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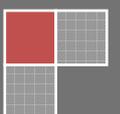
Gender, Masculinity and Power in Southern Portugal

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The masculine—feminine dichotomy (grounded in the male—female divide) is a potent metaphorical source for the creation of difference in a context like the village I have studied. It is not, in and of itself, neither more nor less essentialistic than any other principle of distinction if one accepts that both the sexed body and the gendered individual are the result of processes of historical and cultural construction. That is why I do not use notions such as (sexual or gender) ‘role’: these do not seem to have explanatory value since they imply a false dichotomy between body and individual, sex and gender. The conflation between ‘male’, ‘men’ and ‘masculinity’ — which is one of the premises for the use of those notions — should not be taken for granted but analysed.

Masculinity and femininity are not juxtaposable to men and women respectively: they are metaphors of power and capacity for action and agency, therefore accessible to both men and women. If it were not so, one could not possibly talk about several masculinities or transformations in gender relations. The moving and contingent character of the relation between masculinity, men and power becomes clear when one analyses ethnographies that pay particular attention to dialogue and conflict between hegemonic masculinities and subordinate ones; to individual variability in masculine identity; or to changes that take place in a single individual’s masculine identity along the life cycle or according to situations of interaction.

Cornwall and Lindisfarne (1994) say that anthropology has ignored the contexts and criteria according to which men are differentiated among them. I have tried to do the contrary in my research, through analysis of the hierarchy at work, social inequality, strategies of interaction in sociability, and the dilemmas of emotions and their enunciation. Originally I wanted to understand how the central model of masculinity — hegemonic masculinity — was reproduced, considering that the experiences and identities of specific men seemed to point toward the existence of several masculinities. Hegemonic masculinity is rather like a lived consensus. Subordinate masculinities are not excluded versions. They exist because they are contained in hegemony itself; they are like perverse after-effects of it. A good example of this would be the homosexual ‘threat’ implied in homosociability, or the ‘absent presence’ of femininity in all-male environments.

One point needs to be clarified from the onset. It is one thing to talk about masculinity in the above mentioned sense (independently of men and women) and quite another to talk about the ‘masculinity of men’. When I use the latter term, I do it precisely in order to analyse the complex relation between specific men and masculinity. My starting point is not far from Foucault’s notion that masculinity is a discursive phenomenon — of discourse as practice (Foucault 1972). It constitutes a field of dispute for moral values in which the distance between what is said and what is done is great. That is why in the field I have opted for a strategy of inclusion in a group of men in situations of sociability — a strategy that clearly privileged aspects of homosociability in detriment of relations between the sexes.

Hegemonic masculinity is an ideal cultural model. It is not attainable in practice or in a consistent and enduring way by any man, but it exerts a controlling effect over all men and all women. It involves a discourse on domination and social precedence, granting men (a social category constructed upon a metonymy of sexual dimorphism) this social privilege. One paradox should be cleared out from the beginning: if masculinity and femininity are — at the level of a symbolic grammar — conceptualised as symmetrical and complementary, they are, however, discursively asymmetrical in the arena of power. This is obvious in the ideology of kinship and marriage where the ideology of ‘complementarity’ between man and woman is overridden by masculine precedence. Masculinity itself is internally constituted by asymmetries (such as hetero/homosexual) and hierarchies (from more to less ‘masculine’ behaviour, demeanour and so on) in which hegemonic models and subordinate variants can be identified (the terms are borrowed from Carrigan *et al* 1985). This seems to mean two things: that masculinity is not the mere cultural formulation of a natural given; and that its definition, acquisition and maintenance constitute a fragile social process that involves vigilance, self-vigilance and dispute.

Gender meanings — inherited from the past as collective representations — are grounded on a symbolic division of the world into feminine and masculine. This is a fundamental and constitutive classificatory principle, salient in many ethnographic examples such as the attribution of gender to actions, activities, objects, emotions, spaces in both house and village, and so on. (These examples will not be dealt with extensively here; see Vale de Almeida 1995a.) The experience of men and women is a difficult dialogue between the polymorphous complexity of their feelings and the simplicity of social patterns. I am not referring to any particular psychological or psychoanalytical theories on drives and compulsions, but rather to the simple fact that any human being, in spite of his/her placement in a certain personal and social identity, knows that other identities and behaviours are potentially his/hers too, even if they are socially undesirable.

It is at the level of everyday negotiation and interactions (as well as at the level of life narrative reformulations), that gender can be apprehended as both process and practice. Connell (1987), for instance, states that both Giddens’ and Bourdieu’s work calls for the interconnection between structure and practice, and structure and agency — focusing on what people do through the constitution of the social relations in which they live. Connell developed a theoretical programme for the study of gender within a practice theory perspective. Thus the division of work, the structure of power and the structure of *cathexis* would be the main elements of any given ‘gender order’ or ‘gender regime’ (Connell 1987). As such, they should be the starting point of analysis. In anthropological terms, they should be ‘ethnographed’.

Hegemonic masculinity is a central element in a gender order. In my opinion ‘patriarchy’ could be the label term for a specific gender order in which hegemonic masculinity defines the inferiority of both femininity and subordinate masculinities. It is actually the slow degradation and contestation of patriarchy that has allowed us to think it — i.e. the post-Second World War decades are a period of accelerated hegemonic transformation in which the conflict, ‘noise’ and disputes which have existed for quite some time are now becoming audible, threatening and thinkable.

Connell’s ‘structural inventory’, which he uses as a device to outline any given moment in the sexual politics of a society, is based on a concept taken from Jill Matthews (1984): that of ‘gender order’, ‘a historically constructed pattern of power relations between men and women and definitions of femininity and masculinity’ (Connell 1987: 98—9). He applies the notion to the ‘structural inventory’ of a society in

its whole, leaving aside the notion of 'gender regime' for the description of the state of things at a smaller scale — for instance, in a specific institution such as the family.

