Uyajola 9/9 uTata'kho: Missionaries and Black Masculinities

Siyabulela Tonono[1]

[1]SHORT BIO
Siyabulela Tonono is Justice and Service Field Officer within the Mission Unit of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa. His role within the Mission Unit is creating community awareness and response programmes within the Methodist Church on Gender-based violence.

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION
Mission Unit, Methodist Church of Southern Africa;
siyabulela@mco.org.za

ORCID
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9469-6296

ABSTRACT
This article argues that contemporary Black masculinities in South Africa have been shaped, in various ways, by nineteenth-century missionary depictions of masculinity. Furthermore, yesteryear depictions by missionaries problematised Black masculinities and portrayed African men as uncivilised brutes with no sense of morality. The article presents an assessment of contemporary depictions of Black men on the DSTV shows, *Uyajola 9/9* and *uTata'kho*, in relation to missionary depictions of Black men. Anchored in decolonial thought, this analysis seeks to unpack the problematised Black masculinities that were reinvented in mass media.

Introduction

The Black man's body has been the subject of fascination and research within European scholarship since the seventeenth century. The European world came to know of Africa through the writings of explorers and missionaries of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The accounts of explorers and missionaries, with their inherent distortions of Black people and their cultures have had a significant impact on African historiography and the self-consciousness of Black Africans.[1] Christian missionaries depicted Black men as a problem that needed the remedy of Christian civilisation. Hence, scholars like Ratele call for an African situated psychology of men and boys that locates Black African men within their proper social, economic, and political realities and experiences.[2] Ratele contends that contemporary studies in masculinities reproduce "colonial and alienating notions of Africa and Black African boys, men and masculinities."[3]

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[1] Ali A. Mazrui, "European Explorations and Africa's Self-discovery," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 7, no.4 (1969): 665-8.

[2] Kopano Ratele, "African (situated) psychologies of boys, men and masculinities," *Psychology in Society* 54, no.10 (2017): 10-28.

[3] Ratele, "African (situated) Psychologies," 12.

It was inherent in the missionary ideology that "savage" Black men could only be saved from their savagery through "sound Christian instruction." Thus, their "heathen institutions" became a prime target for missionary work.[4] Within the body of knowledge on Black masculinities, there is a problematisation of manhood, with a focus on researching Black men's practices in order to change them.[5] A critical engagement on masculinities has been driven by the contextual African realities of the HIV pandemic and its nexus with gender-based violence.[6] Men's studies, as a field, have realised the value of working with men and boys. Black men and their masculine practices have been presented as a problem that must be transformed in light of HIV and gender-based violence in South Africa. The purpose of the article is to critically reflect on the ways in which Christian missionaries of the nineteenth century depicted Black African men and how the media shows, *Uyajola 9/9* and *uTatakho*, continue to reproduce these depictions.

Maluleke contends that religion, and its relation to masculinities, is constantly (re)mediated through media platforms.[7] In his view, "sacred texts" are not only to be found in the Bible or Quran, but laced across various media, including television. Given the absence of phenomenological studies on masculinities and their connection to religion, the focus on *Uyajola* 9/9 and *uTatakho* presents the opportunity to better understand the complexities of African masculinities. The phrase "uyajola uTatakho" is a play on words referring to two television programmes – *Uyajola 9/9* and *uTatakho* – that have captured the imaginations of many South Africans. Loosely translated, it means "your father is having an affair." The television shows are aired on the subscription-based

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[4] Mazrui, "European Explorations," 671. Heathen institutions were the practices and customs of Black people that missionaries classified as being of pagan origin and at odds with what they considered as being sound Christian teachings. Such practices include African Rainmaking, Lobola, and Manhood and Womanhood rituals of initiation.

[5] Kopano Ratele, "Studying Men in Africa Critically," in *Masculinities in Contemporary Africa*, ed. Egodi Uchendu (Dakar: Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa, 2008), 31; Ezra Chitando, "Religion and Masculinities in Africa: Opportunities for Africanization" in *African Traditions in the Study of Religion, Diaspora and Gendered Societies: Essays in Honour of Jacob Kehinde Olupona*, eds. Afe Odegame, Ezra Chitando and Bolaji Bateye (Surrey: Ashgate, 2013), 137; Kopano Ratele, "Of what Value is Feminism to Men?" *Communicatio: South African Journal for Communication Theory and Research* 39, no.2 (2013): 256.

[6] Chitando, "Religion and Masculinities," 137.

[7] Tinyiko Maluleke, "Of Wounded Killers and 'failed men:' Broadening the Quest for Liberating African Masculinities," *Journal of Gender and Religion in Africa* 24, no.1 (2018): 46-9.

channels of DSTV, Mzansi Magic and Moja Love, respectively. Both shows fall within the genre of reality television and are said to be mirroring the realities of ordinary people. The central motifs of the two shows are on paternity disputes and sexual promiscuity.

