

## **Towards a reconstruction of masculinity: A Kenyan Maasai perspective**

**Antony Mukasa**

TSC, Kenya

**Charles Kinanga**

South Eastern Kenya University, Kenya

### **Abstract**

This paper is an investigation on the need for a reconstruction of masculinity among the indigenous African communities. The paper argues that there is an apparent disconnect between traditional and modern perspectives on what it means to be a man. The paper is guided by Raewyn Connell's notion of masculinity. The paper seeks to focus on a perceived disconnect between the African traditional conception and the modern view of masculinity. It also analyses the role of language, culture and communication technology in the reconstruction of masculinity. The information in this paper was gathered through literature review. Among the key arguments in this paper is that there is an apparent disconnect between the traditional and modern views on what it means to be a man. The paper also argues that there is a need to reconstruct the African society's perception of what it means to be a man in order to render it relevant in modern society. The paper further argues that language, culture and communication technology can play a complementary role in achieving this goal.

**Keywords:** Masculinity, traditional, modern, femininity, patriarchal system, paradigm

## **1. Introduction**

Philip (2006) argues that in post-modern cultural discourse, the individual is socially constructed. As such, the only reality that is known is the one that is created. He therefore categorises masculinity and femininity as social constructs created for the individual as set rules that define the latter. The study interrogates masculinity in a supposedly pristine and colonial Kenyan Maasai society with Philip's assertion in mind. It highlights the strong influence of culture on the masculinity of the main protagonist, Leshao. Through the character of Leshao, Kulet critiques both traditional Kenyan notions of masculinity and modern, western values (modern masculinity brought by the missionaries through education).

## **2. Ole Kulet's depiction of the dramatic change in maasai view of masculinity**

Leshao epitomises counter-hegemonic forces to the dominant mode of traditional masculinity. The paper explores a society in transition, and the changing faces of masculinities among the Maasai, through the life of the young protagonist Leshao. The young man struggles to understand "real manhood" as he is torn between exogenous western values and the traditional Maasai (mis)conceptions of masculinities. The paper will seek to find out whether Leshao's "liberating" masculinities can break the shackles of traditional Maasai masculinity.

The paper also revisited the early forms of masculinity in the early black Kenyan society before Christianity and colonialism. Key to the paper is to understand how the pre-colonial and colonial Kenyan black man negotiated his masculinity during these two dispensations. Was there any conflict in the various ideas of masculinity? The paper reaffirms that the two key ideas of masculinity the section will be analysing are traditional masculinity (indigenous) and masculinity brought by the missionaries. Indigenous (traditional) masculinity is defined by tribal and group

---

practices. On the other hand, the new version of masculinity is strongly influenced by Christian and western values. This paper argues that the latter is in a constant struggle with traditional masculinity for space within the Maasai socio-cultural context. The struggle originates in the clash between traditional, indigenous values and exogenous, western values as a result of colonialism. Hauff (2003) aptly captures the clash of these two very divergent cultures when she argues that despite the Maasai proving to be resilient, their culture is still very much threatened by industrialization and globalization. The above assertion points out to the role of modern communication and technology in the reconstruction of masculinity. The emergent forms of masculinities bring to fore the idea that masculinities are not static but fluid. Moreover, they are socially and historically constructed.

Pristine means before the communities in Kenya had any interaction with the Western or Arab world. Hence they were strictly following their cultures which were still uncorrupted or unsullied. The study focuses on Henry Ole Kulet's *To Become a Man*. The setting of the novel is in the Maasai community during the pre-colonial and colonial period.

Henry Ole Kulet centers his work during two periods. The period when missionaries had set up centers and were trying to venture into the interior of Kenya. The second period is when Kenya had become a British protectorate. In both periods, the Maasai community was experiencing a rapid transition from a traditional society to a modern society.

Hauff (2003) points out that the Maasai are one of the most celebrated tribes in Africa. The Maasai are a pastoralist group living in Southern Kenya and Northern Tanzania for over 2500 years. They live communally and rely on their herds for subsistence (McCabe, Perkin, & Schofield, 1992:354).