A further issue that needs to be taken into consideration in gender studies (and particularly in what concerns hegemonic masculinity) is that of the body and embodiment. Not because there is a fashion to follow in studies of the body or any desire to discover some new agency that could replace the emptied subject of modern social science. Rather, because the fundamental characteristic of gender is the fact that it uses the body as its metaphorical ground, and the body — in the present historical and cultural circumstances — allows for a resilient process of legitimisation of the social order, namely 'essentialism'. Bourdieu tried to draw the bridge between processes of embodiment and the issue of 'masculine domination'.

La somatisation progressive des relations fondamentales qui sont constitutives de l'ordre social, aboutit à l'institution de deux 'natures' différentes, c'est-à-dire de deux systèmes de différences sociales naturalisées qui sont macrites à la fois dans les hexis corporelles, sous la forme de deux classes opposées et complémentaires de postures, de démarches, de manières, de gestes, etc. (1990: 8)

The relationship between feminine and masculine is not simply like that between the two faces of the same coin as regards moral evaluations; it is asymmetrical and unequal. It denotes a form of social precedence that is reproduced on the basis of a process of naturalisation. The body is the place which is symbolically invested upon in order to confirm that ontology. Processes of embodiment of gender meanings result in a 'lived consensus' (Bourdieu's expression) since its learning is by and large permanent, on-going, unfocused, non-verbal and unreflected. That is why it is necessary to study the socialised and subjective body, as well as processes of embodiment, in a way that will overcome both the study of representations of the body and the body as a passive receptacle of 'power'. It needs to be looked at in a more phenomenological way as 'the existential ground of self and culture' (Csordas 1990). This work remains to be done but must be part of future research agendas.

There are, of course, moments and junctures of contestation and negotiation which challenge the rather 'totalitarian' aspect that an unconscious process of embodiment appears to indicate. These become possible due to several factors: first, the discursive aspect of gender identities allows for 'semantic struggles', of which a good example (among many possible) would be the dispute around more or less feminine and/or masculine forms of dressing; second, the horizontal character of gender, permeating other social stratifications and being permeated by them; last, the effect of structural transformations in social relations at the local level, and in the interaction with the cultural contexts of nation states, and global economy and culture. The growing 'personalisation' of sexuality in late modern societies and the triumph of the 'pure relation' (Giddens 1992), together with the creation of social group identities based on sexual discourses and practices, is one of the most outstanding results of the changing nature of gender categories and relations.

The search for gender meanings should, then, consist of a thorough mapping of the semantic and action areas related to gender, as suggested by Marilyn Strathern (1988), not just focusing on either sexuality *per se* or on the masculine/feminine divide as homologous to the men/women divide. To think about gender as simply the study of relationships between men and women is an obstacle that became obvious in most of 'women's studies' and is now becoming so in 'men's studies' too. Strathern will be a key source of help and inspiration in my argument. 'Society' is not constructed independently of gender and cannot, therefore, be its explanatory context. Gender

relations are neither more nor less autonomous than any other social relations (Strathern 1988); they have to be mutually and simultaneously explained.

We must now turn to some ethnographic aspects of my research to illustrate this, before returning to more theoretical issues about gender, masculinity and power.

Men and power at the workplace

Ever since the 1960s the village of Pardais has been undergoing — but with a marked acceleration in the 1980s — a steady process of social and economic transformation when compared with other communities in the region and the historical *longue durée*. The village is located in an area of ornamental marble-stone extraction, in the southern Portuguese province of Alentejo. It has less than 600 inhabitants. The majority of its male adults (and a large number of youths) work in the marble quarries; among these, the majority are *cabouqueiros* (unskilled manual labourers). The majority of women are housewives or seasonal workers in vine and eucalyptus plantations. They make up the large army of unemployed and retired people. The village literally depends on the activity of marble extraction, which, due to the inexistence of a processing industry in the area (and for that matter in the country), depends, in turn, on the world economy.

Historically, the village was part of the southern *latifundia* or large-estate agrarian economy, constituted by a very small class of absentee landowners, an intermediate group of share-croppers, and a vast class of landless journeymen. As of the 1960s, marble extraction gradually took over arable land and changed basic property and production relations. My concern here is with gender, though. If the large majority of men in the village work in marble extraction, the simple fact that no women work in this activity (not due to any legal limitation, but rather to common-sense inertia on the part of both employers, men, and the women themselves in respect of the sexual division of labour). This makes the work activity in and of itself a privileged field for an analysis of masculinity. More specifically, the question should be: How do the discourse and practice of work (or the ‘gender regime’ of work) constitute masculinity, and vice-versa?

Instead of statistics that could reveal the economic importance of the local activity, let us take a look at a *décima* — a local form of oral poetry, improvised by an illiterate local poet. I have opted for translating the sense to the detriment of retaining the rhyme:

From Pardais to Sousel / It is one single quarry / many make capital / others lose their lives. // France and Germany / for Egypt and Algiers (*sic*) / the Bencatel stone / is very much praised / so much stone is taken / from Pardais to Sousel. // With the drill and the pointer / with the crane pulling / they can extract / stone for the whole world / for the country and abroad / wherever it is needed / short stone or long stone / stone of all sizes / I don't find it odd / it is one single quarry. // There is blue and coloured stone / there is white and pink / which is more profitable / once it has been made? / even when well appraised / no one knows what it's worth / they can go to court / in front of three judges! the unhappy die there/ but many make capital. // The Italian say / that Alentejo's stone / enters every college / shines throughout the country / extracted from its root / where it was produced / once the stone is taken / there is stone ever where / many have made riches / others lost their lives.

Three aspects should be stressed in this *décima*. First, the awareness of the local economy's place in the global economy; second, that in spite of the process of mechanisation and semi-industrialisation, the extractive nature of this activity allows for its perception as something connected with the ‘earth’, a sort of ‘crop’; and third, that the description of the activity is inseparable from value judgements about how some

‘make capital’ and others ‘lose their lives’. These three aspects, as we shall see, are closely connected with masculinity and social inequality.