This article juxtaposes the depictions of Black men in the nineteenth-century South African missionary discourses against the depictions of Black men on the television shows, *uTatakho* and *Uyajola 9/9*. Through this juxtaposition two notions emerge: first, the missionary ideology defined Black masculinities, based on stereotypes that originated in the European imagination, while Black masculinities were thought of as a social problem; second, both shows depict Black men as irresponsible hypersexual beings. This analysis is grounded in the decolonial thought and contributes to ideas of creating more nuanced depictions of Black men in the South African media, beyond the stereotypical projection of these men. Depictions of Black men that recognise the multiplicity of factors that have shaped Black masculine subjectivities, enable narra-tives of Black men that go beyond their stereotypical images and masculinities.

The discussion starts with a brief exploration of decolonial thought and its relation to masculinities in Africa. Following that, it unpacks the South African missionary depictions of African cultural practices of polygamy and circumcision, as well as the implications of a missionary ideology on Black masculinities. The article turns to address the depiction of Black men on the television shows that serves as its case study and provides the context for the juxtaposition that is central to this article. Last, a reflection on the notion that decolonial thought can assist in delinking Black masculinities from colonial depictions of Black men in South Africa, is presented.

Decoloniality and Masculinities

Colonialism defined Black men as savage brutes and problematised their male dress code, marriage customs, and manhood rites of passage. Missionaries in South Africa sought to civilise them by abolishing practices that they considered as heathen institutions. Studies of Black men were not premised on understanding them in their social, economic, and political contexts, but on changing their customs to fit European standards. Ethnographic studies on Black men were not concerned with the social, political, and economic contexts out of which Black masculine practices emerged. Black masculinities continued to be problematised

and presented as needing transformation, while they have not been understood in light of the socio-economic factors that produced them. This can also be called the "villainisation of black men."[8] A "delinking" from such epistemological traditions offers one the opportunity to understand Black masculinities that are centred on the lived realities of Black men.[9] In this context, delinking can be understood as a process of moving away from the epistemic assumptions that are found in all areas of knowledge established in the Western world.

Decolonial thought can be summarised as being a radical anti-systemic intellectual, political, and ethical movement that rejects all forms of fundamentalism.[10] Ndlovu-Gatsheni isolates three components of decolonial thought, namely "coloniality of power," "coloniality of being," and "coloniality of knowledge."[11] Coloniality of power analyses the skewed global power patterns that stem from European colonialism.[12] "Coloniality of being" focuses on the systematic denial of the humanity of the targets of colonialism, while "coloniality of knowledge" challenges the systematic repression of ideas, beliefs, and images of colonised people.[13] It is helpful to understand the idea of coloniality as "the patterns of power that emerged from colonialism, but continue to define culture, labour, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production well beyond colonialism."[14] It is "a power structure and epistemological design that perpetuates skewed global power relations, while claiming the universality of Euro-Northern epistemologies."[15] Ultimately, decolonial thought is a "process of ontological restoration of enslaved, colonised and exploited peoples, and aims to recognise the epistemologies that coloniality

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[8] Refiloe Makama, Rebecca Helman, Neziswa Titi and Sarah Day, "The Danger of a Single Feminist Narrative: African-centred Decolonial Feminism for Black Men," *Agenda* (2019): 3.

[9] Cf. Walter D. Mignolo, "DELINKING," *Cultural Studies* 21, no.2-3 (2007): 449-514.

[10] Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, "Metaphysical Empire, Linguicides and Cultural Imperialism," *English Academy* Review 35, no.2 (2018): 98.

[11] Ndlovu-Gatsheni, "Metaphysical Empire," 103-7.

[12] Walter, D. Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options* (London: Duke University Press, 2012); Ndlovu-Gatsheni, "Metaphysical Empire," 103-7.

[13] Nelson Maldonado-Torres, "On the Coloniality of Being: Towards the Development of a Concept," *Cultural Studies* 21, no.2-3 (2007): 251-7; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, "Metaphysical Empire," 103-7.

[14] Maldonado-Torres, "On the Coloniality of Being," 247.

[15] Sabelo, J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, "Decoloniality in Africa: A Continuing Search for a New World Order," *Australasian Review of African Studies* 36, no.2 (2015): 31.

deemed non-existent."[16] Such an epistemological stance gives recognition to the existence of marginalised masculinities such as Black masculinities, and enables Black men to theorise about their own lived realities, as opposed to fulfilling a mandate of coloniality.

A central notion in the "coloniality of being" is the "Manichean misanthropic scepticism," addressing the very being of colonised people.[17] It doubts their humanity and frees the Western world from acknowledging the violence that coloniality has inflicted on the colonised people. Robert Moffat asserts that "we have known beings so low a grade, that at one time it was seriously questioned whether they belong to the human family."[18] Moffat's assertions highlight the inherent Manichean misanthropic scepticism in the nineteenth-century South African missionary thinking. If the colonised people are not human, then they are excluded from the fundamental rights of human beings. The implication of the Manichean misanthropic scepticism on Black masculinities is best described by Bell Hooks when she argues:

> Racist sexist iconography in Western culture during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries depicted black males as uncivilized brutes without the capacity to feel complex emotions or the ability to experience either fear or remorse. According to racist ideology, white-supremacist subjugation of the black male was deemed necessary to contain the dehumanized beast. This perspective allowed racist folks to engage in extreme psychological denial when it came to assuming accountability for their ruthless and brutal dehumanization of black men. [19]

The Western knowledge production has therefore defined Black masculinities and their depictions. Colonialism defined the boundaries of Black masculinities in order to fulfil its colonial mandate. Mamdani asserts that "the settler defined and pinned the native."[20] Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century ethnographic research laid the foundation for African subjectivities and consequently outlined the shape of Black masculinities

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16 Siyabulela Tonono, "Crafting a Decolonial Economic Order for Re-Afrikanisation in the Context of South Africa," *Africanus: Journal of Development Studies* 48, no.1 (2018): 3.

