



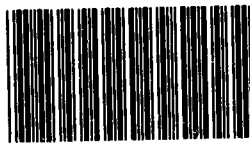
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Violent social relationships and family life in two Transvaal lowveld settlements

J C Kotzé • C S van der Waal

**Co-operative Research Programme on Marriage and Family Life
Pretoria
1995**

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The Co-operative Research Programme on Marriage and Family Life is centred in the Group: Social Dynamics of the Human Sciences Research Council. The emphasis in this programme is on the structure and dynamics of family life, the nature of family disorganization and disintegration, and the nature of changes taking place with regard to family structure and family processes.

In this report the emphasis is on violence within and around families among poor people in two Transvaal rural settlements.

The opinions expressed in the report are those of the authors and should not necessarily be viewed as those of the Main Committee of the Co-operative Research Programme on Marriage and Family Life.

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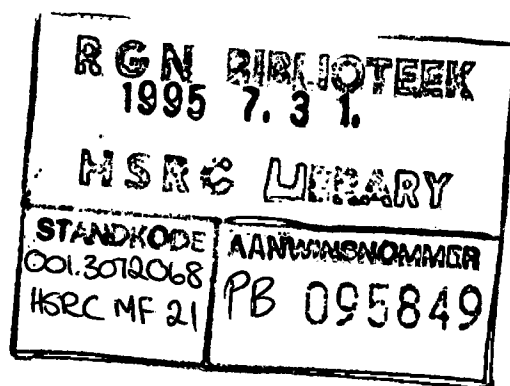
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Tel: (012) 202 2079/2014/2103

Fax: (012) 202 2891

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EKSERP

Hierdie verslag het sy oorsprong in 'n studie oor die gesinslewe in landelike tuislandgebiede in Suid-Afrika. Mettertyd is die fokus egter gekonsentreer op die opsigtelik wankelende en onsekere verwantskapsverhoudings in twee gebiede, naamlik Berlyn en Dixie in die Transvaalse laeveld.

Die klem in hierdie verslag is dus op die gebrek aan sekuriteit in gesinsverhoudings soos dit sigself manifesteer in geweldsverhoudings wat baie met die dominerings van die een geslag oor die ander, en een ouderdomsgroep oor 'n ander, te doen het.

Daar word gespekuleer dat hierdie soort maatskaplike geweld op mikrovlak heelwat te doen mag hê met die politieke en kriminele geweld wat op die meso- en makrovlak in Suid-Afrika aangetref word.

ABSTRACT

This report originated in a study on family life in South Africa's rural homeland areas; but gradually the focus narrowed to the obviously shaky and uncertain kinship relationships found in two settlements, namely Berlyn and Dixie in the Transvaal lowveld.

In this report the emphasis therefore is on the lack of security in family relationships as it is manifested in violent relationships which are closely associated with the domination of the one sex by the other, and one age group by another.

It is conjectured that the social violence found on the microlevel, may be strongly linked with political and criminal violence on the meso- and macrolevels in South Africa.

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INTRODUCTION

Research started, in all naivety, as an encompassing study of rural homeland family life as experienced and perceived by young people and children. The research material pointed to the lack of security in social relationships, and the corresponding lack of a continuous and secure family life (see Kotzé 1992; Van der Waal 1992). Therefore, the focus of the research reported here, shifted to the insecurity in family relationships as manifested in social relationships of violence which express and underlie the insecurity of family life and social relationships in general. It is thus through the events and analyses of relationships of dominance between gender and age categories reported here, specifically as they occur in violent social relations, that a better understanding of family life is hoped to be gained. The category "family" is a different phenomenon in different circumstances, and therefore the conditions for the form of family life in specific instances have to be understood.

The "family" and the "household" (or "homestead") have been defined elsewhere (Kotzé 1992). The same definition is applied here. A "family" (*ndyangu*; pl.: *mind-yangu*), in the two settlements (Berlyn and Dixie, in Northern and Eastern Transvaal, respectively) to be reported on here, operated as a particular relationship between a man, a woman, and their children, or a woman and her children (the "children" being the dependent offspring of one or both of the parents) in which the father and mother, or the mother, were continuously responsible for the care of their dependent offspring in the form of particularly food, clothing and educational costs, irrespective of whether this care was systematic or not. Other children may also have lived with a particular family, but their parents were obliged to contribute substantially, if not fully, to their food, clothes and education — physical care received from someone else than a parent constituted a privilege, not a right. This ambivalence inherent in parents' responsibility to their dependent offspring and their dependence on others to assist in the care of their children, effect a special meaning of family life for children.

As family life in Berlyn and Dixie was acted out in the context of, or in conjunction with, residential membership (of homes), and since individual families did not control sufficient material means, at least not in the long run, to be able to operate in economic or social autonomy from other families, it is necessary to consider the family also in the context of residential (homestead) membership. The term "household" is particularly unhelpful in the sense that individual members of homesteads were often members of more than one residential unit, or in the sense that individuals oscillated between homesteads. We therefore prefer to approach this matter from the vantage point of residential membership: It is less confusing and more accurate to trace the residential membership of individuals than to create "households" with economic, social or residential boundaries which do not exist in practice.