Social inequality in Pardais is defined by a juxtaposition of these aspects, namely what concerns patron—client relations, semi-proletarianisation and the ‘rich—poor’ dichotomy as a local interpretative scheme of difference between capital and labour. The ancient social hierarchy of the estate economy has been replaced by a differentiation between those who own the quarries and capital, and those who work in them. For the *cabouqueiro* who works daily at the quarry, more subtle distinctions in the workplace hierarchy appear in respect of specialisation and wages. One worker once said: ‘First you have the boss; then the engineer or the “fiscal”, who measures and sells; then the supervisor, who makes the men work. Only then do we have the men in the ditches: first the machine operators, and also those who operate the cranes — but these earn more (120 *contos*) than the others (85 *contos*). And lastly come the *cabouqueiros*.’

Usually a worker starts his career without training, with little in the way of education, and learns his skill through practice and experience. The typical male life story starts with dropping out of school at around age thirteen, i.e. with a third or fourth grade education usually achieved after failure at school (fourth grade should normally be achieved at age nine). The man becomes an apprentice *cabouqueiro* while living at his parents’; the upgrading from apprentice to full time *cabouqueiro* usually coincides with marriage. As someone told me once, ‘There I was, a thirteen-year-old, still in third grade, my body fully a man’s body, and yet surrounded by kids! I said, damn it! I joined the quarries, that’s what I did!’ A body which is capable of work is a body that has full physical strength. This is perceived as concomitant with sexual maturity.

The *cabouqueiro* does not perform a single task at work. Experience dictates decisions on what specific tasks a man should perform, and leads to an embodied capacity to work. The passage from one hierarchical degree to the next depends on a kind of general acknowledgement of working capacity and learning: by the supervisor, but also by colleagues, who slowly integrate the worker and eventually charge him with directing small work groups appointed by the supervisor to pursue some task.

Age is an important factor here, since it is related with experience, but it is the latter that is determinant. Specialisation is never total, or individually based. The behavioural (and moral) characteristics that lead to a man’s election as the most able for climbing the hierarchy, allowing him eventually to become a supervisor, depend sometimes on extra-workplace factors such as kinship, prestige, ‘respect’, commensal behaviour and leisure time sociability: in sum, on all the elements that are common to the local definition of what it is to be a man. However, evaluation of physical capacity and dexterity come first.

The discontinuity with the ancient rural-world view does not, surprisingly, seem to be great. In *latifundia* agriculture, men sold their labour force as journeymen to several employers and worked on multifaceted and non-specialised tasks. Supervisors, for instance — who occupy the intermediary point between *cabouqueiros* and the quarry’s technical and entrepreneurial control — are men who, as the local saying goes, have learned how to ‘read’ the stone; this is a capacity similar to a peasant’s guessing the potential of a tract of land. A local man said to me once, ‘If you look at a stone, you see as much as I do if I look at your writing. We folks look at the stone like you look at your writing’.

In theory, the supervisor is but a *cabouqueiro* who reads the stone better than others do; but he is also someone who knows how to direct, command and reconcile men. The supervisor accomplishes two other functions: one of a technical and organisation type concerns planning, preparation and the distribution of work in the

quarry; the other, of a social type, defines him as the hierarchical intermediary and commander of men. Workers are left with 'doing', supervisors with 'having it done'. The capability to command has to be acknowledged by those who are commanded, that being why age is an important factor, since local values still define age hierarchy as a synonym of knowledge based on experience.

The supervisor's authority is controlled by the ethics of mutual respect. He should watch, but in a limited way; he cannot cross over certain limits or he will generate conflict; his experience is supposed to have made him an expert in certain gestures, behaviours and bodily attitudes that are adequate to safety so he is also a teacher of bodies. Generally, what he looks for in those he supervises is *respeito* (respect). He deserves it because of his standing, but respect must be conquered, deserved; it must appear spontaneous. That's what 'respect' is all about. One is the recipient of it as a result of status (a son respects his father, an employee his employer, a pupil his teacher). But one must give 'evidence of respect': honesty, straightforwardness, justice, fearlessness in the face of threats, rhetorical expertise, sense of balance, thrift and the proven capacity to provide for one's wife and children.

As in 'honour', 'respect' (which could be understood as the local gloss for 'honour') is a shaky asset, either because of threats by others (as the bad behaviour of those who depend on one, like wife and children), or because of one's own temptations and vices. Work, together with sexuality, was the main theme during conversations with men in their moments of sociability. Work is not simply the sale of labour for a few hours during which certain tasks, actions and gestures are performed. It is a source of identity and a metaphorical field for conversations and negotiations around personal identity, social place, emotions and gender. Cutileiro (1977: 76) explained thus the local notions of 'work' in the village he studied in the 1960, which is near Pardais:

'Work' includes all agricultural tasks that are done for a salary, as well as the conditions under which they are performed. It excludes all other ways of making a living. Artisans are 'artists'; their labour is an art', not work. Shopkeepers, travelling salesmen and clerks do not work either. Landowners obviously do not work.

Bodily effort and absence of property seem to be the requisites for the definition of work. Simultaneously they define the social group of the 'poor'. These meanings also juxtapose with the notion of 'men' as it is routinely used in everyday conversation. They are ambiguous and conflicting meanings, since another characteristic of a worker is to bend his back, an attitude which is not prestigious. In some situations, to be a worker denotes poverty and submission; in others it denotes respect and masculinity, via 'sacrifice'.

