

THE CENTRE FOR GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES
THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES
ST. AUGUSTINE, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO.

SYMPOSIUM REPORT

The Construction of Caribbean Masculinity:
Towards A Research Agenda

11-13, January 1996

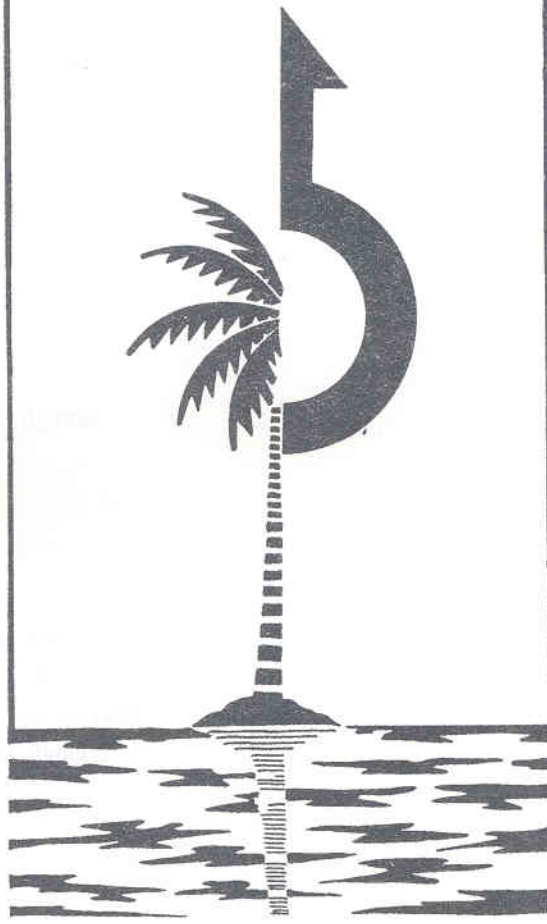
Held at
Seminar Room - Institute of International Relations
The University of the West Indies,
St. Augustine,
Trinidad and Tobago

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January 11th - 13th 1996

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The University of the West Indies,
St. Augustine.
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KINDLY RETURN TO
CENTRE FOR GENDER
AND DEVELOPMENT
STUDIES



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I. BACKGROUND TO THE SYMPOSIUM:

The re-emergence of the women's movement and the transformations which it has wrought in women's lives over the last three decades has brought the position of men into sharp focus. After years of rejection and resistance to the demands of the women's movement, more and more men are beginning to look deeper into themselves and explore the complex issue of masculinity and manhood and what it has meant to them, other men, women, children and society as a whole. This has given rise to a slowly developing body of literature on men's studies and on masculinity internationality.

In the Caribbean the concern with masculinity has taken on an additional focus. Many persons have been 'buying into' the male marginalisation thesis' as developed by Prof. Errol Miller (1986/1991) to explain what for example has been described by University of the West Indies and University of Guyana Chancellor Sir Shridath Ramphal as "male underachievement" within the region as evidenced by lower male to female ratios in university enrollment.

For its part, the women's movement has hastened to point out that in spite of significant gains made by women in recent decades (gains which run the risk of being lost due to structural adjustment), men are by no means marginalised. Men still have much higher levels of employment throughout the region, are still overwhelmingly represented in senior management and government while women are over-represented among the poor and unemployed. They agree however that transformations in the conceptualization of 'womanness' and 'femaleness' among women, has not been accompanied by similar changes in understandings of 'masculinity' and 'manhood' among men, with dire consequences.

In 1994, the Centre for Gender and Development Studies of the University of the West Indies, identified five areas for research. *The Construction of Caribbean Masculinity* was one of these. In an effort to develop a research agenda, literature searches were carried out at national, regional and international level. With the exception of the two publications of Errol Miller the searches revealed little else. Even the publications of which we were aware e.g. published articles by Barry Chevannes were not listed in the data bases.

This therefore provided the impetus and context for this symposium. It was conceived as a mechanism to bring together scholars in the field of whom the symposium planning committee were aware of and whose collective contribution could assist the committee to put in place a framework for this research agenda.

II. OFFICIAL OPENING:

The Official Opening of the Symposium was hosted by the University Open Lectures Committee and it began promptly at 7.00 p.m. at the International Relations Seminar Room. The response to this event was very rewarding as the room was full with many persons standing or being unable to enter the room.

The programme was very simple. It included a welcome and brief opening address by the Chair of the evenings proceedings, Dr. Rhoda Reddock, greetings and remarks on behalf of the UWI Open Lectures Committee by its Chair, Prof. Selwyn Ryan, the introduction of the guest speaker, by Dr. Paula Morgan, joint lecturer of the Centre for Gender and Development Studies and the opening lecture which was presented by Professor Gordon Rohlehr.

Keynote Address: The Construction of Caribbean Masculinity: Towards A Research Agenda. - Prof. Gordon Rohlehr (A Summary)

Prof. Rohlehr's keynote address began with an overview of what the conference sought to do. It raised the question of what Caribbean masculinity is all about, as well as what are the ways to engage in a study of it. In addition, he argued that in beginning to address these questions, the goal of the conference would also need to be to begin to examine how these questions might be asked, what is the data one might look at and what theoretical models already exist.

Using one of the media with which he is most knowledgeable, Rohlehr's paper traced the construction of masculinity in calypso. He chose calypso because he has spent three decades studying calypso and because it includes a century of recorded commentary that includes "an overwhelmingly male discourse of almost everything under the sun." He raised an important theoretical question which might be further explored over the course of the symposium; the issue of whether in decoding popular cultural texts, one needs to ascertain to what extent are they representative of society or social values as a whole or solely an artist's whim.

Rohlehr's paper was particularly engaging because of the review of the calypso canon that he gave. He spoke about masculinity as represented in two calypso genres: the boasting/heroic and anti-heroic. Within the heroic genre he discussed the construction of the hero as winning the battle between the sexes, the warrior, the sportsman and the sexual maverick. Themes that enacted this genre and celebrated masculinity included stick fights, steel pan, women as prize, women as territory, battles over women bodies, and a problematic collusion between sex and violence where relations between the sexes were "martial" instead of "marital".

He also did an equally illustrative section on the anti-hero genre in calypso which portrayed old men as cuckolds and men of waning sexuality where masculinity is unmasked, often involving a woman who is the cause of the unmasking (ironically so, as she is also a key ingredient in the recipe for hero). Perhaps the most memorable moment of his presentation was the long list of euphemisms for both the male and female genitalia that exists in the calypso canon.

Professor Rohlehr captured the contrasts of power and powerlessness expressed within the calypso and the fear of unmasking and/or effeminisation. Although this characterised the dominant "patriarchal mindset" of the calypso, he identified another genre, the praise songs for the honourable patriarchy, for example - the father and tribal leaders such as the late Hon. Dr. Eric Williams, first prime minister of Trinidad and Tobago.

tribal leaders such as the late Hon. Dr. Eric Williams, first prime minister of Trinidad and Tobago. The presentation was extremely well-received and was followed by reception.

III - SUMMARIES OF PANEL PRESENTATIONS

FRIDAY 12, JANUARY 1996

Panel 1: Theoretical Issues in the Conceptualization of Masculinity

Chair - Dr. Eudine Barriteau, Head, Centre for Gender & Development Studies, UWI Cave Hill.

PATRICIA MOHAMMED

"Unmasking Masculinity and Deconstructing Patriarchy: Problems and Possibilities within Feminist Epistemology"

Patricia Mohammed opened her paper with the comment that she thought that Trinidad was a fitting setting for this conference because she said, unlike in other parts of the Caribbean, there has always been a dialogue between men and women. She positioned her paper as a theoretical take on the subject from a "female gaze." She said that masculinity and femininity are defined in relation to one another and constructed over time. She then went on to distinguish between sex which has a biological basis and gender which is differentiated on a social basis, that is our learned gender roles.

In terms of how these are constructed, she said we need to look at how what is assumed as "natural" is transformed over time. In the Caribbean, this becomes particularly clear if one compares colonial representations of the femininity of the white women in opposition to the unfemininity of black women. An important point that she makes is the commonly held ideology that women's gender is rooted in their body whereas for men it is rooted in what they can do. That is, for women, gender is viewed as biologically determined, whereas for men it is socially determined. This is part of what needs to be addressed in order to unmask patriarchy.

Mohammed made the point that feminist theory has been central to the opening of the study of masculinity. In the process of unmasking patriarchy, one must examine relations between men and women, as well as between women and women and men and men, and in the Caribbean setting this means looking at the difference between indenture and slavery and how these institutions in collusion with colonialism served to reshape gender roles that were learned in another land.

MICHAEL KAUFMAN

"A Theoretical Framework for the Study of Men and Masculinities"

Kaufman began by saying that there is a need for a unique Caribbean paradigm to examine masculinities and he noted from the onset, the existence of different masculinities as opposed to a single masculinity. The framework necessarily comes out of feminist theory -- and rightly so as feminism is an exploration of power and inequality of power, of unequal privilege. He made the point that feminist theory shares this with analyses of racism. Moreover, there are vast differences in masculinities based on ethnicity, class, family, etc.

He noted that gender is invisible to most men. Privilege he argued, keeps the terms of one's privilege unknown. In this he alluded to the similarity with racism where the dominant group is often unaware of its own privilege or of the space that it occupies as a group.

His main point was that men have a contradictory experience of power. In spite of the diversity of masculinities, there is a hegemonic masculinity against which all men measure themselves. Most men have a feeling of entitlement to power and if they do not have it in the public sphere, they seek to have it in the private sphere. Most men are terrified about not having power hence the continuous need to prove themselves, for fear of being revealed or unmasked.

Many male responses to feminism, stem from this fear. They are told that they have power, yet they do not see themselves as having power. Rather power is something they must struggle to achieve and demonstrate. He gave the audience an illustrative lesson in "how to smoke like a man," which included things like how to stand, how to hold the cigarette, how to take a drag, how to blow smoke and how to put it out.

MICHAEL KIMMEL

"Masculinity as Homophobia: Fear, Shame and Silence in the Construction of Gender Identity."

Kimmel opened his paper with a discussion about the invisibility of masculinity. The study of men per se is about men's public roles as historical figures, not about the study of men as men. His three main points were : 1) Men do not see gender as important as women do; 2) Meanings of masculinity vary over time and at any one moment they vary over place; 3) All masculinities are not created equal.

Men do not feel empowered because that is the way masculinity has been defined. Men have the constant need to prove themselves and live in constant fear of being unmasked by other men -- something he calls an "homosocial enactment" where men exist in a state of "cultural homophobia."

