

WITCHCRAFT AND THE EXCHANGE OF SEX, BLOOD, AND MONEY AMONG AFRICANS IN CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA¹

BY

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ABSTRACT

In post-apartheid South Africa witchcraft is an ever-growing concern, as political liberation has not led to liberation from occult forces. The study of modernity and globalisation has revealed the significance of the study of witchcraft in contemporary Africa. Among Xhosa migrants in Cape Town the discourse on witchcraft also revealed very specific problems that people encountered within close relationships. The lived conflicts, anxieties and desires were revealed in the exchange of sex, blood (as a metaphor for life itself), and money. This same pattern of exchange appeared in witchcraft, and particularly the role of witch familiars. Witch familiars embodied the anxieties and desires that people experienced on a daily basis concerning sex, blood, and flows of money in intimate relations. The structural problems that were part of the migrants' social configurations were thus revealed in a structural pattern of exchange within witchcraft.

Introduction

In post-apartheid South Africa, democratisation and liberation from authoritarian rule have not led to liberation from witchcraft. On the contrary, witchcraft is a problem that people face on a daily basis (see Ashforth 2000; Comaroff and Comaroff 1999; Niehaus 2001). The recent movie, *A Reasonable Man*, about a creature that assists a witch in its malicious deeds, played to packed audiences in cinemas across South Africa. Witchcraft in South Africa appears to be more alive now than ever. In this paper I will examine witchcraft narratives among Xhosa migrants in Cape Town and try to find out why this narrative is so attractive to their present-day situation.

Life for Xhosa migrants in Cape Town was difficult and insecure. Widespread unemployment, a high incidence of violence, such as rape and assault, the prevalence of HIV/AIDS and feelings of uprootedness

in a new city were only some of the problems they had to face. Many Xhosa men and women told me how difficult it was to maintain relations with parents, spouses, and children who lived scattered around the country or remained in the former Bantustans Ciskei and Transkei.

This paper examines the impact of violence, economic insecurity, and volatile relations on sexual relations, which, as Devereux (1967, 10) notes, can be understood as 'the prototype of all close relationships.' I will try to discover how broad political transformations, such as apartheid and its demise, violence, and economic insecurity, affected people on the most intimate levels. Women, but also men, complained about the difficult negotiations involved in their consanguineal relations and their unsatisfactory relations with a spouse or lover. For married women, affinal relations were mostly very tense. Their stories, loose remarks, gossip, and jokes were often about sex, 'blood'—as a metaphor for kinship—and money. Women complained about men's behaviour, for example having numerous girlfriends, drinking habits, jealousy, lack of money, and failure to contribute to the household. Men often felt pressurised by the competing demands of a girlfriend, a wife, children, and their destitute relatives in the Eastern Cape. Male authority through ritual, participation in local politics, responsibility over lineage, ancestors, and children was virtually absent in this urban environment. It seemed that the many unemployed and destitute men suffered from what might be characterised as a crisis of masculinity. By studying sexual relationships, it becomes clear how money was embedded in relationships and what desires and anxieties were caused by the entanglement of money and intimacy.

The Xhosa migrants told each other witchcraft stories, or made subtle references to witchcraft involving these complex interdependencies. What struck me in particular was the role of what can be called witch familiars in witchcraft narratives. Witch familiar is a term I use to refer to the creature that assisted the witch in its malicious deeds. These witch familiars were the *thikoloshe*, a half child-like, half ape-like beast, the *mamlambo*, which somewhat resembles a mermaid or snake, and the *chanti*, which looks like a snake. The witch used them for enrichment and to cause harm to others (cf. Hammond-Tooke 1970, 1974; Hunter 1979; McAllister 1981; Niehaus 1995, 1997, 2001). The witchcraft familiars embodied violent behaviour, such as rape, killing kin, causing infertility, enrichment at the expense of others, by exchanging sex, blood, and money. The way sex, blood, and money featured in the discourse of witchcraft resembled a pattern of exchange that reflected the horrifying experiences of many migrants. By analysing the entanglement of

sex, blood, and money in migrants' comments about each other as well as within witchcraft the consequences of violence, economic insecurity, and volatile relations come to the fore.

I attempt here to make a contribution to the discussion on witchcraft and modernity. The study of modernity has given insight into the diverging ways in which people deal with new sources of capital, technological developments, and information (Appadurai 1990, 1997; Comaroff and Comaroff 1993). The study of witchcraft has revealed that homogeneity should not be assumed. Witchcraft is very much alive today and has found its way in new technologies, media, and forms of inequality in South Africa as elsewhere in Africa (cf. Ashforth 2000; Bähre 2000; Comaroff and Comaroff 1993; Geschiere 1997; Meyer 1995; Niehaus 2001).

Comaroff and Comaroff (1993, xxviii-xxix) have highlighted that witchcraft relates to the desires and anxieties caused by the impact of globalisation or modernity: 'Witches are modernity's prototypical malcontents. They provide—like the grotesques of a previous age—disconcertingly full-bodied images of a world in which humans seem in constant danger of turning into commodities, of losing their life blood to the market and to the destructive desires it evokes.'

The question of the precise relation of modernity and globalisation to witchcraft is a challenging one, not least because the Xhosa are very reluctant to talk about witchcraft. In South Africa, the move towards democracy has resulted in many changes that cannot be linked to globalisation, or can only partly be attributed to it. Furthermore, there are significant methodological issues involved in relating witchcraft to globalisation. One should have insight into the historicity of this discourse, but the limited historical material on the iconography of witch familiars makes it difficult to reconstruct. Ethnographic accounts are mostly fragmented and sometimes not precise enough to enable historical comparisons to be made. Moreover, the witchcraft discourse has its own ambiguities and contradictions, which complicate its study. It appears that among the Xhosa the *thikoloshe*, the *mamlambo*, and the *chanti* have hardly changed over the last sixty years (see Laubscher 1959; Hunter 1979). The only noteworthy difference is that in the 1930s the *thikoloshe* was presented as a free creature that was captured by witches. Today, it is always seen as made and possessed by witches (cf. Laubscher 1959, 8-9; Hunter 1979, 276). This could indicate that witch familiars were increasingly placed within human relationships, but it is difficult to be certain.

Witch familiars might be modernity's malcontents to the extent that the iconography of witchcraft highlights very specific problems

encountered within close relationships that, at least analytically, cannot be dissociated from global forces that constantly challenge people's lives. Xhosa migrants expressed their worries about violence and economic insecurities, as well as the inability to maintain relations. My argument is that witchcraft fantasies can be interpreted more directly in relation to specific, perhaps structural, problems that come to the fore in the exchange of sex, blood, and money among partners. First, I will deal with some central issues concerning the socio-economic consequences of migration for Xhosa migrants, particularly how this challenges kinship and sexual relations. Then follows a discussion of four case studies collected among Xhosa migrants in Cape Town, which reveal how kinship, money, and sex were intertwined in problematic ways. The iconography of witch familiars, as well as two case studies on witchcraft, will be compared with these problematic exchanges and dependencies. The paper will end with a discussion of the pattern of exchange that seems to emerge.

Xhosa Migration to Cape Town

Until the Abolition of Influx Control Act of 1986, only Africans with a 'pass' were allowed to live in urban areas. Others were forced to live in the impoverished homelands, such as the Transkei and Ciskei. The 1923 Urban Areas Act in particular restricted the residence of Africans in urban areas. Africans were allowed to live in the city only as workers and even family members were not permitted to live with them. This resulted in an urban population of mainly men, often living in migrant hostels under poor conditions (Omer-Cooper 1994, 202-203; Ramphela 1991, 1993; Robertson 1990).

During apartheid, living in the city was even more difficult for African women than for African men. The Bantu Urban Areas Act of 1964, for example, ruled that women had to receive permission to join their husbands in the city. Furthermore, if a 'section 10 woman'—a woman permitted to live in the city under section 10 of this Act—married a 'homeland man', the apartheid state forced her to leave the city and join her husband in 'his homeland'.

In Greater Cape Town in 1911 there were almost four African men for every African woman, which decreased to a two to one ratio in 1951 (Wilson and Mafeje 1963, 5).² The status of women in the city was much more insecure than that of men, because a woman often depended on her husband, who was the owner of the bed, or 'bed holder' (see amongst others Oliver-Evans 1993, 70-81; Ramphela 1989).³

This complicated relations between men and women. Remittances to the women in the Bantustans were irregular, too small, or plainly absent (cf. James 1999, 77; Moodie 1988, 251).