The rich, the poor and Saddam Hussein

Since there is social inequality among men, why then the common association of 'men' with 'power'? This association appears to be 'natural': through metonymic processes men are associated with images and instruments of power according to a 'commodity logic' which is most typical of capitalist formations (Strathern 1988). Power (masculinised power, that is) is associated with those who control resources and who have an interest in naturalising and perpetuating such control, including the capacity to feminise those underneath. Images, attributes and metaphors of (masculinised) power stretch across the social spectrum in such a way that sometimes they mean 'power' in situations that have little to do with 'men' (Cornwall and Lindisfarne 1994).

But in practice things are rather more dynamic. *Cabouqueiros* use the resource of physical effort at work as capital of masculinity vis-à-vis employers who use the control of resources as an image of their social precedence. Not even the idiom of masculinity remains as a common denominator for men of different social backgrounds. Even the romantic and seductive skills of, say, an educated man may constitute capital of masculinity in opposition to *cabouqueiros*' more boastful sexual discourse. Although bounded by social structural conditions, masculinities are situationally negotiated. If there are any clues of 'symbolic feminisation' of the *cabouqueiros* by the rich — i.e. accusations of dependence and lack of autonomy — there are situations in which the rhetoric of virility is used to feminise the latter, as in accusations of lack of virility or physical strength. Similarly, among 'equals', both virility and the capacity to obtain resources (through thrift, savings, alliance, god- parenthood or patron—client relations) can be used in internal disputes for greater masculine prestige. In sum, we have constantly to distinguish and interrelate masculinity as a symbolic principle and several masculinities (in the sense of several men's identities).

For the workers in agrarian society, the landowner had reached man's selfish ideal: to live without working and yet not lose prestige. Cutileiro refers in his work to how *operários* (working class or industrial workers) were thought by agricultural workers to have an automatically higher standard of living; but they did not consider their activity as 'work'. This is not so today in Pardais: partly because the extractive work in the quarries has been construed as symbolically equivalent to agricultural work, but mostly because men in Pardais have reinterpreted their social condition by making it homologous with the ancient notion of work. What is at stake in the cultural meaning of work is the fact that a man has to sell his labour force, as well as the physical nature of the activity. The notion of work also plays with the tropes of risk and sacrifice.

These are ambiguous since they are undesirable, but they strengthen the prestige of those who have endured a hard test. The sacrificial side of work is reinforced in the multiple narratives of accidents in the quarries, orphanage, wives' anxiety, etc. (Vale de Almeida 1995a). Patron—client relations, on the other hand, establish personal relations of exchange of favours that are inherently unbalanced. What the client has to offer is less valuable than the benefits he gets from the patron. Davis (1977), however, makes it clear that patronage is not a mere extension of friendship, kinship or godparenthood; it is rather the ways in which the autocracy of local magnates is controlled by the weak. This was obvious in the life story of one of my informants, who sometimes worked at his employer's quarry, but sometimes was seen tending to and repairing farms and buildings belonging to the same boss. They had established a patron-client relation, and an ambiguous one it was. Sometimes he would praise the employer's cunning; sometimes he would accuse him of dishonesty. But he depended on him since he had four children and all the needs that went with them. His best friend was the opposite: he was single and ready to work in far-away places, and boasted that he never 'lowered his trousers' to any boss.

There is no direct relation between our notions of social stratification and local categories. The latter follow a dichotomous principle: that of 'rich' and 'poor'. It is a classificatory principle of a similar type to 'masculine and feminine' or 'active and passive'. 'We are poor because we work', a *cabouqueiro* once said to me. He was the same man who frequently expressed — as most men did — a yearning for the political utopia of 'equality'. They say that 'equality' does not exist simply because there is a fault in 'rich men's nature' — 'ambition' — which allows them to strategise in a selfish way to obtaining control over scarce resources. One consequence of this is that, at work as in friendship and masculine homosocial groups, there is a similarity of circumstances

that allows for the use at work of the same ethical and moral standards used in friendship. Respect is the outcome of moral and ethical characteristics evaluated in interaction and memory. The final test is the bigger or smaller capacity of individuals to balance egotistical interest with the egalitarian utopia of men's groups.

Few people own quarries, and many quarries belong to the same owner. One of the local owners, Rui Capucho, is the paradigm of the 'rich': he is both saint and devil to the *cabouqueiros*. Sometimes he would be accused of ambition and dishonesty in the way he had obtained his wealth; sometimes they would praise his cunning, shrewdness and ability to manipulate people's loyalties. He was even called 'a gypsy', not because he was one ethnically, but rather because this ethnic tag refers ambiguously to entrepreneurial capacity and the marginality of the nomadic salesman. Not until late in fieldwork was I to realise that the same ambiguity applies to evaluations of masculinity — as in the example of a man who was prestigious because he worked a lot and provided well his family and at the same time spent a lot of money outside the domestic group, mainly with women other than his wife.

Rui Capucho amassed his wealth during his lifetime. He was the son of journeymen and received land from his godmother, one of a series of spinster sisters from a local landowning family. Once marble was discovered, a series of inheritance and succession manipulations took place, some of which are still stuck in the courts. His is, therefore, brand new wealth — something that the marble (or 'white gold') economy has triggered.

The most direct form of patronage undertaken by Capucho relates to local religious life. Ever since a new priest came to Pardais, after a long period in which the village had been without one, Rui Capucho and his wife have been sponsoring his initiatives. The priest is a Spaniard who belongs to a religious order said to be connected with the ultra-conservative Opus Dei. The Alentejo is considered by the Roman Catholic church to be an area of re-evangelisation and mission because of its extremely low levels of church attendance, mainly by men. By supporting the priest's parochial work, Rui Capucho has contributed to the rebirth of the Catholic cult in Pardais, as well as to activities which focus on the safeguarding of the family and traditional gender roles.

Money is, in Pardais, a symbol of the product of work. Locals say that 'a man should not look at another's hand': money makes you independent. Most men talk eagerly about how much they earn, how much they spend on sumptuary goods and expenses; they show money around a lot and are extremely generous in commensality. None of this should be interpreted as a *nouveau-riche* attitude. Money is shown and it circulates in contexts of collective interaction during which one pays, and is paid for. Money is invested with moral meaning and is pivotal in the dichotomy 'freedom versus slavery'.