Masculinity therefore, he stressed was in many ways a homosocial activity, influenced by the constant evaluation of other men. Masculinity therefore becomes a 'hedge' a cover, which keeps men from being unmasked as frauds i.e. not the real men, they purport to be. There is a need therefore to make masculinity visible by

recognizing 1) its plural character and 2) the homosocial definition of masculinity. In the final analysis, this can contribute towards posing new possibilities of masculinity.

Discussion:

In the discussion that followed Linden Lewis commented on this last point suggesting that it is not so much other men who men fear will unmask them but rather women -- who can unmask men in a single movement or look, suggesting an area where the Caribbean and North American masculinities may differ.

There was also discussion raised by Rhoda Reddock referring to all three papers about the juxtapositioning of the social constructionist arguments and the re-emergence among some feminists of essentialist arguments recognizing some relation between gender differentiation and biological sex, a turn that some feminist theory seems to be taking. In relation to the male gaze at men, Mark Figueroa suggested that one area we must look at which has been ignored is the role of peer groups in the socialization process. His consciousness of the collusion between race and gender was largely shaped by the work of bell hooks.

Panel 2 - Gender Socialization, Educational Performance and the "Male Marginalisation Thesis"

Chair - Dr. David Dolly, Lecturer, Dept of Agricultural Extension, UWI St. Augustine

MARK FIGUEROA

"Male Privileging and Male Academic Performance in Jamaica"

This presentation linked male academic underperformance to gender socialisation practices. Such practices have encouraged male gender privileging and follow an historical tradition in Jamaican society. As a consequence, female dominated professions were relatively low paying and low status with men getting higher pay for the same work. When women do the same jobs as men do, they tend to need higher qualifications. So although women have eroded some privileges a general situation of male privileging still obtains.

This paper further noted that boys and girls were treated differently through the self-fulfilling concept that boys are naturally 'bad' and girls are naturally 'good'. Boys therefore get less exposure to the tests that would build self-discipline, time management skills and a sense of process. They are also exonerated from 'female tasks' which are really 'male and female tasks'. Girls are taken care of twice as long as boys.

All of the above male privileging has led to male academic underperformance. However, the paper suggests the need for more research to understand what precisely is leading boys to become deficient with respect to skills that are increasingly required for survival in the educational system. Research at pre-school and primary school level was particularly mentioned.

The need to reform the dysfunctional and alienating character of the school system was also mentioned. To achieve this a multi-faceted approach was suggested involving the home, community, school and workplace. One specific home-based solution would be to encourage equal sharing of domestic tasks where boys could be incorporated into cooking, cleaning and washing where to some extent they have been marginalised.

Discussion:

In the discussion on the failure of the education system, the author maintained that the 'sit still and listen' philosophy was more suited to the socialisation which girls had received. Additionally the myth of the meritocracy had broken down. The ambitious young males have changed the focal point for their assertiveness and have no more faith that succeeding in school will necessarily result in a good life.

He also noted that economists value only work done in the market and undervaluing of social capital for example work done in child care and domestic labour. This meant that this work is devalued and not encouraging for boys. This had been made worse with structural adjustment policies and the new fundamentalism of the market.

ODETTE PARRY

"Boys will be Boys - Why Caribbean Males Underachieve"

This paper presented the results of a research project carried out under the auspices of the Institute for Social and Economic Research of the University of the West Indies, Mona campus in Jamaica. The project focussed on gender and education in the English-speaking Caribbean. Data were collected between September 1994 and December 1995 from a sample of rural and urban single sex and coeducational schools in Jamaica, Barbados, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The group observed were fourth form pupils (14+) of Biology, English and Physics. Ethnographic style interviews were conducted with a sample of 110 head teachers, guidance counsellors, and subject matter teachers.

The study within the context of generally poorer educational performance of boys in secondary schools sought to explore why females are being held responsible for the poor educational performance of boys, why males were perceived as problematic and what accounts for the depiction of "female as the villain" thesis in the secondary education system.

The study revealed that girls engage in sexual relationships with older men for biological, cultural and financial reasons. Boys of the same age notice this and see this as a challenge to their own masculinity. They therefore reject the lengthy process of traditional avenues to 'get girls' and therefore bypass the education system.

This is complicated by other dilemmas, such as the lack of suitable role models; the boys perception that existing educational norms are not 'macho'; the fact that girls mature faster than boys of the same age; the large presence of female teachers in schools and the reinforcement of traditional masculine identities by male teachers.

Discussion

The significance attached to suitable role models was questioned. It was posited that factors such as class and curriculum may be more important. To this the presenter responded that studies in the United Kingdom since the 1950s had suggested that looking at class, family and curriculum could not provide the answers, rather one needed to examine all factors as an integrated mix.

Panel 3 - Sexuality in the Definition of Manhood and Masculinity

Chair - Dr. Keith Nurse, Lecturer, Dept of Government, UWI St. Augustine

EVEROLD HOSEIN

"Caribbean Men: Sexual Pleasure and Sexual Health"

As humans, sexuality and sexual pleasure is very important for general health and longevity. Hosein's main point about sexual pleasure and sexual health was that women in Caribbean society are not satisfied and that we need to examine this if we are to have a conversation about gender relations. Much of the data on which Dr. Hosein drew, was based on studies carried out through the Caribbean Association for Reproductive and Sexual Health (CARESH). These studies found that men do not want to father children as teenagers and raised questions of whether they even wished to do so as adults. Men are generally opposed to family planning and want sexual pleasure from as many women as possible.

Women on the other hand are not getting sexual pleasure because, he argues, of what he calls the male sexual style which can be summarised as RSBS, short for ram, slam, bang, scam. Hosein also mentioned how a recent study which showed that Antiguan teen-agers "love sex." They however have inadequate preparation in sex education in home and do not want to become parents as teenagers. He posited that we need to recognize this and refrain from preaching abstinence because it is just not going to work. In addition, according to Hosein they know about contraceptives but do not use them. He noted that advertising for condoms has not worked or been effective in this setting and this needs to be examined carefully if there is to be any work done on AIDS prevention.

RAPHAEL RAMIREZ

"Masculinity and Power in Puerto Rico"

According to Ramirez, in Harvard University's huge library of anthropological literature about societies around the world he could find absolutely nothing on masculinity. The only thing he could find was work on machismo in Latin American society. In taking this concern to work on masculinity in contemporary Puerto Rico, he found that notions of masculinity are intimately bound up with respect and power.

He introduced the term "subordinated masculinities" as a way to explode the notion of masculinity. Using a Foucauldian framework to discuss power he then took Spanish terminology that is used to categorize individuals -- through everyday conversation and slang -- to see how these terms carry a gendered ideology. The range of terminology itself served to illustrate the spectrum of masculinities and show how the ideal is rarely achieved, yet all the other terminology is measured against an idealized standard.

This ideal man is active, powerful, macho, successfully supporting households, a sexual maverick, etc. In contrast to this the term "maricon" which means homosexual is always used with the passive voice - he is one who receives rather than gives (like a man) and is therefore not masculine. He argued for the need to look at enactments of masculinity - at the acting "as if empowered" when men in fact rarely feel that they are powerful.

Panel 4 - Violence and Manhood: Cultural or Social

Chair - Ms Sonia Cuares, Social Affairs Officer, UNECLAC, Port of Spain Office.

ANAND BIRJU

"Men as Victim and Offender in Criminal Justice in Urban Trinidad"

This presentation was based on the speaker's ongoing crime victim study of the St. James area of urban Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. Through the analysis of statistical data and in-depth interviews, information was provided on men as perpetrators but also as victims of violent crimes. What was also interesting about this presentation was the acknowledgement by some men of being victims of sexual offenses but of their reluctance to report these to the relevant authorities. Birju's main findings were that individuals were victims of multiple offenses; but that little attention was given to sexual offenses committed against men; less serious offenses were committed by relatives and non-relatives alike; but more serious offenses were usually committed by non-relatives and no men reported sex crimes to the police. Also, 82.5% of women also do not report crimes against the person. This suggests therefore that despite increased evidence of violent crimes in this society, the majority of these crimes are still not reported.

ULRIC JOHNSON

"The Reconstruction of Masculinity: Breaking the Link Between Maleness and Violence"

Johnson referred to the work in which he is currently involved in the Boston area with sub-cultural groups such as gangs. Anger and violence was often the way through which young men (and increasingly young women) responded to insecurity, pain, loss of masculinity. Humour was often used to mask the pain of violence. Gangs were becoming a social support group for the society.

This work involved work with gangs and sub-cultural groups and included peer education programmes, peer leadership groups, conflict resolution training and parenting programmes. From time to time in his presentation he referred to educational and interventionist materials which had been prepared for use in such situations.

Violence was defined as "anything done to hurt someone else or oneself spiritually, physically or financially." He called for a reconstruction of masculinity not only in the Caribbean but in the African diaspora more generally in a way which breaks the link between violence and manhood. He spoke of the subculture of peer groups, an issue which was also referred to by other presenters and the importance of studying this.

He also stressed the socialisation process and using the words - mad - glad - sad - bad, noted the acceptable emotions which boys as opposed to girls were allowed to express. He related this relationship to violence to the experience of slavery and frustration experienced in daily life which is often taken out on those closest to you.

SATURDAY 13, JANUARY

Panel 5 - Class, Ethnicity, Nation and Masculinity

Chair - Mr. Kirk Meighoo, Dept of Sociology, UWI, St. Augustine

HILARY BECKLES

"Black Masculinity in Caribbean Slavery"

Prof. Beckles in his presentation focussed on the important concept of the construction of black masculinity within the context of slavery, control and resistance. One of the crucial issues highlighted was the importance of multiple sites of domination and power as well as the complex interaction between these sites.

Importantly, colonial capitalism, we are reminded, was owned and ruled by white males. Masculinities, then were differentiated and black masculinity in particular was marginalized, subordinated and stigmatised. Prof. Beckles points out that Caribbean slavery was intimately tied to the military defeat of African mainly male warriors by

European male warriors. Within this context of conquering European males and conquered African males, "the possession of power, profits, glory and pleasure was specified a core element in the articulation of masculine ideologies in which black men were negated and relegated to otherness."

There took place a conquest and control of the black male body and at the same time the denial of a mind, in the dichotomized Caribbean context. Black masculinity was "feminized" and "infantilized", the latter illustrated by the idea of the Quashee. White men sought to read, write and imagine subordinated masculinity as timid, passive and submissive. The regular use of violent terror in the process attests to the presence of an irrepressible black masculinity expressed by African thought leaders and warriors.