The end of apartheid led to changes in the migration of men and women and their dependencies. Once the apartheid laws on migration were abolished, women left the 'homelands' and tried to make a living in the city. While urban female-headed households were relatively scarce because of apartheid policy, they increased steadily. A conjugal familial unit—a husband and wife living together, perhaps with children—was less common, and many children were illegitimate according to civil or customary law (Burman and Lembete 1995, 28, 46; see also Longmore 1959). If a husband or boyfriend was part of the household, he was often not the biological father of the children. Women frequently complained to me about men, their lack of support, drunkenness, and domestic violence.

The migrants of the post-apartheid era lived mostly in illegal squatter camps, situated on the Cape Flats around the formal townships or on other pieces of unoccupied land. Streets and electricity were mostly absent and people had to share a few communal facilities like a water tap or toilet. The post-apartheid government had provided a housing subsidy for the poor, which was part of the presidential Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). In order to be entitled to a full subsidy one could not earn more than R800,⁴ and this was the case for most Xhosa migrants. Men often worked for cleaning companies and occasionally as guards for private security companies. Most women had jobs as domestic workers for white families in the southern suburbs of Cape Town and some worked for cleaning companies. Salaries hardly ever exceeded R1000 per month and employment in the informal sector, such as running a 'shebeen' or a shop, offered income to only a few. Their meagre incomes therefore entitled them to a housing subsidy that consisted of a plot—sometimes with a small house— with a water tap, a toilet and a pre-paid electricity connection.

In spite of the fact that the migrants often lived in Cape Town for many years, that the discriminatory laws on migration were abolished, and they could even own property by applying for a housing subsidy, they still regarded it as a temporary home that they wanted to leave. Hardly ever did migrants affirm their place in the city to the neighbours and ancestors through a beer-drinking ritual. They complained about the violence in Cape Town, even after the end of apartheid. In the Western Cape Province, the average murder rate in 1997 was 80 murders per 100,000 (SAIRR in Cape Times 1998). In the Western

Cape in 1999, 81 murders and 160 rapes per 100,000 people were reported (SAPS 2000). In the African urban townships murder rates were even higher. Moreover, many rapes were not reported because of lack of confidence in the judiciary system and fear of public stigmatisation.

The racial discrimination that Xhosa migrants experienced also alienated them from the city. Many competed with Coloureds for jobs and often Coloureds wanted to hire their own friends, relatives, or neighbours, and keep Africans out of the workplace. For example, a migrant from Fort Beaufort complained that his coloured supervisor did not pay him for overtime but instead divided his overtime money among the coloured colleagues. He was afraid to say anything about it for fear of losing his job. It was against this threatening background that Xhosa migrants had to manage their finances and complex interdependencies with kin, boyfriends, or girlfriends.

Conceptualising Interdependencies

As elsewhere in Africa, pressure on land, the demise of cattle, and an increasing reliance on migrant labour put all kinds of strains on people who depended on each other. The powers of young men, women, and even children increased in relation to elders, because they earned some money.⁵ Such changes helped them to escape certain inequalities, but also led to new forms of oppression.

Wage labour, which was introduced with colonialism, provided new forms of economic power and marginalised the use of cattle for the constitution of consanguineal and conjugal relations. Young people earned cash, which undermined parental authority over their children's income and the constitution of their children's conjugal relations. Young people did not depend on their father or a chief for marriage cattle and instead bought their own. Subsequently elders complained that they were no longer respected. Although wage labour led to the financial independence of young men, their prolonged absence during labour migration also made men more hesitant to set up their own homestead (*umzi*) and instead they often left their wife with their parents (Beinart 1982, 96-103; Hunter 1933, 270; 1979, 59-60, 177). *Lobola* payments in cattle were replaced by payments in money, but marriage negotiations still took place in the language of cattle and the monetary value of particular beasts was negotiated (cf. Comaroff and Comaroff 1990, 209). Premarital sexual relations also involved money, at least from the 1930s (Hunter 1979, 182).

The study of money in relation to sex shows how a wide range of socio-economic transformations led to drastic changes in gender relationships. Flows of money and flows of blood were pivotal to the Xhosa's understanding of conjugal and consanguineal relations. They often expressed the vulnerability of these relations in reference to money, sex, and the legitimacy of conjugal and consanguineal relations in the absence of money, sex, or parenting. Bloch and Parry (1989) suggest that one should not assume that money is corrosive to social relations, or necessarily promotes individualism. Similarly, the opposition between gifts and commodities, and the association of money with the latter, is problematic. Much more important is an analysis of how money features in particular forms of exchange and what moral ideas surround these exchanges. Bloch and Parry (1989, 7) argue that: 'Relations between people masquerade as relations between things.' The challenge is to see how these relations are constituted and how money is part of the interdependencies between people.⁶

In her study on the Nuer, Hutchinson (1996) demonstrates how flows of money and conceptual understandings of blood provide insight into dramatic political, economic, and social transformations. In a fascinating and unsettling account, she shows how the analysis of cattle, money, and notions of blood help towards an understanding of how the Nuer tried to cope with violent changes. She examines relations between people by analysing exchanges and how money, war, and the state have affected them. The Nuer did not regard particular things as neutral, but, instead, their social or economic origin was distinguished:

People drew a marked distinction, for instance, between . . . 'the money of work', and money acquired through the sale of cattle . . . or 'the money of cattle'. This dichotomy was balanced by a parallel distinction between two sorts of cattle: purchased cattle . . . or 'the cattle of money', and cattle received through bridewealth exchange . . . or 'the cattle of girls/daughters' (Hutchinson 1996, 56).

Hutchinson shows how blood, cattle, and cash (the title of one of her chapters) were pivotal towards an understanding of the transformation of relations under horrific circumstances. The study reveals how commodities reflected relations with people, but also how the commodities themselves were acquired through exchange.

For the Xhosa migrants, flows of money were entangled with economic insecurities, violence, and volatile relations. Money was not the only aspect of intimate relations, but money, and even more so its absence, revealed how people tried, as well as failed, to deal with deprivation. The dissatisfaction that people expressed about these exchanges meant that there was a model of ideal relations. The complaints about

existing relations, or the absence of relations, were implicitly juxtaposed against a normative or ideal view of morally proper relations. The complex associations brought about by sex, blood, and money reveal how they were interwoven (cf. Comaroff 1985, 174). For example, sexual consumption was easily associated with eating.⁷ As will become apparent, sex was also often associated with money. Sex was related to blood because of its reference to consanguineal relations. For example, blood formed a connection with the ancestors: people believed that disturbed relations with ancestors could lead to disturbances in the blood, which in turn could cause illness. Sex was related to blood because sexual relations, or conjugal relations, created consanguineal relations through childbirth.⁸ Hunter (1979, 145-149) reveals how the Pondo believed that it was the woman's blood together with the man's semen that created a child. If a witch wanted to harm the pregnant women, he or she would send out a witch familiar to scratch the pregnant woman's skin with witchcraft potion: 'The poison from these scarifications enters the blood and so harms the child in the womb' (Hunter 1979, 149). In general, I found that illnesses such as miscarriages, where blood became visible, were often attributed to witchcraft. Blood was related to money because it sustained life and because it enabled consanguineal dependencies. The relation between blood and money is clearly highlighted in the Xhosa expression *umcinezeli ngemali*, which the English-Xhosa dictionary (Fischer et al. 1996) translates as bloodsucker, i.e. a person who sucks blood. It literally means 'oppressor with money'. When I asked a Xhosa man about the difference between the literal translation (oppressor with money) and the translation of its meaning (bloodsucker), he explained to me that oppressing someone with money meant that one took the person's blood.

In order to clarify the interconnectedness of sex, blood, and money, figure 1, in which sex, blood, and money are positioned on three sides of a triangle, will be helpful. The three intersections of the sides signify the connections between sex, blood, and money, within which social realms sex, blood, and money are exchanged. Money and sex reveal the dynamic 'conjugal' dependencies. This also includes dependencies between a girlfriend and boyfriend. Money and blood refer to consanguineal dependencies: money was needed to maintain consanguineal dependencies and consanguineal dependencies influenced the flows of money. Sex and blood were obviously related because without sex between a man and a woman a child could not be born. This intersection refers to the creation of life itself, or reproductive dependencies.