Money is what 'makes imagination move inside the brain', as a man once said while talking about Saddam Hussein's 'evils'. When the Gulf War started, the village was taken over by the fear of unemployment for a good deal of marble exports go directly to countries in the Persian Gulf. The process of Hussein's demonisation was almost immediate, despite the fact that the Alentejo is an area influenced by the Communist Party, a situation that normally leads to anti-American attitudes. Confronted with televised news of the war, men who gathered at the café in Pardais interpreted Saddam Hussein's actions as resulting from that same 'ambition' that characterises 'the rich'. Furthermore, in local folklore, the Arabs (or 'the Moors' as they are called in Portuguese historical mythology) are the incarnation of a vaguely pagan, bellicose and hyper-masculine evil. Saddam was judged according to the scheme, in which common-

sense notions, such as the idea that ‘the Arabs have as many women as they want’, were criticised as excessive folly.

This may seem at odds with constant local boasting about the number of women seduced by any man. But in reality it is just a case of superimposing the moral principle of measure and self-containment. What was being criticised was the metaphoric hypermasculinity of Hussein: a lot of women, a lot of territory, a lot of weapons, a lot of victories, a lot of provocation of the ‘big’ by the ‘little’. Hussein was the negative projection of the very potential of local men. He could easily have been a local hero were it not, on the one hand for his social indefiniteness (‘little’ in comparison with the USA, but ‘big’ in comparison with Kuwait), and on the other the effects of the war on the sales of marble. Saddam’s ‘imagination’ could, and should, be controlled by the moral sense; thus, an event in international politics, mediated by television, not only influenced the local economy but also reactualised notions of gender and social inequality.

Homo-sociabilities, the café and bullfighting

Besides the time-space of work and that of domestic life, the time-space of leisure *par excellence* is the café: For a man, the café is not just acceptable but somehow compulsory. It is the ‘house of men’. The Melanesian metaphor is probably not just an analogy, since domesticity and solitude are seen with mistrust as symptoms of anti-sociability and diminished virility.

It is not enough to be with other men. What one does with them — drinking, smoking, talking, competing, playing and arguing — are coercive activities. These are not done by just any men, but rather among social equals. In a close context, that of Andalusia, Gilmore says that ‘the flow of minor comestibles like cigarettes and drinks transcends both the principle of reciprocity and of individual calculation, and represents, as Mauss ... put it, “the movement of the whole society” (1991: 28).

This is what café sociability resembles. It expresses yet a political ideal which is that of the fundamental equality among men: as a community, as a social group (the workers), and as a gender. Masculinity (as a symbolic principle) is mobilised for the definition of a sexual gender (men). This helps us understand how gender is an identity principle as constructed, and mutable as those underlying ‘community’ and ‘social group’.

The structure of masculine norms has its limits in family organisation. A good example is father—son avoidance: not only do they not drink together; they also avoid meeting each other at a café. The deference a son must show to his father, and the imposition of respect by the latter upon the former, are incompatible with either the masculine sense of competition for prestige or with the sense of equality among peers.

What kind of masculinity, however, is discoursed at the café, considering that interaction there is mostly based on conversation? It is mostly an evaluation of each other’s behaviour at work, in domestic life (through informal gossip), in café homosociability itself, or in hunting, bullfighting and nocturnal outings. This evaluation can only be done with the help of a model. The dispute around attributes and around adequacy and inadequacy to the model show how much it is an ideal construction. However, since evaluations are done on the basis of perceived acts (seen and narrated), men’s behaviour tends to ‘mime’ the model’s prescriptions. The model’s intrinsic contradictions generate those elements that are presented to public discussion and that allow for subtle transformations of the model itself, particularly when specific historical and conjunctural circumstances allow for the emergence of elements of subordinate

masculinities. That was the case, for instance, when a man in the village, who had stayed in Lisbon for a long period managed to impose as legitimate a performative and aesthetical form of masculine embodiment based on alternative models (namely an urban macho look, complete with leather jackets, rock band pins etc.) that he had taken on loan from mass media pop culture.

A significant part of this construction of culture of masculinity is done while talking about sex, relations between genders and the latent homosexuality in homosociability; it is also done by metaphorising — with the help of the sexual trope — political, social, labour and emotional relationships. The prevailing idea is that men are naturally charged with some sort of sexual compulsion ('naturally': the use of ethological notions about the male of an animal species is a very common source for legitimating essentialism: see Blok 1981 on 'horns'). Men say that it is their wives' task to control male sexual drives, and safeguard them from 'other' women's insatiable sexual appetites and seduction. The western double-standard — opposing 'mother' versus 'whore' — is very much alive. It leaves a wife in the ambiguous position of being both the 'mother' (of one's children) and one's sexual partner (although a legitimate one).

The masculine model is also internally hierarchical, and includes the spectre of femininity in disputes over masculinity. To femininise someone is a typical procedure in competition, whereas in solidarity masculinity is praised. Homosexuality is full of stigmatising meanings by way of semantic slippage across several homologous categories: femininity, passiveness, submission, passive penetration.

The phenomenon of male friendships on the other hand cannot be seen only in terms of politics and economy (Papataxiarchis 1991). According to this author, instead of being a post-scriptum to the androcentric structure, friendship is rather an aspect of anti-structure, connected with leisure and commensality around alcohol and gambling; it is characterised by an absence of economic functions. In Pardais, groups of friends are considerably smaller than the large group of men who meet at the café. These groups promote common activities that take place mainly outside the social space of the village, on the one hand, and outside the time of normal sociability, on the other, i.e. during the night. Those activities can be a simple meal in a restaurant, a hunting spree, a nocturnal outing to a dance in a nearby village, or going to a *boîte*, which in local jargon means a place of prostitution.