---

The transition from tradition to modernity has several ramifications on the Maasai society's masculinities. There is a clash of two types of masculinities; traditional and modern. The Maasai traditional culture propagates an ideal form of hegemonic masculinity. This culturally exalted mode of masculinity is quite challenging to most men who cannot fulfill these public expectations. Nonetheless, they have to struggle so as to be accepted as "real men" by the patriarchal society. The patriarchal society wields a lot of power and there is a strong peer influence among men of different age-sets among the Maasai. The paper concurs with Donaldson's (1993) argument about the performance of hegemonic masculinity:

The public face of hegemonic masculinity, the argument goes, is not necessarily even what powerful men are, but is what sustains their power, and is what large numbers of men are motivated to support because it benefits them. What most men support is not necessarily what they are. (Donaldson, 1993)

Donaldson's supposition infers that most men practice hegemonic masculinity so as to wield power over other men and women. However, men struggle to maintain that power. The biggest disadvantage for men, who want to express a divergent form of masculinity from the dominant mode, is the strong Maasai communal set-up. Hence there is a lot of policing for the enactment of these traditional masculine roles. The new version of masculinity introduced by the missionaries which is an anti-thesis of traditional masculinity is perceived (by the Maasai patriarchal society), as effeminate and subservient, compared to the traditional masculinity. The gate keepers of traditional masculinity (elders) enforce their "Ideal" version of masculinity through cultural practices and groups of young warriors called Morans. Jackson (2002) aptly labels that diversion from the ideal masculine norms as "laddishness" (adopting "feminine attributes").

---

### **3. Conflict between traditional and modern perceptions of masculinity as portrayed by ole**

#### **Kulet**

The protagonist, Leshao, in *To Become a Man*, is torn between traditional Maasai masculinity and western concepts of masculinity. The father, a traditionalist, wants his son to go on raids so as to bring home more cattle. The father's herd has decreased because he sold some cattle to enable Leshao go to school, the latter's refusal to go for raids is an influence of western values that perceive raids as criminal acts. The most valued commodity in this community is the cow. Hence one's wealth is measured according to the number of cattle in one's herd. Homewood and Rodgers (1991) note that cattle ownership influences the construction of Maasai masculinity because men decide to get married depending on the number of cattle they own. Leshao's father blames the son for the poverty that has engulfed the family. The old man believes that his eldest son has also brought dishonour to the family having acquired the tag of a coward who cannot go on cattle raids. Western values have influenced the school going Leshao, but the father will hear none of it. The father had sent the son to school after the missionaries had promised him that education would bring him more cattle. The father's anger increases because Leshao's age mates who never went to school have gone on many raids and brought many cattle to their fathers. On the other hand, Leshao still goes to school forcing the father to part with more cattle and yet the fruits do not seem to be forthcoming. The father is in a dilemma: the new culture that emphasises education as a tool of empowerment and the old order that values cattle ownership and raids.

Leshao who emerges from school is a changed young man who despises cattle raids as archaic. He detests a very strong element of traditional Maasai masculinity. This really irritates the father. This pristine community still upholds traditional aspects of wealth creation and the issue of empowerment through education is still very alien. These two emerging perspectives of

---

masculinities result in the clash between father and son. The father is a traditional Maasai man who is really entrenched in his culture. Mwangi (1990) notes the Maasai community is reputed to be one of the most positively impervious to cultural hegemony. He argues that the community has resisted western value systems to retain a deep respect for their pre-colonial mores.

Hauff's (2003) assertion that the Maasai have resiliently struggled to maintain their culture points to the Herculean task Leshao faces. He, is forced to negotiate different forms of masculinities in different contexts. These masculinities among Leshao's Maasai community are centered on cattle and pastoral culture, which influence the socio-economic forces in the community, and consequently influence male identities. These masculinities are socially constructed by the society he lives in. Morell (2001) argues that privileges and power are enjoyed by the people who keep the mores of a particular culture. On the other hand, others who have alternative masculinities are not considered "real men". Culture is one structure that holds so much power that an individual may not evade it. Leshao's community espouses a form of hegemonic masculinity to which an individual is forced to confirm. Young Leshao and another convert called Stefano, find themselves in this predicament. This dissent has ramifications.