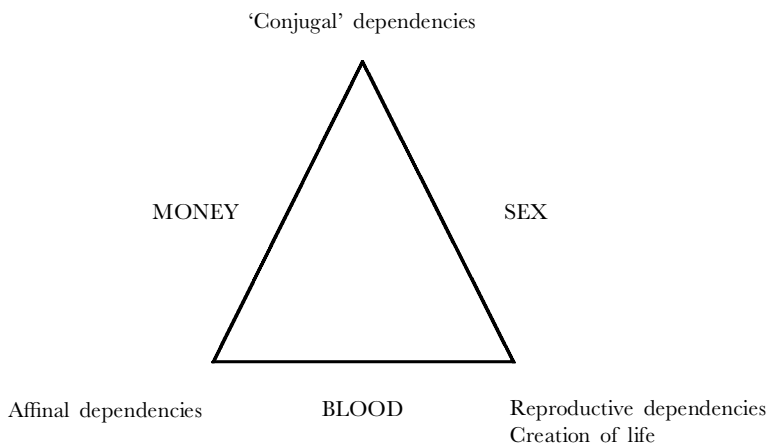


Figure 1: Nexus sex, blood, and money

This figure serves only as a guide in interpreting the exchanges and their associated concerns between men and women. The visual representation of sex, blood, and money has its limitations. Sex is not a commodity or something that one can transfer. Nevertheless, sex appeared to be regarded, at times, as if it was a commodity that could be controlled, and was accessible or not. At the same time, sex was also understood as an act in which money and blood were transmitted. Sex, like blood and money, was regarded as the exchange as well as the exchangeable. Therefore, figure 1 should be regarded only as a tool to clarify what kind of exchanges occur, and how they relate to specific tensions within relations.

No Money, No Honey

In informal conversations with men and women, it became clear that without money a man would have no girlfriend: the desires for sex and for money were closely related. Generally, people expressed the idea that men wanted sex and women wanted money in return. This might convey the simplistic picture that men were not interested women’s money, and that, for women, sex could not be associated with pleasure. These gender differences, however, were due to hierarchical relations coupled with widespread misogyny, which meant that a man could hold on to his own money, take money from a wife or girlfriend, or force a woman to have sex with him. This was not so feasible for a woman, who was on the receiving end of these power relations. Thus,

sex was often the way to gain access to a man's money. During labour migration, particularly under apartheid, many wives were waiting for their husband to return home with desperately needed cash. Wives who were left behind in the Bantustans feared that their migrant husbands had sexual relations in town with women who also desperately needed cash. During apartheid, women's illegal status made it mostly impossible for them to gain money through employment, a situation that made them very dependent on relations with men.

The transfer of money through sexual activity was a central element in the relationship between a man and a woman.⁹ The exchanges between men and women were valued according to some idea of how relations should be, or normative exchange. From the comments and complaints that people made about each other, it was possible to make some deductions about this normative exchange. What follows are four case studies of some residents of Indawo Yoxolo, two concerning the same household, in which the tensions in relations became clear. The tensions were about problematic exchanges of money, sexual relations, and the rights and responsibilities vis-à-vis kin.

Case 1

Thandi was not one of the most respectable residents in her street. It was not that she and her children lived in a shack or because she was unemployed. Many found themselves in a similar position. Her neighbours spoke ill of her because they felt that Thandi treated them disrespectfully. She once borrowed money from a neighbour to buy meat at the local 'spaza' shop (small grocery), but failed to return it because her husband had left her. Some neighbours felt that this was a poor excuse. They also gossiped about how she once borrowed a pick-up truck from a neighbour and had promised to pay for it. Again, the owner of the pick-up truck never received any money, probably because Thandi did not have it.

Another event in January 1998 also highlighted Thandi's way of dealing with money and relations. She took the minibus—a shared taxi with a fixed route—from Indawo Yoxolo to Nyanga Junction where she always took the train to the centre of Cape Town. She related the following story, much to the amusement of her fellow passengers, among whom was my research assistant.

Thandi started a conversation about her boyfriend. He was an old man who lived elsewhere on the Cape Flats, as the area where the townships of Cape Town were located was often called. The boyfriend

used to visit Thandi irregularly to have sex with her. Although Thandi would not be considered a prostitute, she needed the money he gave her. But this time, Thandi explained, the old man was tired and only wanted to lie on the bed and watch some television. Thandi was unhappy about this and told him; 'You have your own bed and television at your own place. You don't have to come here for that.' The boyfriend, who took the hint that she wanted to have sex, explained that he preferred to watch television and rest a little. This time he was not interested in sex. Thandi told the passengers of the minibus that she did not want this at all. Her boyfriend should only come to her for sex and before having sex she wanted to see money. Therefore, she had told her boyfriend: 'First money, then vagina', while she had pointed at her crotch. When he still refused Thandi threw him out. The passengers really enjoyed this story. To make her point even clearer, Thandi said to the passengers: 'He can make his own vagina out of the money and fuck his money!' The people in the minibus almost died laughing.

Thandi's story reveals how money had sexual connotations, and the suggestive way in which sex and money were blended together metaphorically. She explicitly stated that money had to be given in exchange for sex. The discussion about the exchange of money and sex is not new to anthropology. Mauss, for example, reinterpreted Malinowski's fieldwork on the Trobriand Islanders. Malinowski argued that the gifts a man gave to his wife were free gifts, which meant that the woman was not required to reciprocate. Mauss, however, argued that the man's gifts were returned with sexual favours, and were therefore not free, but reciprocated with sex (Gouldner 1973, 298-299; Mauss 1954).¹⁰ In the above case, Thandi stated unambiguously that her relationship with her boyfriend was animated only by the exchange of money for sexual favours. If the man was not going to give her money, possibly because he did not have any, he was not going to get sex. Instead, Thandi felt that he should have intercourse with his money, at least metaphorically.

Case 2

Reverend Magazi had a small independent church in his shack. Neighbours sometimes called it jokingly the 'Holy Baptist Vagina Church'. The minister was married but had many girlfriends, whom he often got to know through his church. Reverend Magazi was reputedly very unscrupulous and inconsiderate. For example, he had an affair with a teenage girl who attended his church. After some time, the girl found

out that Reverend Magazi had also had an affair with her mother. She told her neighbours about this, which damaged Magazi's reputation even more. Many times, however, he had kept girlfriends without being caught. He lied to the women about his whereabouts, was considered to be a smooth talker, and people held him in some esteem for his role as the minister of the local church.

The neighbours, also members of the church, were aware of Magazi's affairs. They felt it was a disgrace but preferred not to say anything to him or his girlfriends. They despised the fact that he did not support his girlfriends and that the women supported him instead. Magazi's girlfriend Noncedo, in particular, was regarded as a victim of his greed. Noncedo was widowed when her husband was shot while driving his car. Some spread rumours that Reverend Magazi was involved in the murder. After all, he and Noncedo were having an affair and they might have wanted to get rid of Noncedo's husband in order to acquire his car and two houses. Reverend Magazi used this car to go to work, even though he did not have a driver's licence, which increased people's suspicions about his integrity. Many neighbours were convinced that Reverend Magazi was going to leave Noncedo as soon as she had no money left. They made jokes about Reverend Magazi and said that he did *ukuphinga*, i.e. had sex like a dog; selfishly, purely for lust, while going from bitch to bitch. His church acquired the reputation as a meeting place for him to choose girlfriends. A neighbour commented: 'That is not a church, it is a matchmaking place'.

In this case, the man had selfish sex like a dog, which referred to irresponsible behaviour. The minister did not give anything to his girlfriends, but his girlfriends ended up supporting him instead. The critique shows that gifts, monetary or otherwise, were intrinsic to a proper sexual relationship. A man who did not contribute financially to his wife or girlfriend was often looked on as a loser.

Women frequently complained among each other about their husbands or boyfriends, particularly the fact that they were unemployed and did not support the household financially. Even if the husband or boyfriend did have a job—many women complained to me—he used his income for other purposes, such as supporting his family in the Eastern Cape, buying presents for secret girlfriends, or wasting it on beer and brandy. Regularly, women argued that their partner was just like one of their children because he failed to contribute financially. The women had to buy and cook food for the men and their children, while the former just sat at home being bored. Unemployed men especially had a low status within the household and the neighbourhood.

Their self-esteem was low and they were constantly afraid that their wives or girlfriends were going to leave them because they had no money. Some men clearly had social and emotional problems and were often regarded as sick by their wives or girlfriends, who felt that the illness was caused by the husband's or boyfriend's own laziness. Instead of drinking, smoking cigarettes, and being bored, the women felt that the men should get up early and search for jobs. Nevertheless, women often argued that they had to nurture men as if they were children.