Black masculinity, then was politicised within a context of white patriarchal ideological representation. Fatherhood was made irrelevant, for example the child of a black mother was born a slave and the child of a white mother was free regardless of the race of the father. This brought in the point of the sexual control of women, in which there was an important competition between white and black men. However white men gave black men a certain amount of space in which they could dominate and exercise violence over black women and practice polygyny. Importantly, Beckles observes, black and white men often share ideological views of masculinity and relations with women. Finally, he illustrates the historical importance of the culture of violence in Caribbean black masculinity, while questioning whether today this culture may be at odds with present social imperatives.

LINDEN LEWIS

"Caribbean Masculinity at the *Fin de Siecle*"

Linden Lewis in his presentation, stressed the idea that at the end of centuries there occurs intensifications of crises, contestations and insecurities. The metaphor of death and childbirth that accompanies these periods leads to a politics of "endism" presently manifested by the great number of analyses which have "post" or "beyond" as part of their titles. He noted further that at the end of the last century in England, the changes from an agricultural to a manufacturing economy, the replacement of human labour by machines exploded the myth of the male breadwinner and prompted a crisis of masculinity on all levels: economic, political, social, psychological; as producer, as power, as role model and as lover. These century-old concerns sound startlingly contemporary today.

Linden Lewis emphasised that we must conceptualize structural determinants when considering masculinity rather than continuing to theorise on an individual or collective level. This is part of the systematic understanding of reality - that is, if men are in crisis and men exist as an integral part of the social system, then of necessity,

women, children, families and civil society must also be in crisis because all exist in systematic interaction. Lewis encourages us to examine the global, regional and national restructuring of production, the external and international pressures on the nation-state (which functions as important terrain for the creation of gendered identities), the crisis of civil society and the historical forces which coalesce around these issues.

Finally Dr. Lewis made the point that the loss of control over women may free men from the limiting aspects of the hegemonic masculinity. Crucial issues which need to be sorted out with great difficulty include masculine ideals, monogamy, male "liming", male responsibilities and male power.

Discussion:

In the discussion the idea was raised that subjectivity and resistance would not be discarded while taking into account the larger structural changes. Generally it was noted that Indo-Caribbean and other ethnic masculinities and class issues were not directly addressed by the papers in this panel. (Organisers Note : The authors were not asked to prepare papers for any specific theme. Papers were organised into themes after presenters had informed them of their titles.)

Panel 6 : Popular Culture, Media and Literary Images of Masculinity and Femininity

Chair: Ms Merle Hodge, Novelist and Lecturer, Dept of Language and Linguistics, UWI, St. Augustine.

JEROME TEELUCKSINGH (presenter) and **TRACY HACKSHAW** (ARTOM)

"M-Y-T-H Spells Media: Mass Media and the Construction of Masculinity and Femininity"

This paper contends that the mass media appropriates the role of the myth in contemporary society. Like myth, the mass media attempts to resolve social contradictions by offering solutions to the essential dilemmas of the human condition; it proves that out of all the alternative solutions, the one offered is the most appropriate; and it celebrates and attempts to maintain the status quo. The mass media (like myth) touches upon all facets of social existence, and as such the mass media is a major force in the construction of identities (especially with reference to gender identities).

It is further argued that the mass media has played and continued to play a special role in the Caribbean. In between colonization (i.e. the trials of slavery, indentureship and forced labour, decolonization and now neo-colonialism) our people have never been allowed to explore, question, experiment with and learn about our very 'real' masculinities and femininities. An examination of the mass-mediated images of masculinity and femininity in Trinidad and Tobago has revealed clearly that the dominant images of masculinity and femininity has failed to translate itself into an adequate praxis for use in the Caribbean.

KENNETH RAMCHAND

"Hello Marcus, Hello Rose: Childhood Reflections in Spite of Adversity"

This paper examined stories by Caribbean women writers - Jean Rhys, Jamaica Kincaid and Olive Senior. Using extracts from these narratives he identified ways in which relationships between males and females and same sex for example mother /daughter relationships of different age groups are constructed by these authors. In some instances, women in these stories are seen as perpetuating the male imaging of the world. In so doing, women are portrayed as both the victims as well as the co-perpetrators of women's oppression.

In his analysis he explored the ways in which childhood femininity is constructed largely by men - as peers, brothers, fathers, relatives or family friends and the need to understand the larger social and economic context which facilitated this. At least one of these stories illustrate quite clearly the ways in which children contribute in socializing each other.

PAULA MORGAN

"Under Women's Eyes: Literary Constructs of Afro-Caribbean Masculinity"

Paula Morgan's paper, also examined how masculinity is constructed by the Anglophone Caribbean female novelist or asks the question "what manner of man..." as she put it, emerges in the writing of these women. The dominant image portrayed in African Caribbean and African-American women's fiction, is that male/female relationships are problematic and inherently unfair to women.

The paper takes a closer view of Olive Senior's "Country of the One-Eyed God", Merle Hodge's *For the Life of Laetitia* and Paule Marshall's *Brown Girl Brown Stones*, portrayal of male characters and poses the questions - "Does gender create an alien and alienating barrier which cannot be breached? Are the portrayals of men merely superficial, displaying no in-depth understanding of the inner feeling of what it means to be a man? Do differences in gender and for that matter race, class and sexual orientation create islands of imaginations which limit their understanding of the Other except through stereotypes or external portraits with varying degrees of accuracy?"

The author argues that while there are female-authored Caribbean fictions which portray men in unfavourable stereotypical profiles, the fictions examined in this paper do not support the assumption that gender is an alienating barrier which cannot be breached. For example even when the portrayal of the male character is negative as in Senior's "Country of the One - Eyed God", there is a sympathetic and compassionate identification with a criminal who brutally murders his grandmother in cold blood.

Hodge's portrayal of men in her latest novel *For the Life of Laetitia* which is explored in detail in this paper, is seen as an effort to recuperate the vilified working-class African male. She decentres the potentially problematic dimensions of male-female expectations and aspirations, in the interest of displaying within the family network what Jennifer Rahim terms "a manhood stripped of chauvinism". By deconstructing negative stereotypes of the sexually irresponsible, economically impotent African-Caribbean man, Morgan suggests, Hodge alerts the reading public to alternative submerged paradigms of manhood which have hitherto remained obscure.

Paule Marshall in her work also engages this stereotype but with such sensitivity that one comes to understand this manner of man with all his endearing qualities, weaknesses and frailty.

STEVE OUDITT and CHRIS COZIER

"Visual Representations of Masculinity in the Work of Two Contemporary Trinidadian Artists."

The visual artists' presentations were an important contribution because they were simultaneously critiquing while representing symbols and instruments of masculinity.

Perhaps the most powerful piece by Steve Ouditt was his "three p's:" priest, politician and policeman as a way to symbolize masculine representations that structure society and embody power. In addition, the importance of Ouditt's work is that it brought in the questions of ethnic, class and religious difference in his representations of masculinity -- whether these were uses of images of the crucifix, Hosay celebrations or the big-toothed bureaucrat.

Chris Cozier very clearly showed instruments of masculinity and power in his discussion of his works: blue soap, the tamarind rod and the shirt jack. He showed how taking everyday objects out of their context and examining them through a gendered lens one can see them in a new way and begin to disentangle their gendered significance. For instance -- the very ordinary shirt jack, when placed on a hanger against a white wall, brings into relief an historical era, historical figures, political movements and figures and stands as a masculine symbol of power or the challenge of traditional symbols of male power. One crucial aspect of Cozier's work is that his visual and performance pieces leave a space for interaction so that the audience/on-looker becomes an accomplice in representing and deconstructing the instruments/representations of power that he has singled out.

CLOSING SESSION - Toward a Research Agenda

IV -RAPPORTEUR'S REPORT - Dr. Keith Nurse

The conference brought together a number of academics, practitioners and policy makers to address the issue of Caribbean masculinity. The objectives were to shed some light on how masculinity is constructed and to identify the implications that emerge as a consequence. The organizers hoped that the insights and perspectives

shared would be useful as a basis for establishing a research agenda. In many ways this was achieved and even surpassed. However, it was generally accepted that this is only the first step, albeit a good one, in what is likely to be a long journey.

The first issue that was put on the table is the one that Michael Kaufman articulated: what theoretical paradigm should we adopt in studying men and masculinity? Kaufman asserted that a useful place to start may be with a feminist paradigm. He argued that a feminist paradigm offered a gendered analysis of power and the inequality between the sexes. For example, he argued that the sexes experienced differences in privilege: "women tend to have a double work day with family responsibilities while men generally have higher levels of power, freedom and choice in the world of work." He referred to these as "gendered spaces". He added that we have to look at the lived realities of people so as to fully appreciate how they experience their constructed or socialized roles. He argued further that gender construction was the real source of difference between the sexes and not biological difference. In essence, he was arguing that there is nothing predetermined in the way men and women behave.

Kaufman then went on to give the example of his walk in the park on a nice autumn day in Toronto. He juxtaposed his experience with that of a woman to illustrate how spaces can be gendered: i.e. how experiences, expectations and fears are differentiated between the sexes. According to Kaufman, women tend to face a higher risk in public spaces like a park. He related this to the structural or systemic nature of gender oppression.

This was an interesting insight into how complex yet how simple gender constructions are. Kaufman's feminist paradigm presents us with a useful point of entry, however, there emerged from the discussion a feeling that this approach needed further elaboration, particularly in the Caribbean context. There was a call for a composite picture of our lived realities. In this regard, Kimmel's use of the nursery rhyme "mirror, mirror on the wall" helped to unravel the problem a bit more. He stated that "when a white woman looks into the mirror she sees a woman, when a black woman looks into the same mirror she sees a black woman, and when a white man looks into the mirror he sees a human being."

The concept of the "talking mirror," which Kimmel borrowed from bell hooks, a leading cultural critic¹, illustrates how modes of representation and social constructions based on gender, race or sexuality can be internalized by the subject and lead to behaviour modification. The importance of representation in our discussion of masculinity is the way in which it allows the hegemon to define the "other" and how the "other" becomes trapped in the

1 Kimmel stated that he got this concept of the "talking mirror" from a seminar discussion with bell hooks. bell hooks, in her book Art on My Mind: Visual Politics (New York: New Press, 1995): 77, features artist Carrie Mae Weems work "Mirror/Mirror." Weems parodies the nursery rhyme: "Looking into the mirror, the black woman asked, "Mirror, mirror on the wall, who's the finest of them all?" The mirror says, "Snow White, you black bitch, and don't you forget it.""

hegemonic gaze and their own self-identity. The problem of race and representation is of particular relevance to the Caribbean because according to Fanon, the colonised is "forever in combat with his own image."² Beckles argues similarly that "black masculinity was marginalised, subordinated and stigmatised." As such, it is somewhat erroneous to talk about one masculinity. Instead, we should be talking about masculinities because the concept of masculinity needs to be differentiated by race and class, as well as by sexual orientation, historical conjuncture and the cultural context.