17 Maldonado-Torres, "On the Coloniality of Being," 245.

18 Robert Moffat, *Missionary Labours and Scenes in Southern Africa* (New York: Thomas Carter, 1843), 148.

19 Bell Hooks, *We Real Cool: Black men and Masculinity* (London: Routledge, 2003), 44.

20 Mahmood Mamdani, *Define and Rule: Native as Political Identity* (London: Harvard University Press, 2012), 30.

in Africa.[21] The thrust behind the ethnographic research was premised on collecting evidence to back up what Europeans regarded as "disparities between civilised and enlightened Europe and the barbaric and dark continent of Africa."[22] Wesleyan missionary, William Shaw,[23] described and defined the Xhosa society as follows:

> The whole native population on the coast is separated into several large divisions which may be called "nations." Each of these nations is again subdivided into bodies of people, which may be called "tribes" and these again into yet smaller divisions, that may be appropriately called "clans." Now every nation, and every tribe of each nation, and every clan of each tribe, has its own distinctive name.

The European knowledge production was characterised by ethno-centrism from which a fixation emerged with the tribe as the basis of social identity in the African society. Missionaries were central in undermining the ontology of Black people through their civilising efforts.[24] Post-apartheid South Africa has continued to recognise and entrench the same colonial tribal categories and it is in the retribalisation of the contemporary South Africa that all South African Black men have been depicted as "rampant, warrior-like, heterosexuals."[25]

Among the structural nodes of coloniality is a "global gender/sex hierarchy that privileges males over females and European patriarchy over other forms of gender configurations and sexual relations."[26] Decolonial thought is a response to the oppressive European ideals that have been cast on non-Europeans emerging from coloniality. It is an attempt by the non-existent world to "free itself from the arsenal of complexes that has been developed by the colonial environment."[27] Decolonial thought recognises that coloniality was not only racialised, but

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21 Mamdani, *Define and Rule,* 55.
22 Egodi Uchendu, "Are African Males Men? Sketching African Masculinities," in *Masculinities in Contemporary Africa*, ed. Egodi Uchendu (Dakar: Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa, 2008), 2.
23 William Shaw, *Story of my Missions in South-Eastern Africa* (London: Hamilton, Adams and Co., 1860), 397.
24 Chabani N. Manganyi, *Being Black in the World* (Johannesburg: Raven Press, 1973), 40.
25 Kopano Ratele, "Masculinities without Tradition," *Politikon* 40 no.1 (2013): 136.
26 Mignolo, "*The Darker Side of Modernity*," 18.
27 Frantz Fanon, *Black Skins, White Masks* (London: Pluto Press, 2008), 19.

also fundamentally gendered, and thus offered the sufficient critical tools for the analysis being presented in this article.[28]

Delinking is an epistemological shift away from the structures of modernity and allows for critical theories to emerge from the vestiges of languages, categories of thought, and subjectivities that modernity has negated, such as Black masculinities.[29] The negation of Black masculinities can only be overcome through a decolonial shift: "Delinking means to change the terms and not just the content of the conversation."[30] The terms of the conversation on Black masculinities have been defined by the colonial forms of knowledge production and epistemologies of modernity. Delinking shifts the focus to the subjects of the conversation: Black men. It is a mode of knowledge production that presents opportunities to understand Black men differently, opening up a variety of understandings of Black men that are not confined to the binary logic of modernity.

Clothing Black Body

The naked Black male body was the first site of offense and depravity in the missionary discourses. The smearing of the red ochre mixed with animal fats, which was a common practice within the AmaXhosa, BaTswana and Khoi, became symbolic of degradation and primitiveness. The trope of the "greasy native" arose from the practice of smearing ochre.[31] The Xhosa attire was a leather "kaross," which was mostly hung over the shoulders in accordance with the weather. William Shaw found the Xhosa attire "excessively disagreeable."[32] Moffat described the Tswana attire as "disgusting."[33] Missionaries placed Westernised clothing as a material symbol of conversion to Christianity.[34] Dress is a matter of cultural identity, and the need to clothe converts can easily be understood as the stripping of one identity to be adorned in another

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[28] Floretta Boonzaaier and Taryn van Niekerk (eds.), *Decolonial Feminist Community Psychology* (Cham: Springer, 2019), 4.

[29] Mignolo, "DELINKING," 457.

[30] Mignolo, "DELINKING," 459.

[31] John L. Comaroff and Jean Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier*, Vol. 2 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 224-7.

[32] Shaw, *Story of my Missions*, 407.

[33] Comaroff and Comaroff, *Dialectics of Modernity*, 226.