Case 3

The third case concerns Nomahobe who worked as a liaison officer for a building contractor that carried out parts of the RDP. This example clearly shows how easily the transfer of money, in this case wages, from a man to a woman was associated with sexual favours.

In September 1997, Nomahobe lived with her husband Zuko and her nine-year-old child on their newly acquired plot. Zuko was unemployed because he had been caught stealing a few cans of beer from the offices where he worked as a cleaner. He was fined, imprisoned for two days, and lost his job. He started to feel very depressed and, at a certain stage, he did not even have the energy to get out of bed in the morning to look for a job. His wife urged him time and again to get up and find work, but without much result. Nomahobe herself used to have several jobs as a cleaner. The employers required Nomahobe to work long and irregular hours, sometimes without paying any extra salary. Her irregular work schedule and many hours of overtime caused a lot of tensions in the family. She would come home from work and her husband would fire questions at her. He was convinced that she was having an affair with her boss at work and that this was the reason for her late hours. Nomahobe was very upset, but finally gave in to his demands to stop working. Her husband's pressure made her quit her job twice, which left them without any employment.

After a few very depressing weeks at home, Nomahobe found a job. She discussed this with her husband and he gave his approval. They desperately needed money and he was pleased that she was going to work closer to home, instead of in the city centre, so he could keep an eye on her. During the next months, however, tensions rose up again between Nomahobe and her husband. He complained about her irregular working hours and carried on to interrogate her about her whereabouts. Moreover, he became concerned about Nomahobe's safety. He felt it was not safe for her to work in the evenings and felt that

she should no longer attend the development consultations where the wishes of local residents were discussed. He tried to find out where she was through their child. When their child did not attend school, he had to join Nomahobe and her boss on their visits to community representatives, suppliers, and subcontractors. Whenever Nomahobe left, the child would cry, scream, and beg to join her. After some time, Nomahobe realised that Zuko again suspected her of having an affair at work. Zuko's suspicions were fed by some of his male friends (for a male to have female friends is virtually impossible) with whom he sometimes drank beers or brandy, or watched videos over the weekend. Zuko's sister in Cape Town also contributed to Zuko's fears because she informed him that she saw Nomahobe with someone else. Zuko once said that he did not really think that his wife was having an affair but that, as a 'proper man', he had to make the accusation.

After some time, Zuko openly accused Nomahobe, who, in turn, told Zuko that he was acting like a child and that he was trying to keep her down and obstructing any advancement in her life. She pointed out to him that, as he was not earning any money, he was like a child she had to maintain. Zuko then increased the pressure on his wife. For example, he told her that he was hungry and asked her to cook. Nomahobe prepared a meal and gave it to him in a respectful manner, sometimes by kneeling in front of him. But then Zuko told her that his hunger had suddenly disappeared and left the plate of food untouched. He also started to steal money from her, became increasingly aggressive, sexually abused and assaulted her. Furthermore, Nomahobe was hurt by the way he negotiated between her and her in-laws. The problems finally led to a divorce, because Nomahobe felt that:

He doesn't protect me from his demanding family and it is very difficult for me to protect myself. His sister stole many of my clothes. When I asked my husband to talk with her to stop this stealing, he promised to do so. But in the end, he always stands up for his family. When I came back from a visit to my family, his cousin had stolen my leather tools, which I used to make leather bags to earn some money. He didn't confront his cousin and even allowed his cousin to visit our place although I told him that I don't want him anymore. I will never forget that he once gave his whole salary to his mother without my consent. When I tried to discuss this, he hit me in front of the child and tried to kick me out of the house. I had to sleep at the neighbour's place that night. He said he would always stand up for his mother and not for me. I am the only person that supports the household. He also regularly steals money from me and leaves me and my child without anything.

Unfortunately, relational problems such as these occurred frequently. All too often, women made remarks about the abuses they suffered from their boyfriends or husbands, and mentioned the destructive impact

that financial insecurity had on their relations. Even if both partners had a job, it was difficult to get by financially, but if the husband had no job, the marriage tended to become a nightmare. The marriage problems revealed a discrepancy between the ideal, or normative, socio-economic expectation and a violent, insecure reality. The man's lack of income caused tremendous anxiety and stress. It made it very difficult for him to assert his position as a husband and father. As Bank observed on fatherhood among the Xhosa in East London: '[F]atherhood is conceptualised in very materialistic terms—the image of a 'good father' is a man who can support his family financially' (Bank 1997, 175). In Nomahobe's case, the man did not provide any money and was completely dependent on his wife's earnings. Therefore, he was regarded as a child who receives less respect and needs to be nurtured. Moreover, according to the wife, he (the husband turned into a child) had no sexual rights: the only way in which he could have sex with his wife was through rape. The normative transfer, the exchange of money and maintenance of kin, especially children, through sexual activity, did not take place. Instead, money was transferred from the wife to the husband, among other ways through theft, and the man's status as husband and father regressed to that of an irresponsible child. Moreover, because the man did not earn anything, the woman increasingly experienced problems setting aside some of her money to support her kin in the Eastern Cape.

In addition to the relationship between husband and wife, there was the relationship between the male employer and the female employee. Money, in the form of a salary, was transferred from a man to a woman. This was immediately associated with sexual activity and the woman's labour could not be regarded as a sufficient exchange. Instead, the husband, some of his male friends, and his sister saw sex as the only logical return for the money.

His remark that 'as a proper man' he had to accuse his wife of having an affair seems to indicate the structural components of exchange. She received money from a man and, even if he trusted his wife, he could not neglect the remarks of his neighbours and his sister. They might think that he was not a proper man if he did not take any action.

Case 4

In October 1997, Themba moved to Cape Town to live with Nomahobe (his mother's sister), Zuko (Nomahobe's husband), and Nomahobe's child. Themba desperately needed a job and could, in the meantime,

stay at Nomahobe's place free of charge. To show his appreciation, Themba regularly did chores around the house, such as washing dishes or minding the child. He got up around six o'clock in the morning and took the train or the taxi to town to visit companies, offices, and private homes in search of a job. He had worked at a petrol station in Johannesburg before and hoped to find a similar job in Cape Town, but he was also prepared to work as a cleaner. Themba's hope was that someone would fail to appear for work and that he could step in. After searching for a few months, he found a cleaning job at a shopping centre. At first he worked on a temporary basis, but after a while he had a permanent position and earned around R1,100 a month because of his many hours of overtime.

Once he was earning money, his relationships with women changed. Themba stopped helping out with the household activities. He was reluctant to contribute to the household expenses, as requested by Nomahobe. Sometimes he gave R300 or so of his salary to Nomahobe so she could buy groceries, but frequently he gave less. He then started to borrow money from Nomahobe, but, to her tremendous frustration, he never returned the loans. She was reluctant to ask him straight out for the money, and felt that Themba ought to know that he had to pay his debt and should not pretend that it was a gift. Nomahobe felt that Themba did not show any respect to her and that his newly found job led him to ignore how she had helped him. Nomahobe considered informing her sister about Themba's behaviour, but eventually decided not to. It was difficult to involve her sister, who lived about 1,000 km away, especially because Themba started to send money to his mother. She desperately needed it because she had just finished her prison sentence for killing a customer in her shebeen in Johannesburg. She worked six to seven days a week, ten or more hours a day, as a live-in domestic worker, but she earned little money. Nomahobe knew that her sister was not going to be very enthusiastic about getting involved in the struggle over money because she was relying on her son's remittances.

Quite soon, Themba bought smart clothing and started to see women whom Nomahobe did not allow into her place. Themba loved two different girls and had difficulty deciding between them. He said that both girls loved him and that he had given them a lot of presents, such as a leather jacket, money, and many other things. At one moment, he even gave a girlfriend almost his entire monthly salary. The girlfriend, who felt uncomfortable about this, offered Nomahobe R300. Nomahobe, however, refused and told her that Themba had to give the money directly to her and not via his girlfriend.

Themba was worried that one of the girlfriends would find out about the other. At one point, he had to divide his time and money between three girlfriends, which required considerable management skills. Notwithstanding his skills, one of the women found out about one of the others, which got Themba into trouble.

It was striking how Themba's relations with women changed when he started to earn money. While he was unemployed he had no girlfriends and needed his mother's sister's support. In return, he helped her in the household. Once he started earning money, he was able to have girlfriends and sex and support his mother financially. He stopped most of his household activities and became less supportive toward his aunt. He did not pay for the shelter and food that he received and even started to ask Nomahobe for loans that he never repaid. Themba's earnings made him more independent of his aunt and it was easier for him to ignore his aunt's claims than the claims of his mother as well as the financial burden of his many girlfriends.