However there is one activity that holds a special place. Performed by men, it is a public spectacle that takes place during village festivities: the *garraïadas*, a pedestrian and poor version of Portuguese bullfighting. Portuguese bullfighting is quite different from its Spanish counterpart in that it is more stylised and baroque, involving considerable capital investment in horses and costumes. The *garraïada*, however, consists of a sort of rodeo in which young bulls, or even cows, are let loose in an arena. Groups of men try to hold them still by the horns; if they succeed, they win a prize, usually offered by a promoter who more often than not is a local patron. According to Portuguese fiction writer and poet Ruben A, bullfighting 'talks' about two things: 'seduction and command'. This poetic synthesis allows us to glimpse bullfighting activities as texts that make sense of a culture. Geertz (1973: 443—4) said the same about cockfighting in Bali: 'An image, a fiction, a model, a metaphor, the cockfight is a means of expression; its function is neither to social passions nor to heighten them but, in a medium of feathers, blood, crowds, and money, to display them'.

On the other hand, for Pitt-Rivers (personal conversation) bullfighting is the claiming of *hombria* through the sacrifice of the most virile animal in the bestiary, even though in Portuguese bullfighting the bull is not killed but rather symbolically

sacrificed. The bull, invested with masculine positive attributes, is there to be sacrificed. Again, if we look at cockfighting, this logic of mirror images becomes clearer, as in Marvin's (1984: 68) case from Andalusia:

'Certain characteristics of cocks are observed by men (they are noticed in the first place because they related to characteristics valued in men); this image of the bird's behaviour is incorporated into men's self Imagery, the imagery is read back onto the bird's behaviour as an evaluation of it and then, through the cockfight ... the imagery is read back once more by men.'

In the village there lives a young bullfighting horse rider who is the nephew of the quarry owner and local patron, Rui Capucho; he also owns quarries, and the profits from these provide him with the necessary capital for a tauromachic career. He had been a schoolmate of the *cabouqueiros* but eventually became the boss of some of them. A social gap widened between them, and this has led to some hard feelings. A horse rider, furthermore, is usually not as admired in a bullfight by the *cabouqueiros* as the *forcados* are: those who fight the bull on foot, holding it still by the horns. Spectators from the upper classes tend on the other hand to identify with the noble horse rider. This has to do with the homology that is established: the risky and physical labour of the *forcado* vis-i-vis a more distant and spectacular performance by the horse rider. Different from the *garraiada* (with its somewhat carnival-like elements), bullfighting in the so called 'Old Portuguese style' is the performative milieu for 'Marialvismo', an ann-modern and integrist discourse that establishes homologies between social precedence of the *ancien régime* type, hyper-masculinity, and essentialistic notions of national identity (Vale de Almeida 1995b).

The education and training of male bodies/subjects in the *garraiada* is — as in work — also a moral and group education. Its discursive elements have to do with sentiments such as courage, solidarity, bravery and bravado. It is, then, a sentimental education also.

Sentiments and the feminine nearby

It should be noted that practically all qualities and attributes that I have so far defined as 'masculine' are also qualities and attributes of the 'person'. The issue is that the hegemonic model defines masculine as the 'perfect form' of person, in a similar way to what has happened in the history of medical definitions of sex (see Laqueur 1990).

Local poets, who are male illiterate improvisers, compose poems that, differently from café conversation, where one can often hear derogatory and objectifying remarks on women, involve feelings of love, loss, fear and abandonment, all based on emotions that are seen to be typically feminine. Men can appropriate these by means of the rhetorical use of poetry. Through poetic freedom they can even take upon a feminine narrative voice. An example illustrates some of these aspects:

'The son is not capable / of cherishing his mother's love! he knows how much he misses her / once she has been gone. The mother is in love / ever since she bore that child / after birth she raised him / in all helped by God / she was very satisfied / for having that son in peace / when you can walk, my son / on your own two feet you'll leave / the mother loves him tenderly / but the son can not. My dear beloved son / child of my entrails / you'll never find in life / someone who'll love you more / I wonder if you remember / seeing your mother slaving / taking from her mouth to give you *i* a certain percentage! the son has no courage / to cherish his mother's love.'

Although an individual creation, the expression of poetry is a public recitation, a practice. Stories of personal experience are important instruments of interaction and

presentation of the self, and narratives of experience are the main topic of café conversations. If ‘discourses ... are ... practices that, in a systematic way, form the objects they talk about’ (Foucault 1972: 49), emotions can be looked at both from the point of view of discourse on emotions and from that of emotional discourses. Lutz and Abu-Lughod (1990) see emotion as a discursive practice: emotions as phenomena that can be observed in social interaction, which is to a great extent verbal. They are, then, pragmatic acts, communicative performances. Both sociability and power relations are two fundamental aspects of social relations connected with the discourse of emotions. In the case at hand, however, it is more specifically about sentiments that I want to talk: a translation of emotions and experiences in sentimental *vignettes* that are collectively shared.

As in Abu-Lughod’s study (1986) of Egyptian Bedouin, sentiments expressed in Pardais’ poems reveal a kind of weakness that would endanger the code of respect were it not for the context of the performance: among social equals, of the same gender. The themes embrace love and melancholy, but also social injustice, stories about Sons, mothers, and mother—son relationships, the loss of maternal love with growth, and the irreplaceable and pure overtones of that love.

Poetry allows for the expression of that which social norms do not allow to be expressed in daily interaction: emotions, sentiments and their expression are seen by men as being part of the feminine world. However, emotions are not things opposed to thought, but rather ‘embodied thoughts, steeped with the apprehension that “I am involved”’ (Rosaldo 1984: 143). Since emotionality is seen as feminine and rationality as masculine, emotions and sentiments weaken people’s chances — and men’s in particular — in the social game.