In the first chapters of *To Become a Man*, the missionaries had started setting up schools. However, most of the people were not willing to send their children there. This is a resistant to the new age of education and communication technology. Leshao, is among the few young people who have joined school. The missionaries were trying to penetrate into the interior of the country: "Leshao was one of the herds boys, different from the rest in that he had gone to school. He still had one term to go..." (4). The father sends his son reluctantly after Leshao promises to bring more wealth to the family after finishing school, and also after the mother intervenes. During this period, most young Maasai men were joining moranship. These young men would

---

later go for cattle raids. Such raids brought a lot of cattle which was a source of wealth. Leshao's father is in a dilemma and is not sure if the decision to send his son to school was right:

The old man had thought if the eight years a boy went to school were to train him to become a better moran, then the whole training was a failure since the ones who did not go to school made the best morans. The old man was very annoyed at those boys who left school, not because he valued school more than he valued his skin sandals, but because their return cast doubt upon the promises his son often made to him, saying that as soon as he completed school he would be employed and would make him rich. His son's promises had once been backed by Reverend Walker (whom the Maasai simply called 'Waka'). (Ole Kulet, 1972:17)

Leshao's father is in a society in transition. Initially, upward mobility was through cattle raids and the acquisition of cattle. However, with the coming of the missionaries and colonialists, education is now slowly becoming the tool for upward mobility, albeit with many challenges. Education is struggling to replace moranship and cattle raids in the social construction of Maasai masculinity. This brings to fore the malleability of masculinities. Maasai masculinities are not static but susceptible to change. An elder, Ole Nkipida, is one person who despite being a Maasai has embraced this change. He tries to convince Leshao's father that it is wise to embrace change because society is in transition. However, Leshao's father, Kerea ole Merresho will hear none of it:

'I wish you had gone around as I did and seen how the other young Maasai boys have progressed. They have bought better cattle than the ones we have. We should let our boys be like them. Let us not hinder them. You might not see the truth of it now, but I am telling you, we are being left behind by other villages because of encouraging our boys to join moranship, let alone cattle raids because they are becoming out of date and —'

'Stop, stop! If you were born a coward, you do not expect to convince others to be cowards. Are you not, ole Nkipida? Haven't you seen young boys of our village become rich overnight just by going on cattle raids....' (Ole Kulet, 1972:76)

#### **4. Towards a reconstruction of masculinity**

Education is perceived as a form of escapism from "real Maasai manhood" by the traditionalists

---

like Leshao's father. According to the traditionalists, education is a kind of a shortcut that avoids rigours that characterize true moranship like bravery, risk, violence and has "feminized" Maasai men. That is why Leshao's father has the temerity to call a fellow elder a coward. The cowardly tag is a big insult especially in a community socialised into warrior hood. The conflict between the two opposing masculinities is evident and education is a catalyst for change. Though Ole Nkipida tries to convince Leshao's father, Leshao's father is very adamant that his son will never go to school. In fact, Leshao's late mother is the one who convinces the old man to allow the young boy to attend school.

However, in this society, the voice of the woman is not given much space. , Leshao's father seems to have changed his mind about his son attending school, but does not want it to appear as if it was because of the mother. This scenario corroborates Spivak's (1988) argument that the voice of the subaltern (in this instance, women in the Maasai male dominated society) is never given space. Spivak asks the key question whether the subaltern can speak. She points out the voice and space of the subaltern is subjugated in the dominant discourse consciously or unconsciously. De Beauvoir (1949) rightly defines Kerea ole Merresho's perception of women. She explains that humanity is male and defines the female as the "other". Giele (1978) also concurs with Beauvoir when he explains that stereotypical masculinity is portrayed as normal, natural and universal in many societies. Thus, how Kerea ole Merresho behaves against women is sanctioned by the society. Apart from being obstinate, the father exhibits excessive hegemonic masculinity. Talle (1988) contends that the Maasai are a male dominated society and women are subordinate in all aspects of culture. He points out that the Maasai culture promotes male dominance and subordination of women through customs such as clitoridectomy (female circumcision) and forced marriages. Messner (2004) observes that patriarchy (an ideology that



---

privileges particularly old men) is a global phenomenon. Thus, patriarchy is not limited to the Maasai but to many societies worldwide. Messner further asserts that the biological fact of being male places men in privileged positions.