Residential membership of a *munti* (homestead) pl.: *minti* — is operationally defined here to mean having meals and/or sleeping space at a particular residential site, irrespective of whether that sleeping and eating was by right of kinship descent, or by virtue of practical necessity. So defined, residential membership statistically exceeded the populations of Berlyn and Dixie: Many inhabitants had meals and slept at more than one residential site. They were those in the less equal positions of unequal, dyadic relationships because they lacked assets to a large degree than most other people.

In these two settlements family life existed in a context of violent relationships between men and women, boys and girls, and parents and children. That is, violence inflicted upon or carried out by individuals, was shaped by gender and age relationships — as much as gender and age shaped one's membership of a family, or as much as the conditions of one's family shaped one's experience of violence as a man/boy, woman/girl or parent/child.

In Berlyn and Dixie life was violent, especially for those who were vulnerable owing to their position in the local social hierarchy. The violence and the social hierarchy were the outcome of poverty and the resultant struggle for survival in the conditions of what was a South African homeland (Gazankulu). The violence did not stem from inborn deficiencies, or from cultural values, but could be traced to the circumstances in which life was acted out. Berlyn and Dixie were not isolated or extreme examples in the South African context: Similar circumstances and social relationships were and are found all over the country. In this (and not a purely statistical) sense do we take social life in these two settlements to be representative of communities inhabited by people who were classified as "black" at the time of the research.

It is therefore necessary to remark that the often repulsive forms of social violence found, were the logical outcome of a set of circumstances. Therefore, any person in similar conditions, and with sufficient personal experience of the prevailing relationships and social strategies, would be tempted to act similarly. It is also necessary to point out that while the focus here is on social violence, life in places like Berlyn and Dixie was not solely violent. In fact, co-operation, mutual assistance, agreement and forgiveness were all central aspects of daily life. That is, people did not want to be violent. They were forced to be so by experiences beyond their control. Why then concentrate on this dark side of the life of people who have suffered so much? The justification for studies such as this is that we need to know how the way in which relationships in South Africa were organized, affected the life of the vulnerable, the "wretched", people. Obviously, we do not wish to portray people as the passive victims of violence or poverty. But equally obvious is the fact that people cannot

change themselves unless those who dictate their conditions of living, also change. We cannot end violence by education, training or legislation whilst the experiences which lead to violence among people remain unchanged. To put it bluntly: We cannot tell people to stop their nonsense if we are an integral part of their lives, if we contribute to that nonsense, and do not stop our own nonsense.

For too long social scientists have occupied themselves with either smooth-running social totalities or with theoretical constructs which overshadow everyday living in particular relationships, including conflict and violence, in specified social situations. Political inhibitions (in the South African context) to expose violent domestic relationships may also have played a role. In any case, studies which look at the microlevel of social relationships in their full scope as honestly as did those of Turnbull (1972) and Scheper-Hughes (1992), still need to be undertaken in South Africa. The work of McKendrick, Hoffmann and associates (1990) did bring together relevant local material, and their approach is very useful, but in terms of an analysis of the violence of everyday living, especially in the African rural areas, they provided very little substance. This is mainly due to the disciplinary background of the writers (social work and psychology). Clearly, sociologists and anthropologists have to record and analyze everyday life in both its negative and positive manifestations. The study of violence in an Israeli community by Emmanuel Marx (1976) is an example of the kind of micro-contextual work we need, although his focus on violence as a social instrument, a form of risk taking and communication, has its limitations. While violence certainly also has its genetic and psychological aspects (see Straker 1992 for a good South African study on the psychology of violence in the context of township resistance), we still know too little of the way in which social relationships, on the level of family life, shape violence and are shaped by it. We also still need to know how social constructions of violence vary between social contexts.

The notion of violence used in this report is broad. It includes physical violence such as assaults, rapes, fights and beatings, but also verbal attacks such as threats of physical violence, cursings and scoldings. It also includes non-physical, or psychological, violence in the form of refusals to provide certain resources or co-operation. Fundamentally, however, violent acts or incidents are not just manifestations of violence; they form part of a system of unequal relationships in which one person is able to dominate (or "diminish" — see the quote from Pinthus below) another. Gender studies have brought a better understanding of domination and violence:

A sociological definition of violence needs to include both the use of force and its threat to both compel or constrain women to behave or not to behave in given ways (Hanmer & Maynard 1987:6).

The most useful definition of violence, however, comes from Pinthus:

Violence should be understood as *any action or structure that diminishes another human being*; and in accepting this definition we must see that the basic structures of our society are often violent in concept. We must recognise the violence built into many of our institutions such as our schools and places of work in that they are competitive, hierarchical, non-democratic and at times unjust (Pinthus, as quoted by Ramazanoglu 1987:64 — our emphasis).

Violence, therefore, goes beyond acts or incidents. Aristotle grasped this inclusive meaning long ago:

Violence seems to be that whose moving principle is outside, the person compelled contributing nothing (Aristotle, as quoted by Degenaar 1980:14).

Degenaar (1980:18) also demonstrated that there are logical connections between various forms of violence:

The observational term violence is used to designate a non-observational meaning of violation, and the image of extreme physical force is built into the meaning of the word in a new context.

