males”.

I understand that:

1. The researcher is a student conducting the research as part of the requirements for a master’s degree at Rhodes University.
2. The researcher is interested in how males talk about abortion.
3. My participation will involve focus group discussions with others around abortion.
4. I will be asked to answer questions which may lead to discussions of a personal nature but I can choose not to answer any questions about aspects of my life which I am not willing to disclose.
5. I am invited to voice to the researcher any concerns I have about my participation in the study and to have these addressed to my satisfaction.
6. I commit myself to full participation, but I am free to withdraw from the study at any time.
7. The report on the project may contain information about my personal experiences, attitudes, and behaviours, but that the report will be designed in such a way that I will not be able to be identified by the general reader.
8. My responses in the group will be tape recorded and transcribed.

Date _____

Participant Name _____

Participant Signature _____

Researcher Signature _____

Witness _____