In effect, the above discourse illustrates how sexism, racism and classism intersect in the social construction of femininities and masculinities. This suggests that a purely gendered theoretical framework is not sufficient to the task. And it is not just that we are trying to explain a Caribbean specificity. The view was that while a feminist approach is useful we need to incorporate other forms of oppression like racism and classism for they are not separate and apart.

Kimmel deepened the analysis when he argued that the epitome of manhood was the white male, heterosexual, middle class, executive-type, university educated, physically fit, married with nuclear family. This is the hegemonic conception of western masculinity which all men - irrespective of age, class, race, sexual orientation or cultural background - are measured by. These ideals may not be identical but tend to be proximate in the Caribbean context because of the history of western colonialism and cultural imperialism. Thus, any man failing to live up to these criteria is deemed to be less than complete by the dominant culture. Here the white male is constructed as an ideal for all "others" to emulate. The irony though, is that the eurocentric ideal is a myth because so few men qualify under these criteria. As well, it is that this ideal is unattainable and undesirable for so many.

This is the contradiction in the dominant construction of masculinity. Most men are not as powerful as they are made out to be. The problem, however, is that they have been socialized to see male power as an entitlement. Indeed, as Kaufman stated "most men are terrified about not having power hence the continuous need to prove oneself, for fear of being revealed or unmasked." This analysis is reinforced by Kimmel's comment that male power, privilege, status and access to women are determined and measured by the length of a man's CV rather than the length of his penis suggesting that it is economic and material power rather than physical prowess that is important in the masculinity game. Phallocentrism (the power associated with the erect penis) is therefore brought into question by men's contradictory experience. Hence, men live in constant fear of being perceived as effeminate, a sissy or a 'sofman' by other men and particularly by women. The fear of being unmasked may be viewed as the basis for homophobia, the backlash against feminism, male-on-male violence and violence against women. Ramirez' paper on masculinity and power in Puerto Rico illustrated how male powerlessness is manifested. He introduced the term "subordinated masculinities" to deconstruct the hegemonic notion of masculinity.

2 Frantz Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks (New York: Grove Press, 1967): 194.

Thus, the white male ideal/myth tends to serve a politico/cultural purpose. The white male is positioned at the apex of the pyramid of social hierarchy. All others are subordinate, including women and children. Additionally, the white male experience is constructed as a universal one. The essence of this view is that the white male is conceptualized as the role model for all times, all places and all peoples. Thus the white male is not just respected but revered and worshipped. For the "others", especially those that see themselves as inadequate, it instils a desire to "catch-up" or "follow the leader." Fear, guilt and the promise of pleasure combine together to act as the driving motors in sustaining and perpetuating the ideal, the hierarchy and the myth.

This hegemonic discourse on masculinity is premised on the constructed superiority of:

- Males over females, hence sexism and patriarchy
- Heterosexuality over homosexuality, hence homophobia
- Europeans over non-Europeans, hence racism
- Western culture over others, hence eurocentrism and imperialism

The question that emerges from this theoretical framework is how is gender, race and class oppression reproduced over time and space. Ramirez and Lewis brought this issue to the table by talking about "structural power" in reference to Foucault. Foucault talks about the relationship between knowledge and power. It is all about how we know ourselves and others. Pat Mohammed, for example, illustrated the dialectic of gender: "for women, gender is rooted in their bodies whereas for men it is rooted in what they can do," for example, hunter, warrior, bread winner, sexual maverick). This in part explains the sexual division of labour. But it goes further than this because in many respects the same ideology is applied to non-white males. For instance, during the slave period in Trinidad, the white men from the French planter class, in celebrating carnival - thereby playing out their fears and fantasies - would pretend to be "negre jardin" (garden niggers or field slaves) based on the "beliefs that the slaves were childish, sensuous, hedonistic, and the planters were responsible, serious and civilised."³ This analysis is borne out by Beckles who argued that black masculinity was "feminized" and "infantilized" by slaveowners through the use of the term "Quashee" to characterise submission, passivity, emasculation and impotence. Artist Steve Ouditt updated this image in his reference to "Ralph," your typical politically neutral, middle-class aspirant, who is everything to everybody.

But there is more to this story. The racialisation of masculinities is intimately associated with its sexualisation. The above example of the French planters masquerading as slaves is not just premised on racism. It is also built on a sexualized representation of the African male body. The black male body has been portrayed historically as one suffering from "libidinal excess and open to predatory behaviour."⁴ The African male is therefore portrayed

3 Kim Johnson, "Introduction," in Trinidad Carnival (Port of Spain: Paria Publishing, 1988): xiii.

4 See Cornel West, Race Matters (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993): 83.

as animalistic, deviant and dangerous. Cornel West explains that "white fear of black sexuality is a basic ingredient of white racism."⁵ This mode of representation, which has been fed into the mass media, popular culture and the academic discourse, serves to validate white male hegemony and black male subordination. However, it is not just restricted to the white and black subjects. Other ethnic groups, like East Indians, Chinese and the indigenous peoples have been subject to modes of misrepresentation but they are less documented. This analysis highlights the importance of bringing the body and sexuality into the discourse on the construction of Caribbean masculinities.⁶

We are still to unravel the problem of how race, gender and class oppression are reproduced from one historical period to another. Here I think we have to draw on Fanon's psycho-analytical thesis on internalized oppression (i.e. self colonialisation, self-contempt, self-hatred). According to Fanon, "the most powerful tool in the hands of the oppressor is the minds of the oppressed."⁷ This suggests that the oppressed can unwittingly play a complicit role in their own oppression. Similarly, Wallerstein argues that:

Racism has served as an overall ideology justifying inequality. But it has been much more. It has served to socialize groups into their own role in the economy... Racism, just like sexism, functioned as a self-suppressive ideology, fashioning expectations and limiting them.⁸

The above argument helps to illustrate how the ideologies of sexism, racism, homophobia, eurocentrism and imperialism could be socially determining by being "self-suppressive". It is that such a cultural construction can enable the oppressor and further disable the oppressed.

It is being increasingly realised that discursive practices are an essential component of the globalising processes of the modern world-system, of which the Caribbean is the oldest sphere of Western overseas colonial expansion. In the past the institutions that perpetuated these social/cultural constructions were, according to Professor Rohlehr, the church, the school and the plantation. One of the images presented by artist Chris Cozier evoked similar sentiments. It showed a somewhat fascist image of elite masculinity. The piece was entitled "Priest, Police, Politician". The presentations by Teelucksingh & Hackshaw added that today there are additional

5 West (1993): 86.

6 For an in-depth treatment of this subject see Caroline Allen, "Caribbean Bodies: Gender and Race in Representation and Practice," paper presented at the Centre for Gender and Development Studies, UWI, St. Augustine, April 1996.

7 . This is the general thesis of Fanon in Black Skin, White Mask.

8 Immanuel Wallerstein, Historical Capitalism (London: Verso, 1983): 79.

institutions like the media, the state, the market and peer culture that play a role in socializing male culture. However, in both the new and old institutions there appears to be a continuity, particularly in regards to how they perpetuate a hegemonic conception of masculinity and misrepresent other masculinities. At one level it is the seduction of the "subordinated masculinities" through representations of beauty, success and progress. At another level it is about complicity on the part of the "subordinated masculinities".

In the panel on "Gender Socialization and Educational Performance" what is striking in Figueroa's and Parry's presentation is not how girls are advancing in relation to boys, but how these boys are reading the signals of the labour market and opting out of the process, but only marginally so. Lewis argued that the process of global economic restructuring and the negative impact that it is having on Caribbean economies in terms of male employment has brought the myth of the male breadwinner into question. Traditional male sectors of the economy such as manufacturing have either disappeared or have faced reduced wage rates and have become dominated by female workers. Figueroa argued that young male underachievement can be partly explained by the fact that female socialization has become better suited to the emerging world of work. Parry also explained that boys are bypassing traditional avenues for social advancement (e.g. the education system) because they have little currency in terms of facilitating access to girls. The prevalence of female school teachers has also evoked a homophobic response from boys.

The latter raises the issue of resistance as it relates to Caribbean masculinities. For example, it is suggested by some cultural critics that the subordinate masculinity of black men when involved in some form of resistance often gets trapped in the co-optive strategies of western materialism and patriarchy.⁹ One only has to note the lyrical content of dancehall music. If you listen to the dancehall artists, they portray a life of materialism and machismo. Many a song makes reference to guns, cellular phones and Lexus cars as symbolic representations of power, status and phallic extensions (read phallogentrism). The same seems to apply to Calypsos according to Rohlehr where the objectification and subordination of women is a means by which men are able to sustain the mask of male prowess. Some care needs to be taken in a too literal interpretation of Caribbean popular culture because of the function of metaphor and role playing (e.g. double entendre) in masking this form of resistance from the colonial and neo-colonial authorities.¹⁰

But there is an additional twist to it all. As men internalize their gender oppression they tend to externalize it onto those most vulnerable. For the African-Caribbean man it is the African-Caribbean woman; for the Indo-Caribbean woman it is the Indo-Caribbean woman; and for the white man it is everybody else. The violence that we associate with masculinity is thus bound up in a whole host of other associations and processes. Johnson's

9 See Hooks, Art on my Mind: Visual Politics (New York: New Press, 1995): 202-212.

10 For the development of this argument see Carolyn Cooper, "'Lyrical Gun': Metaphor and Role Playing in Jamaican Dancehall Culture," Massachusetts Review Vol xxxv, Nos 3&4: 429-447.

analysis of how violence is constructed in masculinity suggests that there is this multi-layered context. He talked about institutionalized violence and about how most crimes are intra-racial and within the family (e.g. Black on Black crime in the USA). Birju, on the other hand, illustrates that women are more likely to be attacked in a violent way in the home, the private sphere, by some man that they know.

I would like to conclude by making the point that based on the evidence put forward at the symposium it is evident that the hegemonic conception of masculinity is in crisis, not just in the Caribbean, but almost everywhere. In that sense it should be viewed as part of a global problematique. The crisis of masculinity differs from other crises in that it remains invisible to men as a collective. As such it has generated little internal debate. This is somewhat understandable because the dominant notions of masculinity are one of the pillars upon which modernity and capitalism rest. The traditional sphere of male privilege, power and status blinds men to their own gender oppression and its implications for society.