The term “structural violence” is used when people are prevented from realizing their full potential by unjust structures, as happened in South Africa under apartheid. The violence of poverty caused by unjust institutions is one example of structural violence (Degenaar 1980:19, 20).

This inclusive definition permits us to see the varieties, often subtle, of active and reactive acts of intimidation and defence. This notion of violence, used in several recent studies (McKendrick & Hoffmann 1990; Riches 1986) is more fruitful than to restrict the analysis to the more brutal physical forms. It was, for instance, extremely difficult for girls and women in Berlyn and Dixie to return the assaults on them in kind, but they did have the power to diminish their counterparts in several, less directly physical, ways.

This broad definition of violence permits the inclusion of both an emic and contextual perspective (Riches 1986). In Berlyn and Dixie, domestic and other social violence was clearly a local, even kin-related matter, which seldom led to reports to the police, as it was dealt with locally either informally or, more rarely, in the tribal court. Also, much of the suffering in Berlyn was ascribed to the violence of witchcraft. These two examples show that the perception of violence in Berlyn and Dixie was quite different from that of the industrialized middle class from which a researcher usually comes.

At a time when political violence and criminal violence are some of the most deeply felt social ills in South Africa, it is necessary to look for possible links between the killings and brutalizations which have a political and criminal face, and those actions, ranging from threats to physical acts, which have a more domestic character and which seem to precede or follow such acts, although they are far less visible and far less reported in social science research. Although McKendrick and Hoffmann (1990:41) state that a direct causal link between political and social violence has not been demonstrated, they also state that a strong association of the two can be demonstrated (1990:164; cf. Segel & Labe 1990). It is our view that the experience of social violence, such as is described in the following pages, is a necessary, although not sufficient condition for the forms of political and criminal violence which traumatize our country, and *vice versa*. Looking at political and criminal violence in isolation will clearly not do. They have to be situated in the social, political and economic context in which they exist. The active and passive experience of social violence is probably one of the direct sources from which the more dramatic forms of violence in our society flow. People learn, in their experience of social and political violence, to become emotionally hardened, on the one hand, and that violence is the only effective and therefore acceptable social instrument in situations of extreme competition and confrontation, on the other hand. The search for the healing of relationships in our country needs to take this dialectical relationship between the social and political faces of violence into account. But it particularly needs to account for the dialectic relationship between poor and affluent families in South Africa.

There is a particularly compelling reason both for focusing on violence within the context of family life, and for defining violence more inclusively. Though violence in South Africa is caught in a vicious circle, it has a starting and terminal point. It starts in white, affluent families and it culminates in poor, black families in a profoundly significant way. This is to say, the violence described here in Berlyn and Dixie is part of a total system of which white families form an integral and crucial part. To argue that we have two discrete types of families in South Africa (one violent and the other non-violent) is to pursue the same flawed, dualist argument we have had in the field of economics (First and Third World). For any state to uphold a system which exploits a part of the population, it needs the support of another part of the population. Or, no state can uphold an authoritarian system on its own; it needs the support of a family system which is at least predominantly authoritarian. The majority of those people who had the vote, needed to have acquired their tastes for an authoritarian system in their families in order for them to have supported the authoritarian government we had in South Africa. Surely no authoritarian government,

and the state it controls, could have survived from 1948 until 1994 in a society predominantly based on a truly democratic family life. Would it have been possible for these democratic families to produce the people who manned the authoritarian state apparatus (the defence and police forces, the educational system and the rest of the civil service) as well as authoritarian type business? From the fact that business in South Africa (despite a new democratic government) is still overwhelmingly undemocratic (cf. Lascaris & Lipkin 1993:40), we may deduce another fact: Authoritarianism in business is fed by at least some degree of authoritarianism in family life. Our premise, contextually, is therefore as follows: For a state to have been able to maintain an authoritarian system for almost half a century, it required the backing and feeding ground of authoritarian type families of some statistical magnitude; we therefore cannot exclude affluent white families from the violence prevalent among poor black families; we cannot eradicate violence among poor black families without affluent white families changing their perception of humanity — *the solution to the problem of violence lies both with poor and white families, but firstly with white families where the problem originates*. To narrow down the definition of violence to mere physical acts, is to set apart white, affluent families from the total, holistic process of violence; which is to miss both the point and the solution to a ghastly problem of society. Hypocrisy has failed us all along, and it will continue to do so.



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PART I: BERLYN

1. THE SETTING

The research, reported here, was done in 1991 and 1992 in the Berlyn settlement in the Ritavi-2 district of Gazankulu in the Northern Transvaal, where I (Van der Waal) had been looking into social conditions since 1986. I visited Berlyn every three months for short periods during the period reported here and, from January to July 1992, I spent several weeks there to add to earlier periods of participant observation. Three young men, still in secondary school, at different times wrote daily reports in *xiChangana* (Tsonga) about events in the settlement during the research period. Cases and relationships of violence in 1991 and 1992 were extracted for analysis in this report. The names of the people involved have been changed in the case material for obvious reasons.