These four cases reveal a specific pattern of sex, money, and kin. Cases one and four indicate that intimate relationships between a man and woman primarily concerned sex and money. Thandi only wanted a boyfriend who had sex with her in return for money, and Themba could only afford to have girlfriends when he could give them a substantial part of his income. In cases two and three, problems about money and sex had a disrupting effect on social relationships. Women looked down upon Reverend Magazi for the way he treated them and the way he reversed gender roles: the women supported him while he failed to support them. The conflicts between Nomahobe and her husband centred on the direction of the money flow and its sexual implications. Zuku accused his wife of having an affair with her money-paying boss and raped her. Nomahobe despised the child-like behaviour of her thieving and abusing husband.

Many intimate relations have the potential to give rise to tensions around sex and money. What was remarkable about these instances was that these tensions were intertwined, symbolically as well as practically, through a particular pattern of exchange. The socio-economic and symbolic associations pertaining to the exchange of sex with money were central to the pressures, anxieties, as well as desires concerning intimate relationships. Through exchange, sex and money became suggestively blended, thus showing how difficult it was to establish an enduring relationship. If the man did not give money, he was not going to have a girlfriend. He was like a child or dog, not familiar with the

responsibilities of a man. The comparison between a man and a dog draws on pervasive notions of masculinity. A dog is not circumcised and is, very much like a child, regarded as irresponsible. Because the Zulu, unlike Xhosa men, no longer practice circumcision, the Xhosa can insult Zulu men by calling them dogs. In general, the uncircumcised could be referred to as dogs to highlight the absence of responsibilities. Uncircumcised boys, for example, were not allowed to have sexual intercourse with girls and instead would have to put their penis between the lover's thighs. Only circumcised men were regarded as responsible enough to have sexual intercourse and thus become fathers. Moodie (1988, 242-243), moreover, notes that migrant workers in the gold mines felt that only dogs paid for sex. In contrast to dogs, men give gifts of money in return for sex. This might give the false impression that intimate relations had no emotional component. Of course they did, but affection, desire, and intimacy did not belong to a separate realm from that of the exchange of money. As Barber (1995, 215), based on research of Yoruba texts, argues: '[A]t a more definitely metaphorical or symbolic level, money represented the support of "people" in a further sense: gifts of money very often betokened social acknowledgement or regard . . . [T]he handing-over of money was both an actual transfer of resources and a symbolic act of recognition'.

Tensions arose over access to the limited amount of money to live on. They concerned the dynamic relationship between husband/boyfriend and wife/girlfriend and the support of children. The allocation of money became even more complex, because of the distinction between social and biological parenthood. This distinction increased the number of people who were involved in the negotiation of legitimate claims on money and further complicated the exchange relationships. If, as often is the case, the social father was not the biological father of the child, he was more likely to withhold money from his partner because he did not feel responsible for the child. Furthermore, many children grew up with other relatives, for example the mother's sister, who could have a claim on the money. Agnatic relations, as well as the woman's relatives, expected support, competed over money and used numerous strategies to influence their children and in-laws.

Thus, descent, kinship, and parenthood were closely intertwined with sexual relationships and the flow of money between men and women. The expectation was that men transferred money and presents to their wives and/or girlfriends, who in return had sex with the partner and possibly gave birth to and nurtured a child. Fatherhood had two components. First, there was the biological component of having sex with

a woman in return for gifts and fathering a child. Second, there was the social component of exchanging money with one's wife or girlfriend in return for a legitimate claim on one's blood-related child. Women's sexual desires appeared to be closely related to the gifts they could expect from a particular man. Some male youth explained to me that many peers left school for that reason: they wanted a girlfriend and needed a job to 'afford her'. Nonetheless, many young men still did not have any money. If they had, they were not always willing to give it to a woman, while some women did not want to have sex, even if the man had money.

The absence of some of these anxiety-provoking exchanges was one of the appeals of male-to-male sexuality among African migrants in the mines (Moodie 1988). Miners' sexual relationships with younger men, known as 'wives of the mine', were regarded as far less complicated and more appealing than relations with the women who lived in the nearby townships. The 'wives of the mine' also received gifts for their (sexual) services that were similar to those given to women. The sexual relations among men during their stay at the mines, however, differed from marriages with women significantly concerning:

long-term reproduction, whether that be understood in its narrow sense as child-bearing and rearing, or whether it encompass the entire process that is implied in the Xhosa nation of 'building the umzi'. The responsibilities for conception within the homestead structure and in the consciousness of rural-based men were such, however, that the reproductive sterility of 'mine marriages' were viewed as an advantage: 'At least one can't get pregnant' (Moodie 1988, 254).

Moodie (1988, 255) furthermore noted that "Town women" were not safe . . . Men maintained "town women" through "gifts", monetary or otherwise, in exchange for services, sexual and domestic, whereas the relationship with the "wife of the mine" was contractual, exclusive, an aspect of status and authority.' The 'mine marriages' enabled men to avoid a major cause of conflict and anxiety between men and women.

The living circumstances in the mines were very different from those in Cape Town. Notwithstanding these differences, the way in which men who work in the mines reshape sexual relations is informative about the way in which people think about these relations. Both in the mines and in Cape Town, managing sexual relations in difficult circumstances involves money. In Cape Town, sexual relations between men and women, unlike those at the mines, involved 'blood' because of the possibility of childbirth, which prompted men to continue financial relations. Otherwise there was also the risk that a man ignored financial/paternal demands, either because of lack of money or because it would

have been at the expense of other relations. If women discussed infidelity, it was mostly in financial terms. If a man had another girlfriend, he would be spending his money on her, which increased the financial constraints. Moreover, women expressed their worries about AIDS. In 1998, 23% of the women who visited antenatal clinics were tested HIV positive (Garner 2000, 43). Many women were scared that their husband or boyfriend would become infected, and in turn infect them. The dramatic increase of AIDS in South Africa meant that sexual relations could result in a long-lasting disease and social exclusion from kin and neighbours.

Witch Familiars and Exchange

Certain events, such as unexpected or peculiar deaths and diseases, might be blamed on witchcraft. Witch familiars can be considered collective fantasies: an imaginary—not necessarily homogenised—collection of daydreams, desires and fears (Thoden van Velzen 1995). The existence of witchcraft and witch-familiars explains misfortune caused by jealousy. Jealous people are said to use witchcraft, or rather, witchcraft is an extreme form of jealousy that allows the witch to profit at the expense of others. Jealousy can be about money, children, or consumer products like cars and cellular telephones.

Witchcraft often rears its head when accumulation is an issue because it tends to reveal inequalities and tensions between people who depend on each other, especially kin (Hammond-Tooke 1974, see also Geschiere and Fisiy 1994 on Cameroon). In Austen's (1993, 100) words: 'For cases within Africa . . . a central trope of witchcraft beliefs is the misappropriation of scarce reproductive resources from households or communities for the selfish use of accumulating individuals.' The witch can use witch familiars, such as the *chanti*, the *thikoloshe* and the *mamlambo*, who steal, rape and kill people by drinking their blood (Hammond-Tooke 1974; Hunter 1979; McAllister 1981; Niehaus 1995, 1997). The iconography and collective fantasies of witch familiars show the importance of the exchange of sex, blood, and money.

Chanti

The *chanti* was believed to resemble a snake that the witch kept in her womb or vagina. According to Hunter's (1979, 286) informants, the *chanti* lived in water, rivers for example, while my informants only talked about a witch owning a *chanti*. Again, this might indicate the

historicity of evil forces that moved from the realm of nature to the realm of close relations. A woman once told me about an experience she had when she took the train home from work. Suddenly, a snake was crawling on the floor of the carriage. All the women were shocked and started screaming and every woman tried to assure the others that it was not her snake. Quickly, one of the women spread her legs and the snake jumped back under her skirt.

Before a witch has sex, she will usually remove the snake from her vagina or womb. In order to remove the snake unnoticed, she will tell the man that she needs to go to the toilet. She will take out the snake and hide it somewhere. After having had intercourse, she will return to the toilet in order to fetch the snake.¹¹ It is also said to be possible that the witch leaves the snake in her vagina or womb during intercourse. The snake would open its mouth and the man would unknowingly penetrate the snake's mouth. The snake would collect the semen, which therefore would not enter the woman. This explains why witches seldom become pregnant. In the unlikely event that the witch does become pregnant, the snake will terminate the pregnancy by eating the foetus. The *chanti* is believed to help the witch get wealthy and powerful. Accumulation is only possible if one refuses to share wealth with others. Thus, the witch receives money or other things through sex, but she does not have to share it with a child. The *chanti*, therefore, is having sex, getting wealthy, and without the risk of sharing it with those related by blood, even a child.