Part of a man’s life is lived within the matrimonial relationship and the exercise of fatherhood, and marriage and the constitution of a family are basic to the definition of the status of a responsible person. Nevertheless, the home and domestic life are simple points of passage for most men. Those who stay more at home are not welcome to express that preference or proclivity in public.

Marriages are seen as dictated by feeling. The lower social stratum does not own land; inheritance occurs only upon the death of the old generation; and dowry is practically non-existent. The very process of courting is seen as a romantic period, not the result of an alliance between two kin groups, and the ideal form of family is an autonomous nuclear one. The institution of *juntar* allows furthermore to begin conjugal sexual life when material conditions for the constitution of a new domestic group have not yet been reached.

A woman supposedly looks for a man who demonstrates the capacity to earn enough money and to provide for the family; a man looks for a woman who demonstrates sexual modesty. Both these ideas are contained in their reverse — *vicio*. Vice is of a libidinal kind in women and of a material (economic) kind in men. If we understand the constitution of a couple as part of a life project that completes the notion of the person, including the correct channeling of sexuality, then we can understand why celibacy is such an object of scorn. Celibate women are seen as having too much virtue of a pious kind (or the wish to show it) but they are never suspected of being homosexuals; celibate men on the other hand are seen as lacking in virility and strongly suspected to be homosexual. The married condition is seen among men in a similar way to that in which they regard work: it is a matter of honour; it is part of public prestige and it commands respect; but it means a sacrifice of adolescent, prenuptial freedom and a contract that means a risk of dishonour through the hypothetical adultery of one’s wife.

The expression of love has its timing in the life cycle. It occurs during the courting period and the object of the feeling should be the bride; it is also expected to wither away with marriage. But similar feelings live on, although in a rather phantasmatic way, among women who consume soap operas and gossip about the love life of the villagers. For men, the issue is a bit too feminine to be talked about openly, but it is channeled to poetry. Romantic love, western passion love, is the current model and it is seen also to be contradictory to the married condition; that is probably why one can hear joking, sarcastic and disappointed expressions about how love is supposed to be at the root of a lifetime commitment.

None of this invalidates the existence of loving and gratifying relationships. What concerns the anthropologist is rather the public character of a discourse (by both men and women) about the 'deceiving' nature of marriage. Accusations and blame are of two types: women say that men cannot resist the seductive allure of other women (who are usually seen as unmarried) because they are not the ones who have children. Men blame women for wanting to 'tie men up' (the local expression is *pôr a arreata*, which means to put on a horse the harness necessary to lead it). They also blame their own sexually predatory and impulsive 'nature', as well as the women who supposedly seduce them.

So marriage for most women means managing the home, not just the physical space, but also the home economy (the husband provides the money but it is administered by the wife) and the children. These two aspects have the greatest influence on the constitution of gender in children. The mother—daughter tie lasts beyond the daughter's marriage, developing into a relationship of mutual support. The mother—son tie has other complex consequences. The separation of a young man from the feminine world, the world of domesticity and maternity, is a demand imposed upon him by masculine groups as early as the end of childhood, and it leads to conflicts that may result in the creation of a mystified notion of the mother as ideal woman. I do not intend to accept uncritically some suggestions from 'object relations' psychology (Chodorow 1978) in order to assess this: masculine poems clearly express the sadness of the loss of maternal love and its non-replacement by conjugal love.

Women's confinement to the home is counterbalanced by matrifocality. The mother-woman is often addressed as the *patroa* (female boss), and as such acknowledged with mixed feelings of irony and fear on the part of men. She manages her husband's wages; she retains a substantial part of her sons' salaries; and she makes all decisions on consumption. Since she is the one who establishes networks between domestic groups, the administration of the home tends to be maximised together with other homes in her kin group, namely those of her mother, sisters and daughters. Parallel evidence of this comes from the fact that men outnumber women as regards place of origin: they are mostly from other villages, while the women are mostly from Pardais. Close kinship relations between women collapse with friendship relations: contrary to the idea that friendship is a masculine institution, feminine friendships are not only strong but twice as dense, since they are juxtaposed with kinship.

Women's capacity to conceive children, to breastfeed and to provide love and care are the elements used by hegemonic ideas to associate women with 'nature' and to prevent them from participating in public life. I believe that instead of constantly reproducing the stereotypical idea that women live oppressed in the domestic space while men enjoy privileges in the public-political sphere, we should start looking at many of the latter as compensations for a lack of real domestic power on the part of socially underprivileged men. Two conditions need to be met, however: first, when speaking about gender we need to make sure that we are speaking about a resource in a

political dispute for symbolic capital, not about an essence or a social group *strictu sensu*; and second, we need to pursue inquiry into the generic social oppression of women and the exercise of symbolic (and too often physical) violence against them.

Gender, masculinity and power: new perspectives

This analysis of situations of interaction that create and make present notions of masculinity allows us to begin to grasp the relation between multiple identities of gender and power. Gender could be best described as an open category, a general ensemble of only basically similar ‘things’; this is what is meant by the concept of ‘series’ as opposed to ‘social group’. This is particularly clear in the Portuguese meaning of the word gender (*género*), which can mean (sexual) gender, a genre or a set of things or objects, such as edible stuffs. Gender only becomes a force for social dynamics in particular situations that are always associated with other forms of social categorisation or levels of social identity, such as hierarchy, class, status, age and so on; it is their precise combination that can define empowerment and disempowerment. The issue remains how and why gender is such a strong source of metaphors for power, and how and why masculinity is a source of symbolic capital for (men’s) empowerment.

Strathern (1988) asks how people are engendered through interaction, i.e. how notions of anatomical and physiological differences are constructed, embodied and transformed through sexual contact, fatherhood and motherhood. Cornwall and Lindisfarne (1994: 5) point in this connection to the usefulness of the distinction between ‘direct’ and ‘contingent’ markers. The former are unequivocal; they are categorical gender symbols such as the pronouns ‘he’ and ‘she’. The latter are non-exclusive, connected to other ideas in a probabilistic and undetermined way: for instance, aggressiveness as a masculine attribute can also be an attribute of a certain age, physical type or personality. That is why these authors suggest three priorities as research guidelines for studies of masculinity: first, the study of processes of gender attribution; second, the study of metaphors of gender in power; and third, the relations between dominant and subordinate masculinities.