The Ritavi-2 district was close to the Letaba valley fruit farms, mainly citrus, where many of the women of Berlyn worked in the labour-intensive winter period. The district was the most "developed" of Gazankulu (Van der Waal 1991). The district's central town, Nkowankowa, was inhabited mainly by homeland government officials and other salaried people. In Nkowankowa there were a number of light industries where some of the women of Berlyn worked. Apart from the larger number of local job opportunities, the rest of the district was very similar to other rural areas of Gazankulu. Poverty was common and competition for scarce resources therefore high.

The research was done among a rural closer settlement population consisting of about 375 people associated with 65 residential stands. Fluid and mostly partial households were situated on the residential stands, which were often fenced to keep livestock out of the maize and vegetables planted around the homesteads in summer. Cattle were owned by a few residents, more people had goats, and some kept donkeys for ploughing and the transport of purchases, firewood and building materials. Discussions at the weekly Sunday community meetings, apart from court cases and administrative announcements, centred around the poor state of the available infrastructure (untarred roads and water), and education. Comparing their settlement with the nearby white town of Letsitele or Nkowankowa, the people of Berlyn saw many glaring examples of their neglect. They saw untarred and neglected streets running through their settlement, one cafe, one unused clinic building, one or two of the communal taps providing water for all the inhabitants, but only when the pump and its attendant were willing, a half-finished primary school building, and a half-finished garden project. One family had the use of a telephone, and one migrant labourer possessed a pick-up which was seen in the settlement every few months

during his visits. The children of Berlyn attended schools in other settlements, as the attempts, over a number of years, to build a primary school had not yet crystallized into more than five unfinished classrooms. Since this school was to be a "community school", the people had to collect funds for it over several years, before the government would start to subsidize the project.

Poverty was common in Berlyn. It was, in fact, the general condition, with some differentiation between households and variations in the life of a household and its individual members. The economically active men of Berlyn were mostly migrant labourers, working in the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging area. Others worked in towns in the area or inside Gazankulu as labourers on government projects or in one of the government departments such as water provision. The educational qualifications of the men and women of Berlyn were very low, and most persons had not even attended secondary school. The result was that they only qualified for the lowest-paid jobs. In 1990, men earned between R120 and R2 056 per month as migrants, while women earned between R80 and R482 per month in their jobs, which were mostly found in the local area. The women of Berlyn were mainly working on the white-owned farms, or in Gazankulu itself where some had jobs on government projects or, less often, in the light industries of Nkowankowa. Many men did not permit their wives to take a job, saying that they would be tempted to have lovers there. Given the high dependency ratio and the unemployment rate in the settlement (unemployment in 1990: 33 % of the economically active men, and 62 % of the economically active women), the income from the formal sector had to be divided between many dependants. Migrants generally remitted only a small portion of their income home.

The dependants in Berlyn had to use all kinds of economic and social strategies to survive in these circumstances. Such strategies consisted of exploiting informal economic opportunities such as donkey cart transport, subsistence agriculture, building, selling beer, vegetables and fruit, and various small-scale craft and repair jobs. Women and girls sometimes entered into temporary sexual relationships in anticipation of gifts of money from their temporary partners. These partners came from places like Nkowankowa, were usually employed, and often possessed motorcars.

Social strategies to cope with the extreme conditions of life in Berlyn led to the fluidity of households and families ("household" refers to the association of people on the basis of co-residence and co-mensality; "family" obviously refers to a kinship-based association). Moving dependent family members between households was a survival strategy which permitted temporary adaptation to the changing demands of life. Young women and children were especially prone to these interhousehold movements, but for all residents a high level of geographical and residential mobility

was common. In 1990, 43 % of the population of Berlyn experienced residential changes or instability (including fostering, and migrancy, but excluding births and deaths) (Van der Waal 1992).

Another way of coping with poverty was through the containment of competition between social categories in the family. Men, as the dominant category, demanded submission from their wives and children. Their social standing was enhanced by their control of household income and spending, the freedom they had to engage in plural sexual relationships, and the primary access they had to household resources such as food and labour. Women seldom had the economic opportunity to earn as much as their husbands, and were thus permanently dependent on them. Following gender, age was the second most important criterion of social differentiation. Children were made aware of their relative junior position in several ways. One of these was the amount of household labour which children had to perform, such as herding, fetching water, cooking food, looking after young siblings, washing clothes, etc. The boundaries between the social categories mentioned were also maintained by the way acts of violence were distributed between these categories.

2. THE INCIDENCE OF VIOLENT EVENTS

Although this study is not limited to violent events, such as physical and verbal conflict, these more dramatic forms of violence give us an indication of the levels of violence in a given social situation. A first indication of the incidence of violence in Berlyn can be obtained by quantifying the report of events in which open violence was used. In my count, a series of related violent events was regarded as one incident in order to relate such events to a subject and an object, based on the first violent act. Obviously, this way of identifying and counting has its drawbacks in that it focuses only on the more spectacular forms of violence, and that it counts together events which occurred in widely different circumstances. Nevertheless, it may give us an indication of patterns relating to the situation and dynamics of social categories.