Thikoloshe

The *thikoloshe* was a nasty, half human, half ape-like, hairy creature the size of a child. It had a huge sexual organ, only one buttock, and spoke with a lisp. The *thikoloshe* carried a stick in one hand and a charm, which resembled a marble and made him invisible, in the other. It was said that the *thikoloshe* was breastfed by the witch and Hunter notes that the witch had a sexual relation with the *thikoloshe* (1979, 277-278). The *thikoloshe* was said to steal everything, especially money, but some informants said it did not steal coins because they were too heavy. Others, however, disagreed and stated that the *thikoloshe* did steal coins. In addition to theft, the *thikoloshe* attempted to have sex with women while they were fast asleep. In order to prevent the *thikoloshe* from raping them, women sometimes elevated the bed by putting stones under the legs, making it impossible for the small *thikoloshe* to get onto the bed. For the same reason, women sometimes slept in different positions

in order to confuse the *thikoloshe* and make it more difficult for it to rape them.¹² Although the *thikoloshe* was believed to be harmful, stories about it were often accompanied by laughter. The *thikoloshe* was almost child-like in its behaviour and, although it was nasty and malicious, it rarely caused death.

Case 5

Inspired by Hunter (1979, 281), I asked a diviner (*igqirha*) if she had ever heard about a *thikoloshe* being captured. The diviner lived in a small shack made out of metal sheets on a wooden frame in Paula Park, Guguletu. The beads she was wearing and a little altar with some medicine indicated her status. The diviner told me the following story about how she captured a female *thikoloshe* that a witch must have sent to harm someone.¹³

Yes, of course! I got confused, that was in Crossroads [a settlement in Cape Town]. The *Thikoloshe* is full of tricks. One of my trainees, his name is Hlathi, caught it. He was going to the toilet at the back of the house. When he opened the toilet door, the *thikoloshe* tried to cover her vagina with her hands and said: 'Yooo! Do not kill me, I am a girl'. The *thikoloshe* is full of hair but she does have five fingers. Hlathi had a shock and moved backwards and the dogs started barking. The *thikoloshe's* vagina was big! He opened the toilet door again and sent the dogs inside. The *thikoloshe* started to cry and asked him: 'Why are you killing me? I am a girl'. The dogs killed her and Hlathi dragged the *thikoloshe* into his house and kept her there. He cut her open and took all the intestines out and kept them in a dish. He was still taking her apart when an old male *thikoloshe* came to look for his wife. Although the dogs were barking, the *thikoloshe* went to the toilet. To keep the male *thikoloshe* away Hlathi burned some herbs and his dogs chased the *thikoloshe* away.

Hlathi left the female *thikoloshe* locked inside his room and came to my place. He told me what had happened and that he kept body parts of the *thikoloshe* and asked if I wanted some. I accompanied him to his place and asked him to cut out the vagina for me because I wanted it. I was so scared! The vagina was taken out. The *thikoloshe* is short and has only one big buttock. These are no lies, it is true. I used to hear about the *thikoloshe*, it has *ingqithi* [half a finger].¹⁴ I wanted to use the vagina for luck because I want to win. When I arrived at my place in Nyanga East [township in Cape Town], in those brick hostels, I tried to burn the vagina but I think I did not count the yard [I underestimated it]. I placed the vagina on a piece of metal sheet and I do not know what happened. I ran out of the building and became mad. That day the *thikoloshe* defeated me. The fire did not burn the vagina but instead the house was full of smoke and there was a strong wind. The sheet blew away and we all ran out and never saw the vagina again. I do not know where it went to. The *thikoloshe* defeated me. Even now I don't want to see a *thikoloshe* alive. I am good in healing people but *thikoloshe* defeated me. Maybe I can try something if the *thikoloshe* is alive but if it is dead: no way! But I can push him away from a person.

The event focused on the sexual powers of the female *thikoloshe* and by telling the story to me the diviner appeared to convey her powers

to me, as well as their limitations. The diviner wanted to win. She also told me that she could cure cancer and showed me an identity card that proved that she was an officially registered diviner who cooperated with a hospital. Her business seemed to be far from prosperous at the time and she probably saw me as a prospective client.

The diviner attempted to control the power of the *thikoloshe* and use it for her own purpose by cutting out its huge vagina. She wanted to make a powerful medicine out of it. In order to achieve this, she put the vagina on a piece of metal sheet, which might symbolise prosperity and wealth; villagers in the Eastern Cape revealed their wealth by building houses with metal sheets instead of grass roofs. It could also refer to the difficulties of containing sexual organs. Eventually, the destructive powers of the *thikoloshe* defeated her, even after it was cut into pieces.

Mamlambo

The *mamlambo* was believed to originate from the water and, at times, it resembled a mermaid, a snake, a root, or a beautiful woman.¹⁵ The *mamlambo* made its owner wealthy. Someone expressed the great advantages of the *mamlambo* to me when they said: ‘You will have a lot of cattle and five wives who do not fight’. But there was a price to be paid. The seductive *mamlambo* was very dangerous because it only consumed blood. Raymond Bolelitye Mava, a diviner in Guguletu, Cape Town, had his own unfortunate experience. He left the Eastern Cape in order to earn some money in Cape Town and left his wife under his brother’s care. At first he trusted his brother, but during a visit home he noticed that his wife was cooking for his brother, that they had meals together, and that his brother was conspicuously helpful towards his wife. He explained to me how someone could obtain a *mamlambo*: ‘you slaughter a chicken, put its blood on a rope and walk around the house. You add your own blood to the chicken blood and than you have a *mamlambo*’.

He distinguished a male *mamlambo* (*inkuzi*) from a female *mamlambo* as having different powers. The male *mamlambo* made its owner rich and in the process it harmed others. The female *mamlambo* was greedy: she ate children as well as everything else that contained blood. So if a person wanted to get rich, he should keep a male *mamlambo*. The owner would get rich, but at the expense of others. If, however, the primary aim was to harm someone else, one should give that person a greedy female *mamlambo*. Also my research assistant’s father explained

to me that the *mamlambo* only ate blood: 'It will start eating cattle and end up with family or neighbours. People will eventually die and when the owner dies all the money will follow him or her. No one will be able to use the owner's money.' A migrant in Cape Town told me how an old female neighbour told him how a *mamlambo* had killed one of her family members.

Case 6

I heard this many years ago from an old lady who lived in Ezibeleni, the township next to Queenstown in the Eastern Cape where I come from. There was a man who was attracted by a neighbouring girl, but he had to ignore his feelings to go to Johannesburg for work. However, he could not get her out of his mind and consulted a diviner and asked him for help. The diviner said that he needed the girl's picture before he could do anything. The man telephoned his sister in Ezibeleni and told her that he needed a picture of the girl. He received the picture of this beautiful girl in the mail and returned to the diviner. The diviner kept the picture for a long time and told the man to pick it up before he returned home on holiday.

The man anxiously waited until he could get some days off from work and when it was time to go he picked up the picture. The *igqirha* gave him the picture, an envelope, and instructions. The diviner told him that he was not allowed to telephone his family to tell them about his plans to visit them. The envelope contained a piece of herb and the diviner instructed the man to open the envelope upon arrival but that he had to throw the envelope away without looking inside it. He also told him to slaughter a chicken for the girl and to stay with her in the same room. If he followed the diviner's advice, the beautiful woman would be his. The *igqirha* assured the man that he should not worry about meeting her: she would be waiting for him at the train station.

The man went home and, to his great surprise, he found her waiting for him at the station. She was still beautiful, even more so than he remembered her. She had a black birthmark on her cheek that he had not noticed before, but it made her only more attractive. She accompanied him to his home and together they spent a few days making love in the back room. He was very happy but noticed something strange. She did not eat as other people did and once he saw her eat a raw chicken. Apparently, she liked slaughtered meat and blood. This was very strange, but he did not want to disrupt his happiness

by worrying too much. After a few days, he decided he wanted to marry the girl and asked his parents to notify the girl's parents. When his parents arrived at the girl's parents' home they were shocked: they saw the girl making coffee for them! The girl's parents said that she had not left home. She could not have been with their son and there must be a mistake.