Leshao has to undergo major challenges so as to try to fit in a highly masculinised society. Connell (1995) explains that hegemonic masculinity is constructed through difficult negotiations. Leshao and the father are victims of a dominant discourse in the strong Maasai patriarchal society. That is why the father is under pressure to make sure Leshao joins the raids and abandons school. Lorber (1994) points out that individual decision on gender-role expectations are mostly outweighed by societal expectations:

My concept of gender differs from previous conceptualizations in that I do not locate it in individual or in interpersonal relations, although the construction and maintenance of gender are manifest in personal identities and in social interactions. Rather I see gender as an institution that establishes patterns of expectation for individuals, orders the social processes of everyday life, and is built into the major social organizations of society, such as the economy, ideology, the family and politics. (28- 29)

Lorber's observation explains the predicament Leshao finds himself in. His individual will does not count much. His father and society expects him to follow the pattern previous Maasai men have followed. If the young man takes a different course it seems that he will be shunned. It is rather unfortunate that Leshao cannot ignore these societal forces. Omalla (1981) explains that among the Maasai, anyone who declined to go to war or raid cattle was considered a coward. Moreover, the so called "cowards" were not grouped with other men, but instead they were rejected. Leshao's father, in a dialogue with the young man, reveals this:

Your grandfather feared to go on raids and I only inherited ten cows from him. But my grandfather was brave. He fought alone and brought cattle everybody admired. Your grandfather saw them all go without increasing any. I wish I was not his son. 'But my son, what disturbs my heart is that you bear a resemblance to him. Your age-group have brought to their fathers and to themselves riches while

---

you yourself continue to be a big pipe draining my wealth away.(Ole Kulet, 1972:5)

Leshao's father's tone reveals bitterness for the son who has not fulfilled the Maasai cultural concept of an ideal man.

Imms (2000) explains that: "Sociological theories represent masculinity as an investment in male-dominated historical and cultural social power structures" (1). Thus Leshao is held hostage by the cultural dynamics in his Maasai community that he has to fulfill. By virtue of his gender, the young man cannot escape the rigorous rituals so as to make him an ideal "man". Michael Foucault (1977), when theorising about gender and power, argued that power is located in the social structures such as social institutions that hold society together as opposed to individuals. Leshao is amidst these social forces that do not consider his individuality. The protagonist is striving to escape from this traditional dominant notion of masculinity, to the western notions of masculinity. The young man believes that the traditional modes of masculinity are outdated.

Leshao's father, apart from insisting on the son to go on raids, also wants him to get circumcised. The old man is preparing Leshao for circumcision and believes that maybe after the ritual, the young man would go on raids. Ole Merresho is an embodiment of a typical Maasai man who has not been influenced by outside cultures. He is the voice of tradition while Leshao is the voice of change. The old man expects circumcision to move Leshao from subordinate masculinity (associated with cowardice, marginalisation and not owning property) to hegemonic masculinity, which means owning property, courage and going on raids. To Leshao's father, the young man is an antithesis of an ideal man. Moreover, according to the Maasai, it is not any type of circumcision; but it must be traditional circumcision. The idea of going to hospital for this rite is really looked down upon. In fact, it is perceived as an act of cowardice. When Leshao's father

---

gets information that the young man wants to go to hospital for circumcision, he becomes so angry:

To come to the point, I have been fearing that your quietness might be cowardice, cowardice of the knife and you might do what the idiot son of Pushka did. If you did that you would not live to see the next sun, not if Kerea ole Merresho lived. I cannot imagine my son going to hospital, as if sick, just for the mere cutting of the penis ... I have been waiting and I have waited for long. Today when I told you that you would accompany the other young men on the raid, I expected you to tell me you were not yet circumcised.’(Ole Kulet, 1972: 14)

Circumcision is meant to prepare young men to be tough and bold. These masculine expectations are geared towards hegemonic masculinity.

Leshao pinpoints clearly that the pristine period is over. Hence, the Maasai man has to be dynamic and change with the times. Protections by the morans and going on cattle raids have become obsolete. However, this harsh reality is not going down well with the traditionalists like Leshao’s father, who are keen on maintaining their culture.