A total of 757 cases of violence were mentioned in the daily reports of my research assistants for the two-year period 1991-1992 in which residents of Berlyn were involved. Disaggregating these acts into the four main social categories, the social stratification was found to be replicated by the incidence of active and passive involvement of men, women, boys and girls (arbitrarily defined by age under 20) respectively. Table 1 shows some significant characteristics of social violence in Berlyn: (a) boys were involved in more such events than the other categories; (b) men were more often active than passive in violence; (c) girls were mostly passive in such acts; and (d) men and boys used much more physical violence than did women and girls.

Table 1: The incidence of violence in Berlyn, 1991-1992

	Men pass.	Women pass.	Boys pass.	Girls pass.	Total
Men active					
Physical*	23	45	53	8	129
Verbal*	21	23	29	9	82
Subtotal	44	68	82	17	211
Women active					
Physical	25	18	26	14	83
Verbal	25	25	23	20	93
Subtotal	50	43	49	34	176
Boys active					
Physical	10	12	133	96	251
Verbal	3	5	27	19	54
Subtotal	13	17	160	115	305
Girls active					
Physical	2	2	10	22	36
Verbal	2	2	14	11	29
Subtotal	4	4	24	33	65
Total	111	132	315	199	757

*(“Physical” includes verbal violence as well. “Verbal” does not include physical violence.)

Broad categories and a synoptic table can never, however, approach the realities of violent acts, nor can it help us understand the violence inherent in the system as a whole. Since my research in Berlyn started in 1986, two violent deaths of females occurred as a result of disciplining by males: one an unfaithful wife, and one a foster girl (aged four) who could not yet herd the goats in her charge. Both were beaten to death by senior males close to them (a husband, a cousin), in anger for their mistakes. Male-on-female violence differed from other violent acts in its extreme physically violent form. Women and girls were often beaten for the most trivial causes, and they were furthermore vulnerable to sexual abuse in the form of rape, forced sex, or sexual harassment. The economic and social dependence of women made them also vulnerable to material reduction in several ways. Men could refuse them shelter or money, but also the right to work or the right to education. In a non-physical way men diminished women by their threats of physical violence, their absence from home

when they were in a position to be home, verbal abuse, and symbolic reinforcement of their domination. Boys did much the same to girls, but added to this by denying paternity when it suited them. Women and girls resorted to verbal attacks, and other less direct ways of confrontation more often than men and boys in gender conflicts, because of their vulnerable position. Women also used their influence over male relatives quite often to reach out in an indirect way, as for example when a mother asked an older son to beat a younger one.

3. LAYERS OF VIOLENCE

The best way to obtain an understanding of the relationships of violence in a place like Berlyn is to look at personalized experience. This will allow us to consider the different ways people of different social categories and in different social groups or associations were using violence and how such violence related to their circumstances. The case material and interpretation is arranged according to the place of the particular social category in the local social hierarchy. Though social categories are used here to show the age and gender dynamics of violent relationships, people do not interact solely in terms of broad categories which may be relevant for analysis. Most cases of violence among people in Berlyn were between people living closely together, often in the same family or household. Thus the terms "men", "boys", "women" and "girls" also incorporate kinship and marital connotations such as the social identities of "fathers", "husbands", "mothers", "wives", "sons", "brothers", "boyfriends", "daughters", "sisters" and "girlfriends". The case material will bring out the interaction between individuals in their multiple social identities, for which the family and household are major daily arenas.

3.1 INTERACTION WITH OUTSIDERS

The powerful outside forces whose influence was experienced by people living in Berlyn, were mostly those of officials and other individuals who represented the various levels of authority: the Nkuna tribal authority, the Gazankulu government as administered from the local district centre, and the white farming community in the Letaba valley. It also included neighbouring settlements which competed with Berlyn people for the scarce resources in the area, such as education and water. The case material highlights incidents of conflict.

- The women got up early to put their plastic containers in the queue at the tap so that when the water would start to flow, they would get it in time. They waited for four hours, from six to ten, at the only available tap for the water to be

pumped. Fed-up with the situation, they went to the headman to complain. They said that the water pump attendant wanted them to quarrel, as occurred regularly when some of the women had to go home to eat or to attend to other household duties, and the long queue of unattended water containers was then jumped by someone. The headman went to see the pump attendant in the company of a local man who worked for the Gazankulu Department of Works. The pump attendant told the headman that he first wanted to finish eating but, when he eventually did start the engine because of the social pressure exerted on him, he stopped it before the time agreed upon, apparently to show everyone concerned that he was in charge of this facility.

On another day, the women went to the pump attendant to complain to him that the water did not reach the tap at Berlyn although the pump was running and water was available at the new stands. Sarcastically, he told them to tell the machine that they wanted water, because it was the machine which was pumping it. They scolded him, he returned in kind. The women then went to the headman to tell him about their problem, but he referred them back to the pump attendant.