This is not quite the same as pursuing the rather comfortable and increasingly less meaningful ‘social constructionist’ strategy. As a matter of fact, in the constructionist position — as in theories of socialisation — categories of gender seem to presuppose an insurmountable biological difference of an essentialistic type upon which something is built. Biological difference, however, is in and of itself historically and culturally relative (Laqueur 1990).

According to Cornwall and Lindisfarne, the constructionist position presents several problems: it leaves us with the dichotomic categories of men and women; it assumes that there is such a thing as the unitary individual to be formed through gender roles and socialisation; it does not accept either sex or embodiment as variables (and therefore does not consider, I think, how sex is constructed). By placing gender in the unitary person, it reproduces western ideas of the individual and the commodity logic; and it sees relationships between men and women in terms of polarised, fixed identities. I would add to this that gender cannot be seen as synonymous with the social group; it is, rather, something that can in certain circumstances become a social group, but only becomes so together with some other social identity. It is only at the level of representations and ideologies that it stands on its own. On the other hand it prevents us from understanding the polyfaceted dynamic of masculinities and femininities and the use of these terms as metaphoric operators for power and differentiation, even in arenas other than those immediately connected with sex and gender.

Can we go on talking only of culture without taking into account evolutionary and biological aspects? If not, will we have to use ethology and the life sciences in order to build some bridges? The answer is a double negative. In the field of social sciences there are as yet little explored ways of understanding the constitution of embodied subjects that are particularly rich for elucidating the resilient (because essentialistic) character of gender categories. Bourdieu, focusing on issues of practice, and Merleau-Ponty on issues of perception are the main authors of two seminal theories of embodiment. For the latter, in the domain of perception the main duality of western thought is that between subject and object, while for the former, in the domain of practice, it is that between structure and practice. The epistemological goal of a theory of embodiment would be the collapsing of those dualities (Csordas 1990: 7).

For Bourdieu, a third order of knowledge needs to be outlined, beyond phenomenology and the science of the objective conditions of social life. Like Merleau-Ponty, he seeks to dislocate the study from perception of objects to the process of objectification. That would lead to the collapsing of the body-mind duality and sign-meaning duality in the concept of the 'habitus' — not as a mere collection of practices but as the unconscious and collectively inculcated principle for the generation and structuration of practices and representations (1977: 72). I believe that gender is precisely one such process of objectification of social relations, simplifying its complexity and localising in men and women characteristics of agency and power that are not inherent to them. It is therefore needed to identify those habitus that, placed in the embodied subject, reproduce gender and empower it to 'talk' about other social relations such as work and labour, politics, emotions and so forth. But that is not all: there is a 'transplant' of gender categories to the World which are then read back as attributes of the World that legitimate the different attributes and social chances of men and women as such and of specific men and women.

For Marilyn Strathern — who, with gender as a starting point, has been questioning feminism, post-modern thought, and notions of person, agency and society — gender is an open category. She sees it as 'a categorisation of persons, artefacts, events (and) sequences ... which draw upon sexual imagery (and) make concrete people's ideas about the nature of social relationships' (Strathern 1988: ix). According to Cornwall and Lindisfarne, Strathern's argument focuses on how gender difference is constructed, by paying attention to local discourses on agency, causality, person and identity. That is why she says that 'idealised masculinity is not necessarily just about relations between the sexes either' (1988: 65), but rather part of a system of production of difference. Thus the use of the notion of the 'dividual', which sees human beings as having permeable borders, experiencing a constant movement between different aspects of social life. Gender would be then one such movement. Thus, 'being "male" or being "female" emerges as a holistic unitary state only in particular circumstances each male or female form may be regarded as containing within it a suppressed, composite identity' (Strathern 1988: 14—15). The commodity logic would predispose us to be fascinated with the attributes of things and to localise possession, property, control and ideas of power in a direct relation between concrete attributes and the unitary individual (Strathern 1988: 338).

The transformational aspects of gender are treated by the author of *The gender of the gift* with the notion of 'impingement', i.e. the effects of people upon each other. It is a descriptive notion and, unlike 'power', it is not automatically associated with men or with social domination. It can describe any social transaction; in this sense, any action is inherently 'forceful' — an act of domination (Strathern 1988: 327). A complementary concept to dividuality and impingement in Strathern's work is that of

‘replication’, which concerns the collective character of relations between people of the same sex. In experiences of replication the excluded sex is implicitly present, even if only in artefacts or parts of the body that embody the other sex (1988: 121).

Dividuation, impingement, replication: men in Pardais are individuals who do not always act on the grounds of ‘being men’, but rather with justifications such as being ‘worker’, ‘poor’, ‘husband’ or ‘friend’, among other roles. But in their interactions and disputes for power, the ideology of hegemonic masculinity is a strong instrument of impingement. Thus the semantic contaminations between the ideology of masculinity and those of social inequality and power. It is in the process of replication too — as, for instance, in situations of homosociability — that the construction of the masculine category takes place, even if (or, maybe, because) ‘men are not all the same’, even when the hegemonic model says that ‘a man is a man is a man’.

As contemporary political and social movements have shown, the creation of a new hegemony will have to pass through the dismembering of the juxtapositions between ‘men’ and ‘power’, or ‘women’ and ‘oppression’, in a similar way to what happened in modern revolutions when ‘state’ (in the sense of status) was separated from ‘person’ (in the sense of citizen) and from predestined place in the social hierarchy. Both in social practice and in social science, many of us — social scientists, citizens, individual men and women — seem to be waiting for a paradigm of revolution. I hope that its name is not Godot.

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