This paper argues that in traditional Maasai culture, hegemonic masculinity is based on the hyper-masculine ideal of the warrior and cattle raider. Leshao’s father is among the elders of the community and is transmitting the dominant culture to his son. The old man fails to understand that times are changing, and society is in a form of transition. The old order that held society together is under threat from foreign intrusion. Ironically, Ole Merresho’s nature and character is culturally praised in the Maasai culture. For instance, Leshao’s father beats up a man sent to force Leshao to go back to school. What had contributed to this conflict is the white man’s messenger called Stefano Malon (a Maasai converted to Christianity), who had exaggerated the white man’s message by adding threats to the old man (84). The messenger had told Ole Merresho that if Leshao never went back to school, the white man would send “askaris”

---

(Policemen) to arrest the old man. These threats had worked up the old man. His reactions can be related to the culture of the Maasai man. Threats and intimidations are not to be tolerated:

But the old man was not of the type to be threatened. Without talking to Stefano or warning him of what was to happen to him, he sprang up from where he was seated and jumped high into the air with his stick raised above his head. Then he brought it down full force to Stefano's shoulder. Before Stefano knew what was happening, the old man had cudged him several times. But Stefano was not the fighting type. Reverend Walker's teachings had softened him. Instead of striking back, the women heard him say, 'The Lord said, if one strikes your right cheek give him your left cheek too.' (Ole Kulet, 1972:84)

This incident highlights the clash between the modern and traditional masculinity. Leshao's father Ole Merresho, behaves in a typical traditional Maasai manly way. As expected, he aggressively confronts the visitor after being threatened. Not reacting would have been perceived by the traditional society, as an act of cowardice. Kerea ole Merresho is one very proud man who would never want to appear weak. On the other hand, Stefano is caught in between the two masculinities. The traditional Maasai masculinity that he was so strongly socialised that advocates aggression, and modern masculinity, taught by the white missionaries that preaches restraint. The missionaries' notion of masculinity is based on the Bible, particularly Jesus'. It abhors violence. Nevertheless, the study opines that Stefano is struggling to discard the traditional Maasai masculinity. Traditional masculinity is quite evident by the way he initially approaches the old man. He adds threatening words to the initial message. Stefano really struggles not to react when he faces Ole Merresho's wrath. Stefano is not his usual self. His retaliation is governed by the notions of masculinity based on the Bible that he has inculcated at the mission centre. This is a man in crisis. In fact, the villagers are so stunned and disappointed in him that they remain perplexed. The elders who represent true Maasai traditional masculinity

---

in a dialogue reveal this disappointment in Stefano:

As the episode was narrated, one of the elders could not help but add his own moral. ‘Surely there is stupidity in being a black Olashumpia.’  
‘There is no doubt about that,’ the other agreed. ‘I knew Malon very well. We were together in moranship and he was a brave man.’  
‘I knew him too,’ the other put in. ‘I can remember when our manyatta fought their manyatta. When his men retreated he knelt down and refused to move. Men of his clan who were of our manyatta defended him and a fight broke out again within our manyatta. I am indeed surprised how Waka has tamed him. They recalled many instances in which Malon had proved himself a great warrior. Leshao listened quietly, feeling pity for him. (Ole Kulet, 1972:85)

“Olashumpia” refers to the new Maasai converts who have embraced Christianity. Waka refers to the white man. Leshao feels pity for Malon(Stefano). Leshao and Malon(Stefano) are both caught between traditional Maasai masculinity that is so much rooted in their culture, and western notions of masculinity that they have recently acquired, after their interaction with missionaries at the mission centre. Despite trying to discard the traditional masculinity for the new form, it still haunts them and they cannot easily discard it. The duos’ (Malon and Leshao) position as counter-hegemonic forces comes with a lot of alienation. Abandoning traditional masculinity comes with consequences and repercussions. For instance, the cowardly tag Malon now wears in the village is a very strong challenge to his masculinity. It is a symbol of emasculation in this war-like community. Malon’s scenario is even worse because he is assaulted before women: “The elders then knew what had happened. They split themselves into two groups. One beat the woman away from the scene ...” (85).

Leshao’s pity for Malon can also be attributed to the type of patriarchal socialisation that the former has been socialised. He knows that Malon should have reacted. This type of patriarchal socialisation which lays a lot emphasis in strength and bravado is called machismo. It is a type of masculinity that dwells on the repudiation of all attributes that display any sign of “weakness” or