Consequently, the unmasking of masculinity and the deconstructing of patriarchy should be seen as part of the larger political project to humanize global society. This is a process that is unfolding right before our eyes. However, men are not in charge of it. This is because men hardly ever view themselves as a gender or subject to gender exploitation.

The crisis of masculinity has evoked a political response and backlash from powerful elite men. All of the recent discourse about family values, male marginalisation, single-headed households, homosexuality and sexual promiscuity are means of disciplining the marginalised groups of women and men as they seek to refashion their roles in society. The threat is really now being felt by the professional class of men as the workplace shifts to the new tides of the world economy (e.g. services). This is the essence of the political struggle that men and women will face in the process of deconstructing both masculinity and femininity.

V - CONCLUDING STATEMENTS: IDENTIFICATION OF RESEARCH THEMES AND POSSIBLE PROGRAMMES

Eudine Barriteau, Head of the Centre for Gender and Development Studies at Cave Hill Campus, UWI, Barbados

Barriteau began by expressing her thanks to the visual artists whose presentation deconstructed masculinity. In particular she found the painting by Ouditt with the three p's: politician, policeman and priest particularly relevant as it is these three individuals who police power within our society via control over the state, home and our souls.

Her three points for the formulation of a research agenda are as follows: 1) The need to unpack the contents of the baggage of masculinity (without judging the moral implications of these) whether this is the propensity

toward violence, men as bread-winners, men as heterosexual or how to be a man among men. Defining masculinity against femininity is dangerous. In the Caribbean, women have begun to invade the concepts of what has been defined as masculine. Women too are bread-winners and are violent and aggressive. We need to then look at a definition of masculinity and femininity that moves away from an opposition of the two.

2) Need to explore the issue raised by Linden Lewis that women are used in an instrumental manner, as tools to carve out what it means to be masculine. They are seen as a product to be consumed by other men and this is how

women are viewed in the eyes of other men and in this framework women are passive on-lookers rather than participants. With the growth of more women as heads of households how does this influence the construction of masculinity. We need to explode the notion of the assumed pairing of masculinity and power.

3) The approach to the study of masculinity cannot be motivated by a compensatory defensive project and the early discussion of the male marginalization thesis sounds just like that which is an insult to both men and women.

4) There are two dimensions of gender studies. One is the study of gender ideology which is the construction of masculinity and femininity -- what are the social roles, and how these are enacted, etc. The second is the material aspects of gender and this is addressed as how men and women access and allocate resources. The conference has focused on the former and this is largely why discussions of the market have been absent -- but they need not be and this kind of work is being done by the Centre for Gender and Development Studies.

Michael Kimmel, Professor of Sociology and Anthropology, SUNY at Stony Brook

The themes that continued throughout the conference were those of variety and cohesion. On the one hand we can float rather effortlessly toward categories -- gender after all is about classification. On the other hand, to go against the stream we can talk about difference and the specificities of masculinities. These are not categories but rather about relations of power. These were essentialism versus constructionism, historical evolution of masculinity, and representation.

Kimmel then divided his discussion between things that we know and things that we need to know. The things that we know after the conference include: an analysis of gender lends new symbolic resonance to every day events/objects, for example a discussion of blue soap or tamarind rod within the context of a discussion of gender evokes new meanings because power enters the discussion. A discussion of gender makes clear an analysis of social structure in terms of power. He reminds us that gender ideology is institutionally reproduced within sites such as media and education, and the expressions of gender are also enactments -- enactments such as sexuality, violence and perhaps sports talk. Also, finally, gender ideology is historically variable, whereby man is opposite to women is an historically emergent phenomenon, for instance, in the 1800s the distinction was between manhood and childhood, not manhood vs. womanhood as it became in the 1900s.

The things we need to know are what are the particular constructions of different situations of Caribbean men. What are the differences articulated by different positions on different islands and differing colonial experiences. What are the different constructions of ideal masculinity and experiences of masculinity. There is a constant negotiation between phenomenology of gender, of experience and ideal construction of what is normative. For instance as Ramirez showed us most men are not in power but they "act as if." In this way one can begin to see masculinity as a performance or enactment -- especially if one wants to develop strategies of intervention. We must be clear that there is a distinction between experience and ideal images. At any time there is also a multiplicity of possible interpretations that carry multiple meanings of resistance and subordination, as Rohlehr showed. We must get specific and not be blind to patterns.

Political theory, Kimmel said, has framed a discussion of equality and difference within a discussion of sameness beginning with Locke. However, difference is inherently unequal: based on talent, motivation and outcome. The political projects of anti-racism and feminist scholars have shown how to theorize difference in the context of equality. It can only be done by those who experience the sameness of equality as a fiction. Can we not theorize equality within a context that embraces, acknowledges and celebrates the differences we embody.

Father Clyde Harvey, Roman Catholic Priest, Maloney Parish, North-east Trinidad.

Harvey questioned whether if we are looking for a research agenda, whether the Centre for Gender and Development Studies is the appropriate agency. He said that it is the perception of males that the Centre is the domain of feminists and this may not be conducive to attracting research on masculinity. Father Harvey said women's entrance into previously male dominated fields as doctors and lawyers has for example created a new set of issues. For instance, a pediatrician now conjures up an image of a woman with a needle for young boys and we might begin to wonder what effect this has on society.

In addition, the notion of "construction" suggests a judgement that there is a problem with masculinity that necessarily needs to be reinvented. This offends certain people who might otherwise have a contribution. Men need to reexamine patriarchy and decide whether or not there is anything good in it.

Third, he said there was a distinct absence of the Indian male in the discussions. One of the issues that would need to be discussed in terms of Indian masculinity is the relation to Indian women and the threat she is becoming to the Indian male.

Other issues that might be explored are the movement of professional black men into Orisha worship; Sexuality and the need to open up the discussion of sexuality to non-Western traditions which focus solely on the penis and penetration for example he said that we need to also look at how Ram and Sita become central figures in constructing gender roles for Hindus.

In reference to papers, Father Harvey said that there were two issues for the male slave and that was work and women. He said that in contemporary times men find their identity and purpose through work and more and more are opting out of relationships. He also wanted to underline the importance of Figueroa's point about peer socialization.

Pat Mohammed, Head, Centre for Gender and Development Studies, UWI, Mona Campus, Jamaica

The conference has come out of over 20 years of work within the women's movement here in Trinidad. It is time now for men to be willing to do what women did in terms of creating a movement and doing work such as consciousness-raising. Caribbean feminist scholarship and activism has never been self-serving but has always situated itself within the context of race, class and gender as it developed within the region.

She also noted the need to locate the Indo-Caribbean masculinity within the Caribbean context as well and to trace its emergence through history and into contemporary time - alongside African-Caribbean men, the recognition and celebration of difference.

But as an 'ageing feminist' she wanted to see what the new generation was working at and she could feel through the work of Steve Ouditt and Chris Cozier a new generation who may not be as divided by race and gender the way her generation was because of our inherited histories. Finally the dissonance between what we do, how we act must be consciously part of the ongoing agenda for change i.e. we must translate words into action.

Closing Statement by Rhoda Reddock, Head, Centre for Gender and Development Studies, St. Augustine.

The aim of this symposium was not to "construct" masculinity, but rather to construct a research agenda that would work toward an intervention. This research agenda although initiated by the CGDS is not for the CGDS only but for other departments of the University of the West Indies as well as other agencies. To facilitate this the planning committee for this symposium included representatives from the departments of Sociology, Economics, Agriculture and English as well as from the group ARTOM, the Association for the Re-orientation and Transformation of Masculinity.

The conference successfully brought together a wide cross-section of persons from various sectors including - education, community organisations, government departments such as the Women's Affairs Division and the Ministry of Youth and Sports, media personnel and representatives of religious organisations.

The aim of this exercise was of course to produce a research agenda but it was also important to identify interventionist strategies both at this point and later which would improve the quality of life of women and men in our region.

VI - TOWARDS A RESEARCH AGENDA (A Summary of Themes and Approaches)

I - The Construction of Caribbean Masculinities: Theoretical and Conceptual Considerations

Themes:

- The institutional reproduction of gender relations.
- The deconstruction of power and powerlessness.
- Re-thinking essentialism and social constructionism in understanding masculinity and femininity.
- The Emergence of Caribbean patriarchies - historical explorations.
- Theorizing difference in a context of equality.
- Feminism and the understanding of masculinity.

II - Understanding masculinities and male identities in the Caribbean

Themes:

- Caribbean masculinities - diversities of ethnicity, nationality, class, religion, age etc.
- Men's relationship to other men including inter-ethnic relationships.
- Age and the changing experience of masculinity.
- Sexuality and male identity.
- Male bonding in the Caribbean - the lime, the gang, the posse, sports and sports talk, boys games.
- Gendered spaces.
- Internalised oppression and understanding self.
- Performance and enactment in male identity.
- Representations of images of masculinity and the contrast with the reality.

- Fatherhood and male identity.
- Alternative ways of expressing sex/gender identity.
- Exploring the experiences of "the new man".

III - Childhood Cultures and sub-cultures

Themes:

- Peer socialisation.
- Education and gender socialisation.
- Social change and the 'feminisation of education'.
- Curriculum responses to gender differences.
- Differential parent-school relations for boys and girls.

Approaches:

- A quasi-experimental longitudinal study of young females and males through their school life and life cycle.
- A historical and dynamic analysis of changes in educational performance over time exploring how each sex responds to changes in society e.g. emancipation, post-World War II, independence, structural adjustment etc. How have these changes meant different things for women and for men and how they react to social change.
- A synthesis between research on education and gender socialization.
- An international comparative analysis.

IV - Work and Male Identity

Themes:

- The meaning of work in men's eyes (paid and unpaid work).
- Male techniques of advancing in the workplace.
- The protective and military services.
- Assumptions of masculinity and femininity in the laws and legal system.

Approaches:

- A historical study of transformations in the sexual division of labour over time and of definitions of 'men's work' and 'women's work'.

V - Male Violence and Aggression

- Gang violence - male and female.
- Violence and sexuality.
- Child Sexual abuse - comparative analysis of male and female
- Inter-ethnic male violence.
- Religious justification for male violence.
- Sex crimes against adult males.
- Violence and modes of resistance.
- The reproduction of a culture of violence - media violence, school violence, family violence.
- Male violence and its relationship to criminality.

Approaches:

- A study of violence against women in historical perspective from slavery and indentureship to the present.

VI - Art and Literary Explorations of Masculinity and Femininity

Themes:

- The construction of childhood masculinity and femininity in the writings of men and women.
- Gender identities as projected by male and female writers.
- Gendered images in contemporary and historical art.
- Violence in the youth musical and artistic sub-culture.
- Representations of masculinity and femininity in popular culture.
- Transformative representations of masculinity in art and popular culture.