[34] Norman Etherington, "Outward and Visible Signs of Conversion in Nineteenth-Century Kwazulu-Natal," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 32, no.4 (2002): 423.

cultural identity.[35] European clothing became an outward symbol of civility in the South African missionary thinking.

Dress produces masculinities and the process of dressing Black men in Western forms of clothing was an imposition of Western masculinities on Black bodies.[36] The process of civilising Black men created a "new order of needs" among the Black converts, which could only be fulfilled through colonial merchants.[37] The clothing of the Black male body created a new material culture where their success was related to their European dress.[38]

Dominant forms of Black masculinities in South Africa continue to operate from a prism of "commodity capitalism" where a successful masculinity is bound with clothing labels.[39] Through the post-apartheid political economy and the emergence of a successful masculinity being tied to the acquisition of consumer goods, Ratele argues that Black men find a way of escaping their historic and contemporary marginality. This consumerist form of masculinity is sold through the media and television programmes and is one of the discursive currents that challenges the development of "socially conscious and egalitarian masculinities."[40]

The fact that a jacket and hat are part of modern-day Xhosa rites of passage into manhood, demonstrates the significant gendered consequences of missionary dress codes upon Black masculinities. Furthermore, it locates the development of consumerist forms of masculinities at their source, within a South African missionary ideology. A key conduit of such masculine identities is television programmes.

Civilising Black Masculinities

Black African rites of passage into manhood were deemed "heathen" practices in missionary thought. Circumcision, along with lobola and polygamy, were the vices of heathen life which stood in opposition to the

[35] Ali A. Mazrui, *The Politics of Gender and the Culture of Sexuality: Western, Islamic, and African Perspectives* (Lanham, MD: UPA, 2014).

[36] Kopano Ratele, *Liberating Masculinities* (Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2016), 29.

[37] Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, *Of Revolution and Revelation: Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa*, Vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

[38] Manganyi, *Being Black in the World*, 32.

[39] Ratele, *Liberating Masculinities*, 76-8.

[40] Ratele, *Liberating Masculinities*, 78.

Christian faith that needed eradication if Black men were truly to be civilised.[41] Commenting on *Bogwera*, the SeTswana rite of passage into manhood, Moffat describes it as a "prodigious barrier to the Gospel."[42] Molema describes the custom in the following way:

> This *bogwera* of the Bantu was analogous to the assumption of the *toga virilis* of the ancient Romans, for the youth who had undergone the rites was recognised as a man, having before this been a boy. The young men who were undergoing the rites were known as *makoloanyane* among BaTswana, and *abakhweta* among the Xhosa-Zulu peoples. They were isolated for a period of three months, being supervised in the meantime by antiquarians, who lectured them on the tribal traditions and customary laws, trained them to despise danger and never to show the feelings of surprise, fear, or pain – it was the place of women to do that – but, above all, their duty was to honour and protect the supreme chief, and to put the interests of the tribe before their own personal interests. [43]

Circumcision was not only a means for boys to enter into manhood, but through this custom, Black boys were taught the laws, customs, and traditions of their peoples. The process incorporated boys into the polity of their community and made them eligible for marriage. A function of the rite of passage was to ensure that communal values were always placed ahead of individual interests. Through the custom, the boys gained their legal, political, and social status. A direct attempt by Christian missionaries to eradicate the custom, was an attempt at eradicating the African being in the same manner that the Manichean misanthropic scepticism eradicates the being of colonised peoples.

In the missionaries' minds, "[t]here are two ways and two rites: the way of God's Word and the way of heathenism; the rite of baptism and the rite of circumcision. Let all give up the one and adopt the other."[44] Such thinking has been a constant feature of the missionary practice in South

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[41] Richard Elphick, *The Equality of Believers: Protestant Missionaries and the Racial Politics of South Africa* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012), 77; Stephen Volz, *African Teachers on the Colonial Frontier: Tswana Evangelists and their Communities During the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2011), 40-1; Comaroff and Comaroff, *Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa,* 264.

[42] Moffat, *Missionary Labours*, 173.

[43] Silas M. Molema, *The Bantu Past and Present: An Ethnographical and Historical Study of the Native Races of South Africa* (Edinburgh: W. Green and Son Co., 1920), 122.

[44] John Mackenzie, *Ten Years North of the Orange River: A Story of Everyday Life and Work among the South African Tribes from 1859 to 1869* (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1871), 378.

Africa. The Methodist Church of Southern Africa only removed its policy on "Heathen Customs and Christian Institutions" from its statutes as late as 1991.[45] The Heathen Customs policy emerged in the nineteenth century when Wesleyan missionaries needed a stance on how to deal with children from non-Christian households, women in polygamous marriages, and the participation of church members in circumcision. The policy was a directive for the Wesleyan missionaries on how to address these issues. Such kinds of policies are indicative that, within a nineteenth-century missionary thinking, African forms of masculinities were incompatible with their understanding of the Christian faith. To be a Black man, in the ways that these men understood themselves, was demonised.