---

femininity. Hence, Stefano's reaction strongly opposes this socially dominant form of machismo. Stefano restrains himself, thus, losing face before the elders. The elders are the bearers of this aggressive form of masculinity. They are what Donaldson (1993) calls "weavers of the fabric of hegemony" (11). He argues that such people regulate, manage gender regimes and interpret gender relations. Malon's ego and self esteem is really dented in the village. Stefano has been assaulted without reacting, and he has been told to leave for his own safety. The price of subverting "real manhood" can sometimes be very costly and painful. Leshao also has to flee the village rather than go on a cattle raid. His "cowardly" act turns him into an outcast like Malon. The town which is the centre of modernity becomes his place of refuge. Leshao encounters a new version of masculinity, whereby the construction of masculinity is not pegged on the number of cattle one has, but education and employment. Nevertheless, just like Malon, the traditional aggressive and violent masculinity is still part of him. He beats up a guard who prevents him from meeting Walker, the missionary mentor that had taken him to school:

Leshao was enraged. His actions were sharp and quick. He grabbed a piece of wood which lay on the ground and jumped at the man, hitting him thrice on the head. The man grabbed him and they both struggled. Leshao was stronger and in the next moment the man was on the ground and Leshao was hitting him hard on his head. (Ole Kulet,1972:125)

Though Leshao has passed through the mission centre, he finds it hard to discard the warrior hood moran mentality he was socialised into. Unlike Malon, he cannot restrain himself when provoked. This part of Christian masculinity of forgiveness and tolerance becomes a thing of the past in this new moran initiate. Leshao's violent nature forces him to miss an opportunity to see Rev Walker and secure a job. He is instantly dismissed by the enraged reverend "I have no work for a fighter,' Walker shouted back" (126). In the village, Leshao would have been a hero through

---

his actions but in the city he is a villain. Leshao's actions quite clearly depict the challenge of totally discarding traditional forms of masculinity. The reverend even reminds Leshao of his father's actions when the former had sent Malon "The other time I sent Stefano to come and see you and your father assaulted him and now you come and assault Jeremia at my home."(126) Walker's reference to that earlier incident, brings to fore the important role fathers play in the construction of their progenies masculinities. Leshao father is a poor role model and the son has imbibed that violent nature. The fact that missionary education has not changed the young man, makes the study conclude that Kerea ole Merresho is a failed patriarch. Leshao's violent masculinity jeopardises the young man's stay in the city because everybody refuses to employ him:

For the following two months Leshao wandered from office to office first, then from shop to shop, then from hotel to hotel, and finally from home to home. But wherever he went, prospective employers turned him down saying they were not prepared to employ a person who fought with his would-be workmates. (Ole Kulet, 1972:127)

Leshao's transition to modern masculinity suffers more when his host, Pushka chases him out of the house because Leshao seems to have become a burden. The young man cannot believe it. This new urban masculinity does not really entertain communalism and dependence. Leshao's violent nature haunts him again when he refuses to leave Pushkin's house and is later arrested by the police. The arrest is quite humiliating to the young moran whose masculinity is dented when he does not fight back:

The third policeman came forward and slapped him on the face. It was the first time since he had been circumcised that a man had slapped him. At first he thought of revenge and he took one step toward his sword, but he quickly weighed the situation and gave up the idea. (Ole Kulet, 1972:129)

Leshao's failed masculinity in the city and subsequent return back to the village is quite

---

humiliating to him. The young man is an outcast in both traditional and western masculinity. The tag of cowardice is too painful for a Maasai moran to bear. Leshao cannot fathom the subordinate tag that he will have to live with. The town was the place of escape from what he considered as outdated masculine practices like cattle raids. However, modern masculinity seems to have rejected him. Leshao's father even opts to leave the village because of the shame that the son had deserted moranship. This situation forces Leshao to strive to redeem his wounded masculinity. He decides to turn to the traditional form of redemption; cattle raids. This is the only way that the young man feels he can gain respect from the father: "The raid was re-organised that night to allow Leshao to join" (131). Unfortunately the raid is not successful. Leshao loses a leg and is later taken to court and sentenced to fourteen years imprisonment. Though Leshao suffers the agonising pain and incarceration, his masculinity is "redeemed". The action re-unites him with the father. The young man has paid the price of manhood in a traditional perspective thus becoming a hero in the village but a prisoner in the modern set-up. Ole Kulet's text explains the clash of two masculinities in a society in transition. Leshao's hybrid type of masculinity does not seem to work.

## **5. Conclusion**

Henry Ole Kulet's text *To Become a Man* has effectively depicted masculinity in a transitional Maasai community. The study has established that the dominant form of masculinity in the pristine Maasai community is traditional hegemonic masculinity. It is a form of masculinity constructed in a dominant, aggressive and violent manner. Characters (Malon and Leshao) who attempt to subvert this dominant form of masculinity face a lot of resistance. The societal forces that perpetuate the old traditional masculinity resist vehemently. It is quite prudent to argue that change especially cultural does not come easily.