VII - Sexuality and Manhood

Themes:

- Gender-based myths, beliefs and behaviours related to sexuality e.g. oral sex, masturbation, women's and men's sexuality and sexual pleasure, etc.
- Male understanding of female and male physiology.
- Sex and alcohol and other forms of substance abuse.
- Attitudes to age and sexuality.
- Male and female childhood and teenage sexual behaviours.
- Inter-ethnic sexual relationships.
- Homosexuality and male identity.

APPENDICES

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES
CENTRE FOR GENDER & DEVELOPMENT STUDIES
(ST. AUGUSTINE)

THE CONSTRUCTION OF CARIBBEAN MASCULINITY: TOWARDS A RESEARCH
AGENDA - A SYMPOSIUM

Thursday 11 - Saturday 13, January, 1996

Thursday 11 January

pm

5.00 - 6.45

Registration & Collection of Material

7.00

FORMAL OPENING AND KEYNOTE
ADDRESS "The Construction of Caribbean Masculinity:
Towards A Research Agenda"
Professor Gordon Rohlehr

Chair - Dr. Rhoda Reddock.

Opening Reception

Friday 12 January

am

9.00 - 10.45

PANEL I THEORETICAL ISSUES IN THE
CONCEPTUALIZATION OF MASCULINITY

Chair - Dr. Eudine Barriteau

Presenters

Dr. Patricia Mohammed - "Understanding Masculinity
and Deconstructing Patriarchy"

Dr. Michael Kaufman - "A Theoretical Framework for
the Study of Men and Masculinities"

Prof. Michael Kimmel - "Masculinity As Homophobia:
Fear, Shame and Silence in the Construction of Gender
Identity"

10.45 - 11.00

** BREAK **

11.00 - 12.30 pm

**PANEL II GENDER SOCIALIZATION,
EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE AND
THE "MALE MARGINALIZATION
THESIS"**

Chair - Dr. David Dolly

Presenters

Dr. Mark Figueroa - "Male Privileging and Male
Academic Performance in Jamaica"

Dr. Odette Parry - "Boys Will be Boys - Why Caribbean
Males Underachieve"

1.00 -2.00

**** LUNCH ****

PM

2.00-3.30

**PANEL III - SEXUALITY IN THE DEFINITION
OF MANHOOD AND MASCULINITY**

Chair - Dr. Keith Nurse

Presenters:

Dr. Everold Hosein - "Caribbean Men: Sexual
Pleasure and Sexual Health."

Dr. Rafael Ramirez - "Masculinity and Power in
Puerto Rico"

3.30-3.45

**** BREAK ****

345-5.30

**PANEL IV - VIOLENCE AND MANHOOD:
NATURAL, CULTURAL OR SOCIAL**

Chair - Ms Sonia Cuales

Presenters:

Mr. Anand Birju - "Men as victim and offender in
Criminal Justice in urban Trinidad."

Dr. Ulric Johnson - "The Reconstruction of
Masculinity: Breaking the Link Between Maleness
& Violence"

Saturday 13, January

am

9.00-10.30

**PANEL V - CLASS, ETHNICITY, NATION AND
MASCULINITY**

Chair - Mr. Kirk Meighoo

Presenters:

Dr. Hilary Beckles - "Black Masculinity in
Caribbean Slavery"

Dr. Linden Lewis : Caribbean Masculinity at the
Fin de Siecle."

10.30-10.45

**** COFFEE BREAK ****

10.45-1.00

**PANEL VI - POPULAR CULTURE, MEDIA AND
LITERARY IMAGES OF MASCULINITY AND
FEMININITY**

Chair - Ms Merle Hodge

Presenters:

Messrs. Jerome Teelucksingh & Tracy Hackshaw -
"M-Y- T-H

Spells MEDIA: Mass Media and the Construction
of Masculinity and Femininity"

Prof. Kenneth Ramchand - "Hello Marcus: Hello
Rose: Childhood Reflections in spite of Adversity."

Dr. Paula Morgan - "Under Women's Eyes :Literary
Constructs of Afro-Caribbean Masculinity"

Messrs. Steve Oudit & Chris Cozier - "Visual
Representations of Masculinity in the Work of
Two Contemporary Trinidadian Artists"

1.00 -2.00

**** LUNCH ****

2.00-4.30

Towards a Research Agenda

- Chair - Dr. Rhoda Reddock

- Rapporteurs Report - Dr. Keith Nurse

- Identification of Research Themes and Possible Programmes.

Panel - Dr. Eudine Barriteau

- Prof. Michael Kimmel

- Fr. Clyde Harvey.

- Dr. Patricia Mohammed

Appendix II

**THE SYMPOSIUM ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF CARIBBEAN MASCULINITY :
TOWARDS A RESEARCH AGENDA
11th - 13th January 1996,**

LIST OF NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF PARTICIPANTS

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Appendix III

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David Dolly	-	Lecturer, Department of Agricultural Extension
Tracy Hackshaw	-	Member of ARTOM, Student, Department of Sociology
Kirk Meighoo	-	Asst. Lecturer, Department of Sociology
Paula Morgan	-	Lecturer, Department of Literatures in English
Keith Nurse	-	Lecturer, Department of Government
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Jerome Teelucksingh	-	Member of ARTOM, Student, Department of History

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Germaine Arthur

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THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE REORIENTATION & TRANSFORMATION OF MASCULINITY

A R T O M

c/o The University of the West Indies
Centre for Gender and Development Studies
(St. Augustine)

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

Within recent years in Trinidad and Tobago, there has been a further deterioration of both the image and reality of the male specie. Contributory to this have been the increased pressures of modern social, economic, political and psychological conditions. It is plainly obvious that the existing praxis of masculinity has failed to adequately address the social problems that face us all. The existing praxis cannot fully perceive the magnitude and dimension of the challenges posed by the postmodern condition.

The inadequacies of existing structured of masculinity and femininity have become increasingly apparent as our society generates increasing cases of spousal murders, domestic violence, child abuse, crimes of passion, sexual harassment and rape. Additionally, the rapid spread of the HIV virus (which is in itself indicative of societal patterns of behaviour) and the accompanying attitude of denial makes a clear case for some form of focused attention on the important issue of male sexual behaviour.

Not surprisingly, the worldwide activism of the women's movement has brought into sharp focus the acute division of labour within both the private and public spheres. This has resulted in the development of more conscious and articulate women, who vociferously demand that males take a larger share of their double burden.

There is therefore a dire need for the reorientation/reconstruction (certainly the transformation) of masculinity in order to cope with the increased social, emotional and psychological burdens of the male-at-large in our society. How else can the male challenge the present condition of life, a life which is shared by two distinct gender groups?

In this context, the **Association for the Reorientation & Transformation Of Masculinity (ARTOM)** hopes to go some way toward re-examining the stereotypes of masculinity, improving gender relations, and producing more acceptable role models. It seeks to challenge - and eventually to change - the existing praxis of masculinity in Trinidad and Tobago.

ARTOM will operate under the aegis of the University of the West Indies' (St. Augustine) Centre for Gender and Development Studies, and as such will seek both to formulate an appropriate research agenda and mobilize at the grassroots level.

ARTOM intends to network with other NGOs both nationally and internationally, and to this end has successfully established preliminary contact with the Jamaican group, **Fathers Incorporated**. While ARTOM is initially mobilizing at the level of the St. Augustine Campus, it is our expressed intention to make this a national effort in the not too distant future.

Membership in ARTOM is open to anyone male OR female, interested in working towards improving the current state of gender relations, and by extension, transforming the existing praxis of masculinity. We will greatly appreciate your ideas, suggestions, comments, views and criticisms, which should go a long way in assisting this organisation create what we hope to be a safer, better future for all.

Newspaper Clippings

Newsday 8th January, 1996, page 7

Newsday, 13th January, 1996, pages 4 & 5

Saturday Guardian, 13th January, 1996, page 1

Sunday Express, 14th January, 1996, page 4

Sunday Mirror, 21st January, 1996, page 24

Sunday Guardian 28th January, 1996, pages 8 & 9

Gender studies symposium

THE UWI Centre for Gender and Development Studies will hold a symposium on the Construction of Caribbean Masculinity from Thursday to Saturday. Venue is the Institute of International Relations.

It will look at male marginalisation, gender socialisation and education, popular culture, sexuality, violence and manhood, theoretical issues, class,

ethnicity, nation and masculinity.

Regional and international scholars will present, including Dr Michael Kaufman, Dr Michael Kimmel, Anand Birju, Dr Patricia Mohammed, Dr Paula Morgan, Dr Odette Parry, Professor Kenneth Ramchand, Dr Everaldo Hosein, Dr Mark Figueroa, Dr Hilary Beckles, Dr Ulric Johnson and Dr Linden Lewis.

Professor Rohlehr:

'Sissy' fear can cause murder

By NEWSDAY REPORTER

A GENERAL FEAR of effeminisation (being called sissy) that exists in the calypso culture might contribute to the number of men who contemplate murder, as occurs so often now, according to Professor Gordon Rohlehr.

He was speaking at the University of the West Indies conference on Caribbean Masculinity on Thursday night.

Rohlehr said that the calypso reflects stereotypical belief about masculinity and its place in the domestic and social domain. He said the calypso masks and reveals notions of masculinity in heroic rhetoric and anti-heroic picong.

He said stick fighting and its associated songs, dances and drumming, re-enacts beliefs in masculinity in terms of power, dominance and kingship which are also reflected in the calypsoes. They

contain many phallic symbols and women are seen as part of the area of conquest and the prize for whom champions fought.

He said that there is a tendency to represent intercourse as martial not marital encounter which is tied in with boasting and self-glorification of the bois, which in calypso, is reduced to the penis.

He quoted several calypsoes through the ages from Sparrow to Rudder that define masculinity in terms of dominance. He said that on the calypso and chutney stage sexuality is discussed openly although in the wider social sphere it might be widely censored.

Quoting from Penguin's "Soft Man" and Tambu's "Yes Darling" he suggested that the calypso reveals deep-seated fears by men of effeminisation and beliefs that men must be in control of the domestic sphere and should refuse to become emasculated by "women's work."

Why boys are failing

By KRIS RAMPERSAD

DO NOT blame girls for the failures of boys in the education system.

This advice comes from sociologist Dr Mark Figueroa and Dr Odette Parry at the same conference yesterday.

Dr Figueroa and Dr Parry noted that notions of male marginalisation need to be closely examined so as not to place the blame on girls who are focussed and achievement oriented.