Problematising Polygamy

Missionary depictions of Black men presented polygamy as the source of all evils and inconsistent with Christian beliefs.[46] The Wesleyan missionary, Stephen Kay, described it as "the most formidable obstacles with which the Gospel has to contend, and constitutes a prolific source of many other evils."[47] Missionaries required men in polygamous marriages to divorce their wives and be left with one before they could gain church membership. King Sechele of the BaKwena was required to "discard" his wives so as to be baptised by David Livingstone.[48] Similarly, Chief Kama, the first AmaGqunukhwebe chief to convert to Christianity, rejected the wives that were given to him as gesture of strengthening diplomatic ties, on the grounds of professing Christianity.[49] To be a man, in missionary thinking, meant to have only one wife. Accepting the

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[45] Methodist Church of Southern Africa, *The Laws and Discipline* (Cape Town: Methodist Publishing House). The *Laws and Discipline* is the constitution of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa and they only removed the Policy on Heathen Customs in its seventh edition, which was published in 1991.

[46] Elphick, "The Equality of Believers", 74-7; Diana Jeater, "Masculinity, Marriage and the Bible: New Pentecostal Masculinities in Zimbabwe," in *Masculinities under Neoliberalism*, eds. Andrea Cornwall, Frank G. Karioris and Nancy Lindisfarne (London: Zed Books, 2017), 166-8.

[47] Stephen Kay, *Researches in Caffraria: Describing the Character, Customs and Moral Condition of the Tribes inhabiting that part of Southern Africa* (London: John Mason, 1833), 185.

[48] Edwin Lloyd, *Three Great African Chiefs* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1895), 203.

[49] Joan Millard, "One Man's Experience of Colonialism: The Story of Chief Kama," in *Orality, Memory and the Past: Listening to the Voices of Black Clergy under Colonialism and Apartheid*, ed. Philippe Denis (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2000), 139-42.

gospel meant for Black men that "the very day they give their consent to receive the Gospel, they that moment must give up their political authority, their manner of dress, marriage, circumcision."[50]

The problematisation of polygamy had two ramifications on the depiction of a Black man. The first ramification was that it ignored the fact that polygamy was limited to affluent Black men and exaggerated the widespread nature of the practice. Even though polygamy may have been common custom, it was only limited to wealthy men that could afford the responsibilities that came with it.[51] The reason that many missionaries exaggerated the prevalence of polygamy is because nineteenth-century missionaries mostly engaged with men of African royalty. Essentially, the Black man was depicted as part of a cohort of men who were all polygamous.

The second ramification is related to the association of polygamy with sexual immorality. The dominant missionary view was that this practice emerged from the Black men's hypersexuality. The missionary, Dudley Kidd, described Black men as "self-indulgent and brimming with sensuality, caring mostly for oxen, grain for beer and women."[52] Kidd was the originator of the theory of "pubertal degeneration." According to his theory, a Black person's brain began to degenerate upon reaching puberty. He attributed the degeneration to "[t]he everlasting talk and thought about matters of sex draw[ing] off the imagination from more healthy topics."[53] Needless to say, Kidd's racist theory morphed into an apartheid ideology that locked Black men into "interlocking systems of oppression" and a perpetual state of boyhood.[54] It is important to note the manner in which the missionary ideology depicted Black men as hypersexuals that would do anything to satisfy their sexual desires and thus normalised the practice of polygamy. Kay's comment on polygamy evinces this when he writes:

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[50] Volz, *African Teachers*, 40. The quote is attributed to James Read of the London Missionary Society in 1817 when he commented on the common view among BaTlhaping on the introduction of mission stations.

[51] Comaroff and Comaroff, *Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness*, 132; Elphick, *Equality of Believers*.

[52] Elphick, *Equality of Believers*, 78.

[53] Dudley Kidd, *Kaffir Socialism and the Dawn of Individualism: An Introduction to the Study of the Native Problem* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1908), 239.

[54] Simphiwe I. Dube, "Race silence: the oversignification of black men in 'the crisis of/in masculinities' in post-apartheid South Africa," *Acta Academia* 48, no.1 (2016): 85.

> By the Chiefs this abominable practice is carried to an incredible extent. Independently of the great number of women whom they regularly acknowledge as wives, their concubinage is altogether unlimited; for whenever the Kaffer (sic.) monarch hears of a young woman possessing more than ordinary beauty, and at all within his reach, he unceremoniously sends for her or fetches her himself; nor does anyone dare to question the propriety of his conduct. Seldom or never does any young girl, residing in his immediate neighbourhood, escape defilement after attaining the age of puberty.[55]

The trope went from "all Black men are polygamous" to "all Black men are hypersexual." These depictions fit neatly within the colonial thinking of modernity. With this insatiable lust in mind, the "mythical depiction of the black man's penis" becomes a threat and "the black man is depicted as an aggressive sexual beast who desires to rape women."[56]

The missionary depictions of Black men and their customs could not stand the test of scrutiny as the missionary was often without a response when challenged by Black men. In relation to circumcision, Black men questioned how the missionaries condemned the practice, while the Bible was littered with reference to that practice. Moremi once questioned Rev. Lloyd as to why the missionary forbade circumcision, whereas Abraham was told to circumcise his descendants.[57] Similarly, Moffat could not respond when Sechele "challenge[d] that he explain to BaKwena why the missionaries had made him discard all but one of his wives, while Solomon and David had so many wives and concubines, and were still 'men after God's own heart'."[58] Contrary to the missionary belief, Molema contends that in fact, great fidelity existed between Black African men and women and that polygamy discouraged lust within their communities.[59] The direct attack on Black African customs was not premised on biblical teachings, but on racist and Eurocentric views of Black masculinities.