- Children were told, at the start of the school year, not to come to their school, in the neighbouring settlement, without their school fees. The principal had also said only those who paid would receive school books. Children without covers for their books were threatened with a beating if they did not buy the covers. Later in the year, the headman of the neighbouring settlement instructed the principal to insist on a contribution of R50 from every family for the building of a secondary school or else the children would have to stay at home. The people of Berlyn were upset, because they were also contributing money to build their own primary school and, furthermore, they had not been consulted about this levy.
- David (19 years) and Nico (15 years), boys from Berlyn, carried sand for building to the stand of David's sister, and they came back with Fanuel (4 years), the son of David's sister, riding on the cart. Crossing the tar road, they were stopped by traffic officers for beating the donkeys with a whip. Expecting to be yoked with the donkeys and whipped by the officers, the older boys ran away, leaving Fanuel crying on the cart. He cried more when the officers played at shooting the boys, while laughing about the effect of their action.
- Thandi (19 years) had been in labour all night long. Her mother took her on the 05:30 bus to the hospital, but they were told that they should have gone to the clinic for examination and registration to start with. Back at the clinic, an

ambulance was called from the hospital to carry Thandi and her mother back to the hospital. Only then could the mother come back to prepare food and go to her work.

The case material shows that the people of Berlyn were very much at the mercy of outside forces. The reason for their vulnerability was that they had no political power to change the relationships of authority under which they lived, as these were structured undemocratically. The tribal authority was the local centre of power for matters with regard to occupational rights and other land-use matters, civil disputes and nature conservation, with the headman as the local representative of the chief. Falling out with the tribal hierarchy might lead to informal pressure to leave the community. From time to time tribal police fined women for having cut living trees for firewood. Stand owners were also fined for not building toilets. The next level of authority was the Gazankulu government whose officials worked in the fields of justice, transport, water provision, agriculture, education, social services, etc. From the case material it is clear that women, in their desperation and despite their socially junior position, took the initiative to confront the local water pump attendant about his poor performance. Officials' negligence of the basic needs of the settlement population was an extension of the structural violence in the South African society, which added to the pressures experienced by the poor population. Salaried Gazankulu officials abused their authority on occasion, as exemplified above in the behaviour of the traffic officers who intimidated road users, and the nurses who failed to attend to the needs of their patients. This behaviour was not restricted to isolated cases.

Education was an area of conflict of several kinds. Before the school boycott of 1990, children were beaten much more than after the boycott in which the students demanded an end to corporal punishment. The fear of being beaten definitely contributed to the absence of those children who for several reasons failed to perform academically, or were not able to meet the requirements put to them by the teachers. Such requirements pertained to school funds, book covers, and school uniforms. The case material shows that children were sent home from school when they lacked these requirements. It is also clear that there was a lot of competition between the settlement of Berlyn and its immediate neighbour, Mulati, regarding the use of the primary school and the building of a secondary school. The same negative competition for scarce resources occurred in connection with the clinic building which the two settlements had to share, the primary health club ("Care Group") and vegetable gardens.

Finally, there was the relationship with the farmers of the Letaba valley. The poor remuneration of farm workers was a constant topic of discussion. Some farmers paid

less than others (as low as R5 per day in 1994), but overall wages in the agricultural sector was low — much lower than elsewhere. This in itself amounted to structural violence, because it created conditions of poverty and underdevelopment which led to fierce competition for scarce resources, and a lack of security. The employment structure of the country as a whole, the system of migrant labour, and the lack of social benefits all contributed to this situation. Apart from the economic structure, the relationship between farmers and labourers was still, in many cases, very hierarchical. There had been considerable improvement in relationships over the last number of years, with some farmers taking the lead in establishing branches of the Rural Foundation and providing better facilities for their workers. The inhabitants of Berlyn, however, still regarded the whites of the surrounding platteland as people who preferred to be called “baas” and who should be treated with circumspection in order to avoid being beaten. Farm owners on occasion shot at trespassers and poachers, or had them caught and beaten by the farm workers, thus contributing to the persistence of this stereotype. In 1992 AWB signs were painted on cattle which had been mutilated in the neighbouring settlement of Mafarana. This incident constituted an act of white racist terrorism in the politically volatile climate of the time. It was interpreted by the people of the settlements to be associated with the incidents of indiscriminate shooting of cattle at night in those days. The shootings were clearly carried out by outsiders, because they occurred near the tarred road. They were, however, not caused by cattle roaming dangerously on the road, as the beasts were inside the fenced grazing camps. People also mentioned stretches of the tarred road in the white farming district which were unsafe at night for black people. They said that whites in pick-ups shot at pedestrians at random. There was also a threat of repressive violence during the unrest of 1986 and 1990 with the deployment of soldiers and police in and around the settlement.

3.2 MEN AND THEIR VIOLENT SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

- A migrant worker, Petrus (41 years), had returned to his home in 1990 in order to be able to attend to a variety of domestic troubles. He found various low-paid jobs on farms in the Letaba district, interspersed with periods of unemployment, until he landed a government job as a labourer in May 1992. While unemployed, he sold off some of the cattle he had inherited from his father, and tried to obtain some money by selling bottled beer. Meanwhile his wife, Maria (24 years), earned some money in the informal sector by perming hair. The two children were still young and dependent. Even when Petrus was working, Maria had affairs with other men because the money he sent was not enough for the household. Her lovers used to buy her clothes and other items which she needed,

or they gave her gifts of money. Petrus knew about these affairs and had sometimes come home unexpectedly, while he was still working as a migrant, to check whether Maria was sleeping at home. Another way he devised to stop her from having affairs was to take her with him to his job on the Reef, where he could control her movements, and she could, in addition, earn some money as a char. During Maria's absence, the only child they had at that time (then 7 years) was taken care of by a sister of Petrus. The couple often had fights over their affairs.