---

Agents of change such as education face a lot of resistance in this rigid society. The study also contends that culture and language (discourse of communication) are used as a vehicle to propagate masculinist sexual ideologies by agents like the traditional Maasai patriarchal society. The group uses the two to perpetuate the narrative of traditional masculinity as the ideal form of masculinity. The traditional masculinity in this chapter clearly fits into Donaldson's (1993) description of hegemonic masculinity. Donaldson argues that hegemonic masculinity can be negated, challenged, renounced, imposed, constructed with difficulty, modernised but not necessarily enjoyed. He further argues that this form of masculinity that passes itself as natural can harm, deform, deny but not necessarily satisfy.

The paper agrees with Donaldson that this form of Maasai traditional masculinity propagates cultural ideals that do not correspond to the real personalities of most men. On the other hand, the new modern version of masculinity brought by the missionaries seems to borrow heavily from the teachings of Christ. It can be categorised as a form of Christian masculinity that negates hegemonic attributes of masculinity such as aggression and violence. It espouses values such as forgiveness and non-violence which are categorised by most patriarchal societies as subordinate.

## **Reference**

Barker, G. and Ricardo, C. (2005). "Young Men and Masculinity in Sub-Saharan Africa: Implications for HIV/AIDS, Conflict and Violence." *Social Development papers: Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction*, paper No. 26, June 2005.

Coast, Ernest. "Wasting Semen: Content and Condom use among the Maasai." *Culture, Health and Sexuality* 9.4. 2007:387-401.

Connell, Raewyn. (1995). *Masculinities*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Connell, R. and James, M. "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept." *Gender and Society*

19.6.2005:829-859.

Chitando, Eand Sophie,C.(2012).Redemptive Masculinities. Geneva: WCC.

Gikandi, S.(1987).Reading the African Novel. Portsmouth: Heinemann.

Griele, J.(1978).Gender and the USA. Harvard: Harvard University Press.

Galaty, J.(1983).Ceremony and Society: The Poetics of Maasai Ritual, Man, Electronic Document ,Accessed March 2015.

Goodman, N.(1964). Race Awareness in Young Children: A Cultural Anthropologist's Study of How Racial Attitudes Begin among Four Year- olds. New York: Collier.

Imms,D.W. "Mutiple Masculinities and the Schooling of Boys."Canadian Journal of Education 25.2.2000:152-165.

Kulet,H.(1972). To Become A Man.Nairobi:Longhorn.

Lorber,J.(1994). Paradoxes of Gender. New Haven: Yale University.

Messner,M.(1992).Power at Play: Sport and the Problem of Masculinity. Boston: Beacon.

Milner, D.(1975).Children and Race. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Mugubi, J. (2010).The Child Character in Adult Literature: A Study of Six Selected Caribbean Novels.Saarbrucken: LAP.

Morell, R. Changing Men in Southern Africa. Pietermaritzburg: Univ of Natal.

Ndagala, D. K.(1992).Territory, Pastoralists, and Livestock: Resource control among the Kisongo Maasai. Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell.

Odhiambo, A,; Ouso, I and Williams, M.(1977). A History of East Africa. Hong Kong: Longman.

Omalla, D.(1981). Be A Real Man. Nairobi: Evangel Publishing House.

Saibull,S.O and Carr, R.(1981). Herd and Spear: The Maasai of East Africa. London: Collins& Harvill Press.

Reddock,R.(2009). Interrogating Caribbean Masculinities. Kingston:UWI.

Roy,N.(1961).Black Albino.London:Longman.

Saitoti,T,O.(1980). Maasai. New York: Harry. N. Adams.

Seidler,V.(2006).Transforming Masculinities: Men, Culture, Bodies, Power, Sex and Love.  
London: Routledge

Talle, A.(1988).Women at a loss: Changes in Maasai Pastoralism and their effects on gender relations. Stockholm: Stockholm Studies in Social Relations.

Wa Thiong'o, N.(1972). Homecoming. London: Heinemann.

CattlePeople:Survival.(1998).Electronic Document, <http://www.stpt>. Accessed 7/14/15.