The missionary depictions of Black men presented them as being problematic hypersexuals that need the transformation prescribed by

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[55]   Kay, *Researches in Caffraria*, 186-7.
[56]   Maldonado-Torres, "Coloniality of Being," 255.
[57]   Comaroff and Comaroff, *Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness*, 245. Moremi was the Chief of BaTawana, which is part of the Tswana kingdom.
[58]   Mutero Chirenje, "Church, State, and Education in Bechuanaland in the Nineteenth Century," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 9, no.3 (1976): 410.
[59]   Molema, *The Bantu Past and Present*, 131.

their missionary's ideology. African masculinities were considered as a "manifestation of pathological irresponsibility, hatred and hedonism."[60] We now turn to the modern-day media depictions of Black men.

Uyajola uTatakho

uTatakho's producers – ConnectTV – describe the television production as a "docu-reality show that explores the contentions that arise out of the issue of paternity."[61] The show is premised on DNA testing of willing participants that have paternity disputes. Each episode involves new participants as they share their paternity dispute. Generally speaking, a participant comes to the show alleging that person X is their father, and then the show's producers organise a paternity test of all parties and the show ends with a revelation of the paternity test results.

With an approximate viewership of 650,000 people, the show commands a significant audience on South African television.[62] It has been broadcast on the Mzansi Magic channel for seven seasons since 2015. *UTatakho* has already captivated and maintained an audience interest for quite a few years. With 60% of South African children having absent fathers, it is not surprising that the contentious issue of paternity is captivating to South African audiences.[63] It is, however, interesting to note that all the participants who have settled their paternity dispute on the show are Black people. The paternity that has been in question has been that of Black men.

Historically, Black men in South Africa have been associated with negative stereotypes. A study examining representations of masculinity in the South African English language print media, found that the dominant ideas about masculinity remained strongly intertwined with ideologies of race and continued to produce long-standing racial hierarchies that positioned White masculinities on the "normative moral centre"

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[60] Rob Pattman and Deevia Bhana, "Black Boys with Bad Reputations," *Alternation* 13, no.6 (2006): 269.

[61] ConnectTV, "Utatakho", https://www.connect.tv/utatakho.

[62] Broadcasting Research Council of South Africa, "June 2019 Top TV Programmes," https://brcsa.org.za/june-2019-top-tv-programs/.

[63] Johan Fourie, "Why are there so many single mothers?" *Fin24*, 28 September 2018, https://www.fin24.com/Finweek/Opinion/why-are-there-so-many-single-mothers-20180926.

and Black masculinities on the "potentially deviant periphery."[64] Current understandings of masculine identity are shaped by representations, narratives, and stereotypes of the past.[65] When we understand the racialised hierarchies of South African masculinities in their historical context, the association of Black men with negative stereotypes as portrayed in *uTatakho*, are the continuities of patterns of power that emerged from colonialism and still define images of Black men in the media.

UTatakho has featured prominent Black men, Bonginkosi "Zola" Dlamini and Nimrod Nkosi as its hosts. Zola, being a kwaito musician and an actor, has featured in some of South Africa's leading productions, like *Yizo Yizo 2* and *Highjack Stories*, while his music has also featured in the soundtrack of the Oscar Academy Award winning production, *Tsotsi*. Zola's success as an actor and musician lies in his "ability to project the image of an authentic gangster/thug/tsotsi."[66] To South African audiences, Zola has an on-screen image that is already connoted with violence and criminality. To draw upon such an image and connote it with notions of paternity disputes and absent fatherhood, points to a layering of Black masculinities in various negative stereotypes. Essentially, Black men are a prominent feature in the show, not only as the participants, but also as the "face" of the show in its presenters, and are layered in negative Black stereotypes.

The use of the language of isiXhosa in naming the show also suggests that the targeted audience for the show are Black South Africans. Representations on paternity disputes on the show squarely locate Black men as being the only source of paternity disputes. The absence of other races of men on the show, presents Black men as sole proprietors in the business of absent fathers. It hones in on a "narrow and dehumanising

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[64] Erez Levon, Tommaso Milani and E. Dimitris Kitis, "The Topography of Masculine Normativities in South Africa," *Critical Discourse Studies,* 14 no.5 (2017): 526-7; Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Modernity*, 19.

[65] Jane Stadler, "Tsotsis, Coconuts and Wiggers: Black Masculinity and Contemporary South African Media," in *Power, Politics and Identity in South African Media*, eds. Adrian Hadland, Eric Louw, Simphiwe Sesanti and Herman Wasserman (Pretoria: HSRC Press, 2008), 348.

[66] Adam Haupt, "Black Masculinity and the Tyranny of Authenticity in South African Popular Culture," in *Power, Politics and Identity in South African Media*, eds. Adrian Hadland, Eric Louw, Simphiwe Sesanti and Herman Wasserman (Pretoria: HSRC Press, 2008), 382.

narrative of Black men as absent fathers."[67] The show furthermore depicts Black men as irresponsible fathers.