Once, in 1990, she found him with another woman, grabbed him by the penis and he stabbed her. She then left him to stay with her agnates for several weeks, but she eventually returned after he had sent for her, asking her brother's pardon with an amount of R120.

One day in 1991, Petrus found her sitting with a man near the spruit. He called her home and asked her why she was having an affair and did not cook food at home. She answered that she had affairs because he was not working, she had to care for her child and there was no mealie meal in the home. Petrus wanted to beat her, then both of them grabbed knives. She refused to borrow mealie meal; he therefore had to borrow it himself, from relatives. But she then refused to cook it. He then beat her and she left the stand, only to return when a relative of Petrus reconciled them. This event did not stop the affairs or the fights.

On another occasion they again fought about him having an affair with a girl in Mulati, although he had forbidden Maria to have affairs; which she had to engage in because he was not employed. When she was beaten because she had challenged him, she ran out into the night, but he followed her and brought her back.

The next time they fought, she packed her belongings and said that she would go. Petrus forbade her, saying that she wanted to leave him only now that he was unemployed, while she had not said she wanted to leave him when he was working. A male relative helped Petrus to convince Maria to stay on.

Petrus and his brother, who was home on leave, were drinking in the shebeen with other relatives and friends to celebrate the recent birth of the brother's youngest child. Petrus told his brother that Simon, a man from the settlement, was having affairs with their wives — he had once found Simon standing next to his brother's attractive wife. They decided to confront Simon and said they would kill him. They took a knife and went to Simon's stand where they called out to him from the street, scolding him and challenging him: "Come out from there, come here so that we can kill you here!" Simon remained in his yard, warning the younger men to leave: "Petrus, you are still young, stop what you are doing

and go!" Petrus and his brother eventually left, still rebuking Simon on their way back to the shebeen.

A few days later, while Petrus and his brother were drinking home-made beer at a Berlyn home, a man from Mulati took the beer from Petrus's brother and drank it all by way of challenging him. When Petrus and his brother complained, they received further verbal challenges about their ability to buy more beer: "So where did you get the money you buy beer with, because you said you did not have money?" Petrus then said: "We have much money, not like you who always take from the old women when they get their pension." The man then said: "These elderly women, you are referring to your mother who has died because of a lack of money to buy beer!" Petrus's brother then beat the man, saying: "It was you who killed my mother!" A fight erupted in which the brothers beat up the man, who then left. On other occasions Petrus also became involved in fights with men with whom he was drinking, usually on the issue of who was responsible for paying for the drinks.

One evening, when Petrus's brother was again at work, Petrus came home after drinking with friends. Just outside the settlement they found Simon and Petrus's brother's wife having sex. When Simon ran away, one of Petrus's friends raped the woman, then Petrus had sex with her as well, after threatening to tell her husband about her affair, so she could not refuse him. A month later, the woman was beaten up by another man with whom she had had an affair. Petrus, representing his migrant brother, went to her home with other relatives to find out what had happened. At first she lied about it, telling them about an injury at her work. Then the man with whom she had had an affair, arrived and told them what had happened. He said he was under the impression that she was not married and he had even paid her debt of R800 at a *machonisi* (person who lends out money at exorbitant interest rates). Petrus then asked them to end the affair, because she had a husband who would kill one of them.

Petrus sent his son to herd goats with his female cousin, because the goats were troubling them a lot by straying on to the fields of other people, but instead Michael (9 years) went to play football at his other cousin's home. He lied to his father, saying that he had herded cattle, but Petrus took him along to the cattle herd-boy who said that Michael had not helped him. Petrus then beat Michael with a belt because he had lied to his father.

- At a community meeting, the headman reported about attending a "population development" talk where the use of contraceptives was promoted to prevent Aids. The *tindhuna* (headmen) had been told that they should tell their people to use

contraceptives which they could get from a doctor or from the clinic. The men of Berlyn retorted that the problem was that the women and girls of Berlyn were having extramarital affairs; thus to allow them to use contraceptives would turn them into prostitutes, because they would no longer fear becoming pregnant, even if "they would be in love with ten men".

George (28 years), a man usually unemployed, had a temporary job. One day he did not go home after work, but went to his lover's place to sleep there. His wife, Alice (20 years), asked her mother-in-law where George had gone, but she said she did not know. The following day he did not send a message home to say where he was. After work, he first visited a friend, then he arrived home and asked for his food, but Alice ignored him. When asked again, she told him to eat where he had come from. He told her that he would leave and come back when he liked, but she ignored him again. He asked her again to bring his food and when she kept refusing, he hit her. She tried to defend herself and scolded him, while he was beating her, until her mother-in-law saved her. George's mother wanted to know what the fight was about, and on hearing the story, said that Alice should go and cook for George — she should not allow a fight to develop. She also spoke to George, privately, who told her that his wife had not carried out her duty towards him, and had told him to eat where he had come from. He told his mother about his girlfriend, saying that he now had two wives and loved both of them. Alice then cooked the food, and had it sent to her husband. Next, she started packing her clothes to leave him, but she was persuaded by her mother-in-law to stay, while George promised not to go to his lover again. He told Alice that he had slept away from home because it had become dark while he was visiting in Mafarana. Alice and George did not speak to each other anymore that night.