They also said that there is the need to look for clues in the way boys are taught to behave to understand their lack of achievement in education.

Figueroa said that if boys were taught to sit and pay attention and be disciplined and different like girls are taught, they may perform

better. He also questioned why so much concern has been generated now that girls are performing better than boys, compared to the 1920s when boys headed the list.

He suggested that if girls had the opportunities in education in the 1920s as the boys did, they would have performed just as well or even better because of the kind of behaviour they were taught.

He said that maleness gets privilege in Caribbean societies and quoted statistics to show that women have to work harder and achieve more to attain the same positions that men have.

In the Faculty of Arts while women have comprised some eighty percent of the attendance over the years, only 40 percent are represented on the staff of the UWI campus at Mona

and only 17 percent are at the level of professors.

Figueroa said that women performed better because the barriers to female education are coming down and men do not, because they are socialised into believing that getting good grades is a girl's thing.

Dr Parry agreed, stating that from her research with schoolchildren in Jamaica education is looked upon as being "sissy." She observed that boys believe that getting good grades is not a macho thing.

She also said that this idea is reinforced by the fact that most of the teachers in the schools are women.

Furthermore she said, they see English as a girls' subject and believe that reading is not a masculine activity.

Prof Rohlehr tackles sexy kaiso and Trini males

By WESLEY GIBBINGS

PROFESSOR Gordon Rohlehr excited and inspired an overflowing audience on Thursday at the St Augustine campus of the UWI with a picturesque discourse on calypso in the context of the conference theme: *The Construction of Caribbean Masculinity: Towards a Research Agenda*.

Rohlehr spoke about the use of calypso as a tool for the exploration of Caribbean masculinity. The "stick" (that ultimate symbol of kingship) of the stickfight was, according to Rohlehr, only one of scores of metaphors employed by calypsonians throughout the years to colour phallogocentric discourse.

Rohlehr then issued his "short" list of calypso images for the phallus. Among them the well-known ones, but a few exotic ones as well: snake, wood, devil, brush, plantain, banana, fig, bamboo, hard wood, iron, needle, bull pistol, electric plug, wire, knife, stick, water hose, black pudding, roast corn, picker, cane and cricket bat.

The sexually rampant male, Rohlehr said, has been represented as a number of things including: donkey, mule, horse, dog, bull, doctor or dentist giving out injections, mechanic fixing a woman's car, electrician, stick fighter, boxer (going 15 rounds), roast corn vendor, cannibal, scavenger (cleaning up every species of garbage), dancer (going the fox trot), gardener (forking up the land or watering the garden), ram goat, town man, vampire, demon, iron man and bionic man.

"The female genitalia," Rohlehr went on, "has not been unrepresented in fanciful calypso imagery." Some examples: Miss Mary, poom poom, kangkalang, Mango Vere (if you eat it ripe the hair won't stick in your teeth), nanny, business, property, food, honey, bag of sugar, sawmill, sports page, toon toon and tooney.

"The calypso," Rohlehr said, "outwitted censorship and spoke about sexuality behind thin masks of metaphor, thus maintaining a tradition of pri-



CONFERENCE LOGO

mal discourse even as it emerged from the controlled space of the tent into the moral light of the public forum where overt mention or acknowledgment or celebration of sexuality has long been censored."

"The calypso, like the Scottish ballad, the songs of Robert Burns and the genuine English folk songs, celebrates a beleaguered and earlier tradition that ran and runs counter to the demonisation of human sexuality that was central to Puritanism," he said.

"The annual condemnation of phallogocentricity and overtly-indulged sexuality in the contemporary calypso conceals older and deeper dimensions of discourse about how male and female sexualities have weathered the peculiar history of this Caribbean place," Rohlehr argued.

"The calypso is, despite notions that it is sick and dying at the Port-of-Spain General Hospital, a living tradition of overwhelmingly but not exclusively male discourse," he said.

Not all images, said Rohlehr, related to the sexual act as proper respect had been paid to the "honourable patriarchy" of national and international fame. He found 150 calypsos on the late Prime Minister Dr Eric Williams.

The discussions continue today.

Saturday Guardian, 13th January, 1996, page 1.

UWI student slams media for macho male image

By DAVID BREWSTER

A 23-YEAR-OLD final-year UWI history student yesterday lashed out at the mass media for promoting "calypso junk" as artistic work.

In a hard-hitting presentation, Jerome Teelucksingh accused the media of going too far with obnoxious videos by Machel Montano ("Come Dig It") and Marcia Miranda ("Push The Bumper Back"), which showcase sexually suggestive gyrating women.

Teelucksingh's paper was among those delivered yesterday, the final day of a symposium titled: "The Construction of Caribbean Masculinity: Towards a Research Agenda" at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine.

The UWI undergraduate also castigated calypsonians like Crazy ("Drive It", "Nani Wine", "Penelope"); Colin Lucas ("Bring Yuh Box and Come"); Denise Belfon ("Kakalaylay") and Iwer George (a myriad of wining compositions), blaming them for producing degrading and derogatory "wine and jam" party songs in which Caribbean men and women were portrayed as obsessed with partying and getting on bad.

Speaking on the topic "M-Y-T-H spells Media", Teelucksingh pointed out the highlighting of drunken men, disorderly, wining scantily-clad men and women via Carnival coverage in the print and electronic media, which served only to reinforce stereotypical notions of masculinity and femininity as being shaped only for sexual purposes.

"Can we honestly say that artistes such as Machel Montano, Shabba Ranks, Shaggy, Supercat, General Grant, Patra, Lady Shabba and the like are useful role models for their

legions of male and female supporters? Are these masculine and feminine identities adequate for use in the Caribbean?" he asked.

Teelucksingh pointed out that in 1995 the cinema celebrated 100 years of existence. He asked to what extent had the silver screen matured, arguing that movies such as *Basic Instinct*, *Pulp Fiction*, *Natural Born Killers*, *Showgirls* and *Rambo* were promoted through the local media as "blockbusters".

"To make matters worse," he said, the recently produced indigenous cinematic releases, such as *Innocent Adultery* and *Men of Gray*, closely resembled the American model of immoral and violent films.

He said that such movies glorified sexual immorality and the promotion of the undesirable gun culture.

Teelucksingh said the Caribbean man was portrayed in numerous media commercials as having only certain qualities and is looked on as a fun-loving, alcohol-consuming party animal, muscular and possibly brainless.

"Indeed, the advertisements give us the impression that his well-muscled body and sexual prowess are because of smoking du Maurier or Benson and Hedges," he said.

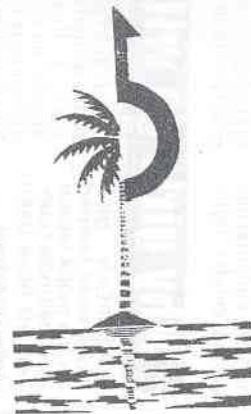
He pointed out that the type of Caribbean man not portrayed was one who was intelligent, competent, reliable and honourable. "We in the Caribbean are concentrating too much on creating the superficial macho man who fails to positively contribute to society," he said.

Teelucksingh noted, though, that there was no stopping the mass media from becoming even more powerful.

He said the twenty-first century was fast approaching and there was a need to rediscover, or create our Caribbean masculinity and femininity. The solution, he argued, lay in a reformation and revolution of media

methods based on decency, morality and integrity and being true to our cultural and historical legacy.

There were also addresses by Hilary Beckles, professor of History at UWI, Cave Hill, who spoke on "Black Masculinity in Caribbean Slavery"; Dr Paula Morgan on "Under Women's Eyes: Literary Constructs of Afro-Caribbean Masculinity"; Prof Ken Ramchand on "Hello Marcus: Hello Rose"; Dr Linden Lewis of Bucknell University, USA, on "Caribbean Masculinity at the Fin de Siecle (at the end of the century); and a visual representation of masculinity by Steve Ouditt and Chris Cozier, Trinidadian artists.



THE CONSTRUCTION of Caribbean Masculinity: Towards a Research Agenda

Sunday Express, 14th January, 1996, Page 4.

School system is

alienated to boys

der symposium unmasks Carib 'macho man'

A MALE economist shocked his predominantly female audience when he announced at a recent gender symposium that he was a postfeminist.

A number of shocked women exclaimed "what!" after his announcement.

However, Dr. Mark Figueroa calmly repeated his confession.

He then added: "I am from the old school ... I am not in the new wave."

"I have had an acute gender concern for 40 years, and I have been in rebellion."

"I used to consider myself a feminist, but now I consider myself a post-feminist."

Dr. Mark Figueroa, a Jamaican economist, was speaking at a recently-completed symposium on "The Construction of Caribbean Masculinity: Toward A Research Agenda", at the St. Augustine campus of the University of the West Indies.

Figueroa, a lecturer at the Mona Campus of UWI, speaking on the topic "Male Privileging and Male Academic Performance in Jamaica", observed: "There are many differences between Caribbean gender relations, and international gender rela-

tions.

"But it is important that people in the Caribbean look at gender research from a Caribbean perspective."

Figueroa stressed: "Being male does not place one in a privileged position in the Caribbean; but maleness is a privilege."

He pointed out the number of females who were represented in a number of faculties at the university, with the highest number being nursing with 90 percent.

However, he noted, that despite the high percentage of female graduates at the university, it did not stimulate gender consciousness amongst the males, except when the females started encroaching on "their territory" in the Social Sciences.

"There is now a concern that women are taking over from the men in the field of social sciences."

"Yet, women need to be better qualified than men in order to get the same jobs as them."

"Look at the level of professional appointments at UWI ... only seven percent of the women are professors," he observed.

"Even in Arts, where women form the highest number of graduates, men account for 42 percent,



DR. MARK FIGUEROA

and women 17 percent of professors.

"After 20 years, only 80 percent of women are professors."

"This shows that the idea of men's marginalisation needs to be rejected," Figueroa stated.

He noted that in the Caribbean, the old saying of "tie the heifer and lose the bulls" still stands.

"Girls are to be kept indoors, but boys are allowed to roam the streets."

"The skills girls acquire at home, are that they need to sit down and keep their mouths shut."

"But boys," Figueroa added, "show an extreme reliance on rote learning."

"They are not socialised, and they are punished more than girls."

"That is why teachers in the Caribbean move to the strap more for boys."

"The school system is alienated to boys," he concluded.

Why girls go with older men

CARIBBEAN girls have been blamed as the major reason why their male counterparts have been failing in school.

According to UWI Mona Campus lecturer, Dr. Odette Parry: "Females are perceived as villains, and males as victims in the Caribbean education system."