The simplistic caricatures of Black masculinities and negative stereo-types of Black men as irresponsible and absent fathers in the show, do not reveal the complexities around notions of fatherhood and absent fatherhood in South Africa. The settler-colonial capitalist system has, for generations, required Black men to abandon their families to serve settler-colonialist interests in urban centres of South Africa, and in the process dismembered Black family structures.[68] The legacies of the colonial disruption of Black family structures have continued into the twenty-first-century South Africa.[69] Such a historical context has, thus, normalised the absence of fathers in Black communities. The depictions of Black men on *uTatakho* ignore the ways in which such continuities of colonialism and apartheid rupture on Black family structures which are manifest in the current South Africa.

Patriarchal notions of fatherhood put much emphasis on economic provision as an essential aspect of fatherhood. Occupational and income attainment form part of the burdens of patriarchal notions of fatherhood upon which many men form their masculine identities.[70] With this, coupled with the economic marginalisation that Black men are faced with, many of them become unable to fulfil the patriarchal social responsibilities that are associated with fatherhood. The general structure of the show merely sensationalises the paternity disputes without much appreciation of the social and economic realities of the men featured on the show. The representations of Black men on *uTatakho* do not critically engage with their economic marginalisation in how it portrays them.

Uyajola 9/9 is a show that airs on Moja Love on Sunday evenings and is considered to be a South African rendition of the popular American

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[67]   Makama *et al.*, "The Danger of a Single Feminist Narrative," 4.
[68]   Siyasanga M. Tyali, "Dismembered by Colonialism: On Nadine Gordimer's July's People and its Entanglement with the Dynamics of a Black Family Structure under Apartheid South Africa," *Imbizo: International Journal of African Literary and Compa-rative Studies* 9, no.1 (2018): 2.
[69]   Mamphela Ramphele and Linda Richter, "Migrancy, Family Dissolutions and Fatherhood" in *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*, eds. Linda Richter and Robert Morrell (Pretoria: HSRC Press, 2006), 78-80.
[70]   Kopano Ratele, "Analysing Males in Africa: Certain Useful Elements in Considering Ruling Masculinities," *African and Asian Studies* 7, no.4 (2008): 529.

programme, *Cheaters*. The show aired its first episode in May 2019 and has received a massive following on social media platforms. The twitter hashtag #Uyajola99 has been among the most trending topics in South Africa on Sunday evenings, when new episodes of the show air. The central theme of the show is that a person who suspects infidelity on the part of their partner, contacts the show in writing, whereupon the case is investigated and filmed. Each episode of the show features new participants being investigated for their romantic infidelity.

In all the episodes that have aired so far, all the parties that have been involved, were Black. Black men have been closely related to sexual promiscuity through *Uyajola 9/9*'s core narrative. In the same vein as *uTatakho*, *Uyajola 9/9* is presented by Black men, Molemo "Jub Jub" Maarohanye, Dr. Love and Moss Makwati.[71] A depiction that emerges from *Uyajola 9/9* is the idea that Black men are perpetually involved in scandalous sexual affairs and infidelity.

Uyajola 9/9's core narrative of scandalous sexual affairs is anchored in presenting Black people as hypersexual beings. Such representations of Black masculinities play on the historical stereotypes of the Black male body that is portrayed as being aggressive, hypersexual, deceitful, and dangerous.[72] At the core of these discourses lie sexist and racist representations of Black sexuality, premised on the European colonial imagination of the uncontrollable Black penis.[73] Black manhood is always presented with an oversized phallus that makes them "energizer-bunny sexual machines" that have "animalistic energy" within the imagination of coloniality.[74]

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[71] Rofhiwa Maneta, "Uyajola 9/9 uses black pain for ratings," *City Press*, 23 June 2019. https://city-press.news24.com/Trending/uyajola-99-uses-black-pain-for-ratings-20190623.

[72] Busi Makoni, "Labelling Black Male Genitalia and the 'New Racism:' The Discursive Construction of Sexual Racism by a Group of Southern African College Students," *Gender and Language* 10, no.1 (2016): 52. https://journals.equinoxpub.com/index.php/GL/article/view/21434.

[73] Tamara Shefer and Kopano Ratele, "Racist Sexualisation and Sexualised Racism in Narratives on Apartheid," *Psychoanalysis, Culture and Society* 16, no.1 (2011): 30.

[74] Neal Lester, "RACE," in *Cultural Encyclopaedia of the Penis*, eds. Michael Kimmel, Christine Milrod and Amanda Kennedy (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014): 180.

Delinking Black Masculinities

Black masculinities are a product of historical, often ongoing residual, imperialistic, colonialist, patriarchal, structural, symbolic, and direct aggression on Black people.[75] Delinking is essentially challenging the racial and sexual/gendered hierarchies that are structural nodes of coloniality.[76] These racialised and patriarchal hierarchies are premised on stereotypical views of Black masculinities, as being characterised by hypersexuality, deceitfulness, and absent fathering. Delinking means that media portrayals of Black men must go beyond the limited understandings of Black men that are characteristic of coloniality.