But when the man's parents returned home the girl was still there. They were very worried and consulted an *igqirha*. After he heard their story, the *igqirha* explained that they were in a very difficult situation: their son had not been sleeping with the neighbour's daughter but with a *mamlambo*. This *mamlambo* had also caused their children's sickness and the death of someone dear to them. The desperate family asked him to get rid of the *mamlambo*. The *igqirha* could get rid of the *mamlambo* by killing it, but this would mean that their son would also die. If, however, he would not kill the *mamlambo*, and if the *mamlambo* did not have sufficient blood from raw meat, it was going to kill more people. The son decided he was going to die together with the *mamlambo* because he did not want to cause even more misfortune to his family.

In order to kill the *mamlambo*, the family followed the instructions of the diviner. The family and the girl gathered at their house, slaughtered a pig, collected the pig's blood in a bowl and added a medicinal herb that the diviner had given them. The other herb they received was used for making tea and, as the diviner had instructed them, they drank the tea. The tea had a strange effect and it was as if they were dreaming while awake. They saw how the girl started to stretch her body further and further until she looked like a snake with a person's head. She slithered to the pig and started to eat the raw meat, leaving only the pig's skeleton. Even after she had eaten a whole pig she was not satisfied. She turned to the plate that contained the pig's blood that was mixed with the herb. Soon after she drank the blood the girl died. The next day the son, who had brought this creature into their homestead, also died.

In this horrific event, in which the man's desire threatened to destroy his family or himself, particular exchanges feature. The migrant worker fell in love with a woman and searched for help from a diviner who turned out to be a witch. When the migrant returned home, he did not give anything to his family, as he should have, and instead of spending time with them he locked himself up with his girlfriend. Instead of bringing home money and joy, he brought death and disaster. He ignored the obligations towards his family and instead had

sex with a beautiful, desirable woman who was actually a *mamlambo* eager to take blood in return for sex.

The story emphasises economic competition and tension between the man's family and his lover. The sentiment that people conveyed to each other with stories like these is that having a lover is regarded as destructive for the man's kin. People reflected on the many struggles between consanguineal and conjugal responsibilities and how this relates to sexual pleasure. The exchange between the *mamlambo* and the man was vastly different from the normative exchange between man and woman where money stood for enduring consanguineal ties as well as sexual relations that were not at the expense of others. Instead, the collective fantasies revealed anxieties and desires about money, sex, and 'blood', and the tensions between how people would like to have their own lives, how they would like things to be for others, how they ought to be, and how they unfortunately were.

A Pattern of Exchange

The collective fantasies of witchcraft and particularly of witch familiars bring specific patterns of exchange to light. From the criticisms, fears, and comments that people expressed about other's behaviour, a normative form of exchange emerged. In short, this norm was that a husband and wife, or boyfriend and girlfriend, have sex in exchange for money, although this was mystified in daily speech. With this money, the woman could maintain herself, those related by blood, and possibly nurture a child. It could also enable a man to assert fatherhood, seniority, and male authority.

Practice, however, was uncomfortably different. Many men did not give money to a woman and neglected their children. Due to the lack of money, some men could not engage in sexual relationships and the status of many men was undermined. Especially among migrants, many male duties, such as providing an income, as well as ritual and political positions, could not provide any status because they were absent in the city. The high incidence of sexual abuse of women, also within marriage, appeared to be related to the crisis of masculinity, which in turn was partly due to the financial crisis. The spread of AIDS had also increased the incidence of rape, at least among Zulu youth: 'Young people express a desire to share the burden of disease [AIDS], and this is believed possible by spreading the virus to others' (Leclerc-Madlala 1997, 369). Gang rape was one of the ways in which young men tried to spread this disease and assert male domination.

Relations were highly unstable and a constant source of anxiety in which sex, money, and kin were crucial. Many women were raped, many men did not share money, probably because they had too little, and some men were regarded as too destitute to be desirable and could not engage in intimate relationships with women. Fatherhood, in a socio-economic sense, was virtually absent and women had to take care of the children on their own while they tried to disguise the complicated circumstances of an absent or uncaring father. The absence of the father jeopardised the initiation of a boy in his father's clan. Therefore, a boy would often be initiated in his mother's clan by his mother's brother.¹⁶ A man who failed to fulfil his financial obligations towards his wife and/or girlfriend was not considered a man. This, together with the difficulty in controlling the sexual escapades of a husband/boyfriend or wife/girlfriend, created tremendous anxieties.

Tensions about money existed also in the broader realm of kin. Relatives, from both the man's and the woman's side, lived in the poverty-stricken former homelands of Ciskei and Transkei and were dependent on the remittances of their distant, uncontrollable relatives in Cape Town. The migrant worker was only able to accumulate by ignoring at least some of the conjugal or consanguineal obligations. Some believed that the migrant was not willing to fulfil his familial obligations because he preferred to accumulate. Thus, the structural and persistent problems of the capitalist mode of production, such as low wages and unemployment, were interpreted in relational terms.

Witch familiars expressed the tensions and frictions within partnership and kinship, i.e. between those who should be trusted (cf. Geschiere 1997, 11). Exchange was accompanied by ambivalent feelings of friendship and rivalry, reminiscent of the way in which Mauss connected poison with presents in the meaning of the German word *Gift* (Mauss 1954, 62, see also p. 80).

The witch familiars should be regarded as fantasies of the practice and experiences of exchange between man and woman in the context of wider kinship networks. The greedy and selfish witch used the *chanti* (snake) in such a way that sex was not related to procreation but to accumulation. The snake enabled the witch to accumulate by eating the semen or foetus, which made the witch barren. Accumulation was thus possible by having sex without having to take care of kin. The *thikoloshe* stole money and things, and also raped women. However gruesome, this was a reality that many women had to cope with. Moreover, the *thikoloshe* satisfied the witch's sexual desires and was breastfed. The *mamlambo* gave sexual gratification or money to its owner in return for

the blood of kin. Again, sex and accumulation have a strained relation with consanguineal obligations. The migrant worker harmed his kin because he was engaged with a *mamlambo* who was disguised as a desirable woman. The *mamlambo* fed on the migrant's kin by drinking their blood, just as a girlfriend or wife was felt to compete with her lover's agnates over the same restricted money. In this case the competition between conjugal and consanguineal relations could only come to an end by breaking the conjugal bond, which caused the death of their son.

Witch familiars seemed to be a fantastic reflection of the exchanges, desires, and anxieties that people experienced in daily life. The exchange, desires and anxieties of sex, blood—as a symbol of life and consanguineal ties—and money featured in the imaginations of the thieving, blood-drinking, rapist witch familiars that the witch created out of jealousy. Talking about witchcraft was therefore a way to make some sense of the horrors of everyday life.

It has been argued before that the fantasies of witch familiars represent sexual desires (Hammond-Tooke 1974; Niehaus 1995; Wilson 1951). Wilson (née Hunter) considered them to be women's repressed sexual desires that were caused by clan exogamy. Hammond-Tooke interprets the *thikoloshe* as a male fantasy that is part of inter-sexual relations and the man's awareness of feminine deprivation, because 'what more natural than they [women] would take daemon lovers, who not only fulfil their inadequately satisfied sexual needs but can be used to wreak vengeance on male society (Hammond-Tooke 1974, 132). According to Niehaus, both Wilson's and Hammond-Tooke's argument are not sufficiently general to explain the *thikoloshe* in the Lowveld, South Africa, an area where the belief in the *thikoloshe* is relatively new. Niehaus (1995, 526, 529) argues that

[i]t seems more plausible that the *tokolose* symbolizes illicit sexual desires which are very general . . . The apelike *tokolose* present an apt symbol for unrestrained sexual desire . . . Being unable to support dependants, jobless men tend to be single and not to be desired as husbands. Such men are thought to use the *tokolose* to compensate for their lack of sexual fulfilment.¹⁷

It appears, however, that the *thikoloshe*, the *chanti*, and the *mamlambo* represent sexual desire and sexual anxiety. The danger of rape to which women were exposed, as well as the lack of support from a husband or boyfriend, were indications of sexual distress. An example of the anxiety women underwent when their migrant men returned home is provided by research on spirit possession among the Zulu:

'crying hysteria' and nightmares of a sexual nature tended to take place while husbands were at home (i.e. not away on migrant labour) and that there was evidence of strong dissatisfaction on the part of women with their sexual role in marriage (Lee 1969 in Hammond-Tooke 1974, 135 n. 6).