"This is because schoolgirls, today, do not want relations with boys because they have no money."

"Boys are therefore under the impression that schooling is fooling."

Parry was speaking at UWI, St. Augustine's Centre for Gender and Development Studies symposium.

tion of "The Caribbean Masculinity: Toward a Research Agenda" on the topic "Schooling is Failing: Why Some Caribbean Boys Fail in School".

She noted that in the Caribbean, many girls are condemned by their teachers for having sexual relations with older men.

However, the reality of the situation, is that many of the girls need the men to help their families financially.

"Girls contribute to boys failing because they hold up their sexual failure to them."

"The motives of the girls are then seen as mercenary," Parry observed.

Boys, she ob-

placed under the impression that being masculine and macho do not contribute to good grades.

"Boys, therefore, have to adopt a macho identity."

Traditional subjects such as English and reading are considered girlish, and not "macho or masculine".

"Boys prefer not to work in school, because it is seen as being girlish."

"It also appears that boys do not have role models."

She stressed: "If we are going to construct masculinity opposite homosexuality then that is not going to help the boys at all."

"Females should not be blamed for boys failing," Parry ended.

Breaking into the boys' room



The Construction of Caribbean Masculinity: Towards a Research Agenda, was the theme of a symposium sponsored by the Centre for Gender and Development Studies at the St Augustine campus of the University of the West Indies from January 11-13, 1996.

By SHARON CAREW

THAT SUCH A SYMPOSIUM should take place is itself a major achievement for gender analysis in the Caribbean. On this score, the conference gets full marks. There were quite a few thought-provoking presentations, particularly by some of the male participants.

Those offered enlightenment as their authors approached the subjects not only from a sound intellectual basis, but particularly because they were honest interrogations and explorations of masculinity. Some of the men spoke eloquently and movingly about the experiences which shaped their masculinity, and how that has affected the different ways they interact with men, women and children.

A few major themes and ideas were explored. Very early, the contribution of feminist discourse to the understanding of gender was recognised and appreciated. It was generally accepted that it made no sense to re-invent the conceptual wheel, so to speak, feminist theory being the obvious starting point in the examination of masculinity.

The differentiation between sex and gender as one of the tenets of feminist theory was repeatedly made. Sex was defined as an individual's biological make-up and gender as socially constructed - a person is born either male or female, but is socialised into becoming masculine or feminine. It was also noted that this is not static but is culturally and histor-

ically specific and therefore always changing.

Race, ethnicity and class are also factors in the experience and expression of masculinity (and femininity). The notions of various masculinities, therefore, was generally accepted in the end.

The socialisation argument was extended by some to include gender negotiations, i.e. that the social construction of masculinity and femininity takes place in the context of relations between men and women.

As Dr Patricia Mohammed, head of the Centre for Gender and Development Studies at the UWI's Mona campus, pointed out, the masculine/feminine dichotomy misrepresents human experience. There is, in fact, an overlap between maleness and femaleness. She also noted that masculinity needs to be examined in relation to femininity.

This was a rather important point which I thought could have been extended. It was not sufficiently integrated into the conceptualisation of gender. Although various presenters warned against the "binary" (an often used word) perception of masculinity and femininity, gender relations was not adequately explored. In the end we seemed unable to relieve ourselves from "binarism." This will probably remain a challenge for future research and discussion, primarily because it seems feminist discourse is still largely based on socialisation theory.

Socialisation theory has of course been extremely useful in demystifying gender, i.e. in revealing the process of learning how to be and what it is to be male or female. It has also helped to explain the different historical roles men and women have played in the development of society. Feminism and feminist theory have also been concerned with deconstructing the patriarchal notion that woman is incomplete without man and has accomplished a lot in terms of the perceived and real status of women. In this context, socialisation theory has served as a proactive tool - women could be socialised differently so as to be more visible in certain social sectors and institutions. There is no doubt that society has benefited from all of this, but there are limitations.

Feminist theory has relied heavily on the theory of socialisation. The focus has been on defining women, that is woman as not man. Thus it has contributed to the problem of theorising men and women as being in opposition to each other, each having been fixed into a social mould.

It might be more useful to conceptualise socialisation as a guideline to behaviour which people adhere to in varying degrees, and which is never really an absolute in anybody's life. Of course, some people will follow their guidelines more rigidly than others, but they are always being interpreted and reinterpreted. If we follow this line of thinking, no one is really



complete male or female in gender. There is always a gap between what is considered to be gender norms in a society and how people actually come to understand and express their gender in everyday lives.

I was reminded of Edward Glissant's position that society is constantly being reproduced, so that it is never the same as what it was before. Each individual interprets what he/she is being socialised to become. Another theorist, Anthony Giddens, argues that according to socialisation theory, there is no action which can be genuine. All action is learnt, leaving no room for a sense of truth; what individuals understand the truth to be. Gandhi believed that regardless of their circumstances, people always had moral

choice. Indeed, masses of Indians made that choice effecting radical change in their country.

The point that people always have a degree of choice never completely fit into any social mold. The extent to which a person does fit the mold is extremely important, but he or she is always struggling to alter the mold so it fits his or her form; i.e. the person's unique interpretation of the world. This is what human agency is all about - human beings being subjects rather than objects of change.

This approach could be useful towards understanding gender and gender relations. One concrete example of how it can be is the experience of wife abuse.

While we need to understand how men become violent and women pas-

sive, it is also important to understand the process of liberation women go through as they remove themselves from these situations. Many women experience radical transformations when they have come out of abusive relationships.

How do they do this? How do they begin to see themselves as worthwhile beings undeserving of abuse? The feminist movement has facilitated, not created this self-awareness in the creation of halfway houses, etc.

Another interesting point of discussion was the issue of the "male gaze." Sociology Professor Michael Kimmel argued that men seek the approval and confirmation of their masculinity from other men.

"One got the impression though, that somehow an enquiry into Indian masculinity was not a valid exercise, as if Indian men are not masculine."



The three images on these pages, a series by Christopher Cozier, are called *Police, Priest and Politician*. Cozier was one of the presenters at the symposium, *The Construction of Caribbean Masculinity: Towards a Research Agenda*. These images were part of his presentation.

Even if a woman insults, or questions his masculinity, a man is concerned with whether this was observed by other men, not the woman's actual perception. Masculinity in other words, is defined by men, and their interaction with women is used as a kind of measuring stick of masculinity. This is an important point which contributes to our understanding of how gender gets worked out socially, but again we must be careful that it does not lead us to conceptual "binarisms" which everyone so wanted to avoid.

The male gaze is part of the public assertion and validation of masculinity. Occurring in spaces and situations in which the society's gender norms are expressed. However as noted before, there is a

gap between this and how individuals actually perceive themselves as male or female. There are perhaps also situations and spaces in which gender and norms are challenged. In our context that could be carnival or chutney fetes. Moreover, in situations where women publicly admonish men, the argument that they (the women) are challenging gender norms is probably equally plausible.

Dr Linden Lewis, assistant professor and co-director of the Race and Gender Resource Center at Bucknell University in the USA, made a similar point about the "boys' lime" being a gendered space where masculinity is negotiated and defined among men. This shed some positive light on the "old boys' lime," positive

because it hints at the possibility of a male critique of masculinity in that space. It demonstrates the dynamism of gender.

But I am beginning to think that men and women are most "gendered" in their interaction with each other. Simply put, you are more a man when you are with a woman and you are more a woman when you are with a man; and it is precisely in this context that masculinity is expressed and tested. In other words the crucial point is gender relations. Men and women are probably more alike when they are separated than when they are together!

There were two very informative and interesting papers on gender and education which attempted to explain the increasingly poor performance of

boys in school and the preponderance of young women in the university system. Dr Odette Parry, an ISER research fellow, presented one of two papers based on actual field research. Her data reveal that girls are actually being blamed for boys' failure (by among others, female teachers) and that girls are discriminated against in attempts to have some kind of gender balance in the education system.

Dr Mark Figueroa, a lecturer in the Department of Economics at the Mona campus, examined differences in the discipline and privilege between boys and girls. The more rigid form of discipline experienced by girls has paid off in terms of performance. The unabated freedom which is granted to boys does not serve them well in school. On the other hand, boys are punished more severely than girls who although performing better, do so in a repetitive, boring system which encourages conformity. Figueroa pointed out that this differential performance occurs from the time children enter school. The real imbalance in education said Figueroa, is the scarcity of women in faculty positions throughout the University of the West Indies, especially given the fact that they represent the vast majority of graduates (70% in Jamaica).

Professor Hilary Beckles' paper was also quite informative and stimulating. He looked at masculinity in Caribbean slavery. Among the points raised were the ideological

construction of gender by the white elite which perceived the black man as childlike and dependent. The contradiction to this, of course, is the fact that Caribbean slavery was not only marked by violence against the slaves, but also by violent slave insurrections. Another important point raised by Professor Beckles was the exploitation of women in Maroon communities, where it was likely they experienced the same injustices of the plantations.

Two final points: first, this was not a symposium on Caribbean masculinity. Rather, it was a symposium on Afro-Caribbean masculinity. It is perfectly legitimate to have such an event to examine Afro-Caribbean masculinity, but its name should reflect that. To use the word "Caribbean" when the enquiry was exclusively about the African experience was unacceptable; particularly in the demographic context of Trinidad where we should be more sensitive to issues of representation.

Several other questions could have been asked. For example, is there any difference in male criminality between Indians and Africans? Someone recently commented that there is a racial division of labour in local crime - Indians control the car theft business and Africans, breaking and entering. Something to think about. Other questions come to mind: is there any difference in the experience of domestic violence, particularly in the incidence of

wife murders and in cases where entire families are killed? Are gender relations different in the Indian community? Do inter-racial marriages affect masculinity and femininity in both communities? Father Clyde Harvey raised this point at the end.

One got the impression though, that somehow an enquiry into Indian masculinity was not a valid exercise, as if Indian men are not masculine. Well they are not, are they feminine? Emasculated?

Finally, the discussion did not consider class. Most of the symposium the focus was on young Afro-Caribbean, urban working class men. Lewis examined the effect of structural adjustment and the globalisation of capital on blue collar white collar workers, this was the only attempt at comparison. There was an attempt, for example, to identify class distinctions in male violence.

The symposium on Caribbean masculinity would have to be graded a success. It actually opened, it was well attended by both men and women. Discussions were enlightening and thought-provoking and most importantly has contributed to the arising and understanding of gender relations in the Caribbean. As with any experience, there are problems, some of which I am sure will be redressed. And the next conference on the subject will certainly be a welcome one.

— Sharon Carew
contributing writer.

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