Narratives on Black men must locate Black masculinities in the interlocking systems of the oppression in which they exist. This situatedness, in patriarchal and racialised hierarchies that have histori-cally placed Black male bodies in inferior and dehumanising positions, ignores the multiplicity of structural forces that confront Black masculi-nities.

Delinking is the realisation that Black masculinities operate from marginalised positions. From that marginal point, the interwoven nature of economic marginalisation, stereotypical hypersexualisation, and notions like absent fathering coalesce into solid structures of coloniality.

It cannot be denied that Black masculinities contain negative elements. Neither can it be denied that Black masculinities are weighted by the patriarchal burden of the systems of coloniality that place an economic provision and male dominance as foundational to the construction of masculine identities. How else would one account for the fact that young Black men face the highest risk of homicidal victimisation? The removal of the patriarchal system of coloniality offers new ways of constructing Black masculinities that go beyond the "binaristic" logic of coloniality, that currently underscores discourses of Black masculinities.[77] Representa-tions of Black men need to highlight them in their varied spaces.

Delinking Black masculinities must not be understood as a rebuttal to the negative images of Black men in the media. It must open up a complex-ity of the representations of Black men. It must furthermore take into con-

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[75] Ratele, "Violence, Militarised Masculinity and Positive Peace."
[76] Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Modernity*, 19.
[77] Makama *et al.*, "The Dangers of a Single Feminist Narrative," 5.

sideration that dominant discourses of masculinities have been impacted upon by Christian missionaries and their distortions of Black men.

Conclusion

Nineteenth-century discourses of Black masculinities were premised on racialised stereotypes that are a product of the European imagination. From that imagination arose the characterising of Black men with hyper-sexual and animalistic traits. Clothing the Black male body can be regarded as a way in which the missionary ideology sought to transform Black men from their animalistic hypersexuality into men that fit into the missionary standards. Being made men, included being incorporated into gendered hierarchies of coloniality, albeit as marginalised subjects.

That the media plays a pervasive role in the ways in how South African men shape their own masculine identities cannot be argued against. It is critical that studies of men scrutinise the content that is produced by media platforms which can negatively affect the construction of masculine identities in South Africa.[78] The media offers its consumers a negative way of understanding themselves as fathers and masculine subjects.[79]

uTatakho and *Uyajola 9/9* perpetuate the ontologically violent stereotypes of nineteenth-century missionary discourses. Through a regulating dress code, initiation rites, and marital customs of Black men, the missionaries evinced strong traits of coloniality and ontological violence. In the mind of the nineteenth-century missionary in South Africa, Black men were presented as non-beings, characterised by a wanton propensity for sexual promiscuity and irresponsibility. Both television shows focus on the same themes of Black male hypersexuality and irresponsible fathering. These narratives of Black men are also a trend in broader Black masculinities discourses.

In both shows, Black men become central figures and are associated with sexual promiscuity and paternity disputes as well as irresponsible

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[78] Mandisa Malinga and Kopano Ratele, "It's Cultivated, Grown, Packaged and Sold with a Price Tag:" Young Black Men's Consumption of Media Images of Love, Happiness and Constructions of Masculinity," *Culture, Society & Masculinities* 8, no.2 (2016): 114.

[79] Nhlanhla Mkhize, "African Traditions and the Social, Economic and Moral Dimensions of Fatherhood," in *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*, eds. Linda Richter and Robert Morrell (Pretoria: HSRC Press, 2006): 196.

fathering, in the same way as the missionary depictions of Black men in the nineteenth-century South Africa described Black men as brimming with sensuality. These shows highlight a "hypervisible black masculinity" anchored on capitalist consumptions, paternal irresponsibility, and sexual promiscuity.[80]

Nuanced depictions of Black men in media spaces should include the historical context that enabled fatherlessness to thrive in Black communities. The patriarchal burden of economic provision that is placed on Black men by coloniality, needs to be challenged when engaging with narratives of absent fathers.

The hypersexualisation of Black men forms part of the arsenal of weapons that coloniality unleashed in its portrayal of Black men. The emergence of these themes in modern-day South Africa illustrates the continuities of the logic of coloniality. Many of the same ideas that served as justification for the direct colonial rule in Africa have now been modified by the mainstream media to perpetuate coloniality.[81] Delinking from such logic requires representations of Black men that are located in the historical, economic, and sociocultural context of marginality that Black men exist in.

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[80]   Mbuyiselo Botha and Kopano Ratele, "Ought Anti-Racist Males be (Pro)Feminist Too? Engaging Black Men in work against Gender and Sexual-based violence" in *A Reflexive Inquiry into Gender Research: Towards a new Paradigm of Knowledge Production and Exploring New Frontiers of Gender Research in Southern Africa*, eds. Samantha van Schalkwyk and Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholar Publishing, 2015), 136.

[81]   Morgan Ndlovu, "Manufacturing Black-on-Black Violence in Africa: A Decolonial Perspective on *Mfecane* and Afrophobia/Xenophobia in South Africa," *International Journal of African Renaissance Studies – Multi-, Inter- and Transdisciplinarity* 12, no.2 (2017): 107.

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