Sex was not only desirable, or not always desirable, but also a cause of anxiety. It could cause anxiety for those who wanted it and did not have it; for those who did not want to have sex with certain people but were physically forced; and for those who could not deal with the financial consequences of not having sex. Experiences, desires, as well as fears that were embedded in relations come to the fore in the intermediary role of the *thikoloshe*, the *chanti*, and the *mamlambo*. At times, people's behaviour resembled the image of the *thikoloshe*: they behaved like dangerous creatures, stealing, raping, murdering, and abusing. While the witch fed the *thikoloshe* and had sexual intercourse with it, the *thikoloshe*, in return, would steal for the witch and rape women.

The collective fantasies of witch familiars, and the centrality of sex, blood and money in these fantasies, provided a discourse on the non-normative exchanges that took place in everyday life. The exchanges among witches, their familiars, and their victims followed the same gruesome pattern of exchange that was often practised and experienced in painful ways. Thus, they were a symbolic and fantastic imitation of the harsh realities of life in a socio-economic, emotional and politically destructive environment. The volatile relations between husband and wife, or boyfriend and girlfriend, as well as the influence these relations in turn had on consanguineal relations, concentrate on the exchange of sex, blood, and money. The disrupted exchanges, and their socio-economic implications, reveal the fragile and insecure conditions under which Xhosa migrants tried to manage their lives. The disturbing and complex dependencies and exchanges of men and women are thus shaped in the fantasies of witch familiars. The fears, as well as the desires, that these witch familiars encompassed reveal much more about the structural problems that men and women were facing than the beast-like iconography of witch familiars might suggest. Some people might be quite pleased if they could be a *thikoloshe* or other witch familiar and engage in illicit sex and accumulation. But others might feel their social relations, especially blood relations, threatened by thieving and raping monsters.

An analysis of the structure of witch familiars and the nexus of sex, blood, and money might seem at odds with an analysis that takes the dynamic processes of globalisation and modernity into account. The

anxieties and desires that people had were related to structural problems within relationships. This was especially true for the witch familiars because they were involved in exchanges between the witch and its victims. The problems that people had were very immediate, not very new, and physical. Their concerns were the maintenance of children, rape, HIV, status, and authority in a destructive environment, to mention just a few. The broad economic and political changes caused structural problems within intimate relations that were embodied in witch familiars. The interdependencies among the Xhosa were entangled with global interdependencies: the images that were broadcast on television tuned into people's desires and fears; colonisation, apartheid, and global inequalities had dramatic consequences for people's livelihoods; the end of the cold war and international boycotts contributed to shifting power balances in South Africa; technological innovations changed work as well as domestic life.

The social configurations of Xhosa migrants cannot be separated completely, at least analytically, from globalisation and modernity. But many of their worries did not express an interaction with the world and concerned their own interdependencies, such as those with kin, people at the workplace, lovers, or neighbours. In post-apartheid South Africa, many new opportunities have emerged for inequality while old social conflicts continued. The witch familiars offered a genre in which the anxieties and desires of interdependencies and the nexus of sex, blood, and money could be expressed and made comprehensible.

Conclusion

In post-apartheid South Africa, witchcraft is an ever-growing problem and the political liberation has not led to liberation from these occult forces. The study of modernity has provided challenging and inspiring insights into the witchcraft discourse, but might be too general an approach. The iconography of witch familiars embedded in exchanges between witches and victims reveals that witchcraft concerns very immediate problems within social relations. These problems concern the nexus of sex, blood, and money.

Violence, economic insecurity, and volatile relations disturbed even the intimate sexual relations between men and women. Large-scale unemployment, labour migration, rape, uprootedness, social constraints by relatives—and agnates in particular—made it impossible for most Xhosa migrants to have the kind of relationship they desired. The nexus of sex, blood, and money revealed that it was very difficult to have a

long-lasting relation with a lover under such conditions. It was rather an exception to find people who were fairly happy about their relationships. For most people, it was impossible to create a home and have satisfactory relationships. The tragedy was that violence and insecurity had penetrated even the most intimate aspects of relationships.

The exchange of sex, blood, and money also featured in witchcraft, and particularly the horrific relations that the witch familiars had with their victims and the witches. The exchange of money and things in intimate relationships were comparable with the exchanges that featured in witchcraft fantasies. This revealed that structural problems within relationships appeared in similarly structured collective fantasies.

Beliefs about witchcraft, and particularly witch familiars, represent modernity to the extent that collective fantasies were about the anxieties and desires embedded in kin relationships and relationships between partners. The entanglement of intimate relations, witchcraft, and the nexus of sex, blood, and money becomes particularly clear through precise ethnographic accounts. Such accounts made it possible to examine the exchanges, anxieties, and desires within the witchcraft discourse to specific exchanges, anxieties, and desires of daily life. For the Xhosa migrants in Cape Town, witchcraft fantasies offered a discourse on sexual desires; the horrible experiences of sexual abuse in the era of AIDS; conflicts caused by the exchange of money and material things between partners who were under severe pressures; as well as the impossibility of having a long-standing relationship. But they also expressed the desire for money and accumulation, a desire for illicit sex without strings of money and blood attached. Instead of how it ought to be, the witch familiars revealed how people experienced their lives, as well as how they, maybe even at the expense of others, hoped to accumulate money or have sex.

NOTES

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2. Lee (1999, 67) shows how, in Langa, the female population decreased between 1965 and 1970 because of the council's policy of making Langa a township for male bachelor migrants. As a consequence, the male to female population ratio rose as high as 6.3:1 in 1970. Ramphele (1989, 399) found that, in the mid-1980s, the male to female ratio among hostel dwellers was 2:1. In the Transkei, the ratio had fallen from 73 men per 100 women in 1946 to 66 men per 100 women in 1974. The decline in the number of men and women in the age group 25-29 years was even stronger: from 36.1 to 28.9 men per 100 women (Clark and Ngovese 1975 in Bundy 1979, 229-230).

3. For Johannesburg, there is more information on women's activities than for Cape Town. One of the few possible activities that generated some income for women was brewing beer. The beer was sold in illegal beer halls called 'shebeens' run by 'shebeen queens'. Here, men could drink beer and sometimes engage in prostitution, which provided the women with some income (Bonner 1990 1995; Longmore 1959, 138-141; Moodie 1988, 244-247). The absence of women in these urban areas, and the engagement of women in prostitution must have been one of the disturbing effects on the intimate relationships between men and women.

4. At the time R1.- was approximately £0.12 or Euro 0.16.

5. See, among others, Comaroff and Comaroff (1990) on South Africa, Geschiere (1983) on Cameroon, and Hutchinson (1996) on Sudan.

6. Bloch and Parry (1989, 24-30) argue for an analysis of short-term cycles of exchange of individual competition and long-term cycles of exchange of social order. In the Xhosa case, it was difficult to categorise all exchanges as cyclical because of inequalities that were embedded in exchange. See Bähre (2000) for a case of short-term cycles among Xhosa migrants that were part of individual competition as well as the creation of social order.

7. See also Comaroff (1985, 101) on the Tshidi. Schmoll (1993, 207) shows that *ci* in Hausa means 'to eat' but could also mean 'to have intercourse'.

8. See Niehaus (2000, 33) for similar connotations among the Northern Sotho.

9. See Mayer and Mayer (1974, 252-269) for the entanglement of money and relations between lovers and spouses among the Xhosa in East London in the late 1950s. They, however, convey a much more harmonious picture of intimate relations.

10. See Meyer (1995) on the nexus of money and blood, as well as sex and money (1999, 195-204) that comes to the fore in witchcraft narratives among the Ewe in Ghana. Ankamah (1999) found similarly that in Ghana sex and money were intimately connected and exchanged. In his study of collective credit arrangements in Cameroon, Rowlands (1995, 117) found: 'Since debts have primordial values, not only can they not be discharged, they must constantly be extended with the transmission of substances of all kinds in exchange (blood, semen, witchcraft substance, money).'

11. It would be interesting to analyse how this belief relates to the use of contraceptives.

12. In his research on witchcraft in Green Valley, South Africa, Niehaus finds that the witch can assume the shape of a witch familiar, such as a *tokolose* (Niehaus 1997, 254).

13. To my knowledge, *thikoloshe* was mostly male and I did not find a reference to a female *thikoloshe* in the anthropological literature.

14. This refers to the Xhosa custom of cutting off a part of a child's, mostly a girl's, finger to cure her or establish ancestral protection. The *ingqithi* refers to the human features of the *thikoloshe*.

15. See Niehaus (1995) for the transforming capacities of the *mamlambo* in Green Valley, South Africa.

16. See also Jones (1998) who suggests that Xhosa kinship is in practice bilateral, although patrilineage tended to be emphasised.

17. The spelling varies in different languages.

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