Two weeks later, a co-worker of George told Alice that George was continuing his affair with the woman he worked with. She said that George used to send one of the workers to fetch food from this woman, or he stayed with her all day without working. The other workers had to tell lies to the foreman when he came to check their work and wanted to know where these two had gone to. Alice then became very angry because he was again sleeping away from home some nights. She tried to oppose him again by refusing to talk to him or to give him food, while she cried. She told George that his food was in Mafarana at the home of the other worker. When he asked her where she had heard that he had an affair, she still refused to talk, while washing their baby son. George then became very angry, he beat and kicked her until she told him the name of the woman who

had told her. George went straight to the woman's house, scolding her and threatening to beat her. She threatened to report him to the police, at which he retorted that she could go by all means; he would not accept being rebuked by "a woman who had told lies to his wife". He then went to Mulati to drink. Meanwhile, Alice had left to take her child to her mother in Mulati, possibly in preparation to leave him. When George saw her there with their son, he beat her again, saying that he did not want his child to be at the house in Mulati. Alice, crying all the way, went to her mother to fetch the child. When she had told her mother everything that had happened, her mother reprimanded her for not obtaining her husband's permission to take the child away. Alice was chased away, and told to return to her husband. When she arrived there, her mother-in-law repeated the whole "sermon", telling her that she had done the wrong thing by taking the child away without George's permission, even if they had quarrelled. Alice could do nothing more than tell her mother-in-law that she was siding with her son against her, and that the mother knew everything about his affairs.

- A young man (20 years) who was a soldier, arrived home. He had been married several times, but his wives had all left him. He told his younger brother, when they were paying his accounts in town, that he now wanted to marry again in order *a ta n'wi salela na nhundzu ya yena loko a nga ri kona ekaya* (to leave his property in her care when he was not at home). He also asked his parents to assist him, because he was now tired of wives who left him after a while, while he did not know why they did so. He said he now wanted to have a wife *loyi a nga ta hlayisa swilo swa yena* (who would look after his things). The parents advised him to look for a local girl, because then they would be better able to choose a suitable woman. He said that he did not know a woman in Berlyn who was good. His parents then suggested a girl whom they regarded as a suitable wife. His father also went to the maroela tree at their home to *phahla* (talk to the ancestors). That same evening, the son sent a message to the girl whom his father fancied and asked her to come to his place. She was unwilling, but he managed to entice her with promises of buying nice things for her. For that evening he had bought cookies, cold drink and sweets, played his record-player in his hut, and invited friends to join them. When the friends had left, after being given a sign, he locked the door to keep the girl there, although she said she wanted to leave.
- A man, Daniel (30 years), who had a job at the local agricultural project, and who used a considerable portion of his wages for alcohol, came home one

evening to find his wife out. On asking the relatives, nobody could tell him where she was. He then went to Mulati to drink, but on his way he found his wife standing with a man under a tree outside the settlement. The man ran away. Daniel then told his wife to go home and then hit her. She ran home and sat on the bed. He told her to take her things and go to her parents in Mulati, because he did not want to be killed by "her people". Daniel then went to tell his grandmother about his problem. She said he should tell his mother when she arrived home. Daniel went home again and found his wife still there. He then beat her with his fists. His wife fled to her mother-in-law who had meanwhile arrived home. Daniel told his mother that he wanted his wife to go to her *nuna wa ntiyiso* (real husband), the boyfriend. Daniel's mother then asked the wife who this boyfriend was. She confessed the affair, asked to be forgiven, and said she would leave the boyfriend. She said she must have been possessed by Satan and was also misled by a friend. Daniel's mother said Daniel should call the boyfriend to tell him to leave his wife alone, without quarrelling or fighting with him. Instead, Daniel told his wife to go to the man herself to tell him that she would end the affair.

- A woman from whom 120 bricks had been stolen, went to a stand nearby to see if the bricks lying there were possibly hers. On seeing her, a man at the site scolded her, saying "she was having shit, he would beat her, he would kick her in the vagina in order that she could stop fucking around". When this was testified in the local court, the people rolled with laughter. The other party testified that *she* had said "*they* would shit", and that she would get the Mozambicans to kill them.
- A married woman (29 years) had incurred a debt about which the creditor, a friend of her husband, came to see her. The husband was upset, since she had not asked his permission for making this debt, and neither she nor he could pay the amount of R40. She asked forgiveness from her husband, who then extracted himself from the situation by leaving. The creditor insisted on getting his money, and the woman told him to take any of her possessions. He then said he would be paid by her sleeping with him, which she then allowed, after sending the children away.
- A migrant (22 years) from Johannesburg arrived home with his new wife. His previous wife, Elizabeth, and their children were at her parents since he had seriously neglected them, just as his father had done in the case of his family. The man wanted to take his son with him to Johannesburg, therefore he asked his

mother to send people to the nearby settlement to ask to see his son. Elizabeth refused to allow the child to go to his father, saying that if he wanted the child, he should take her as well. If he really wanted to see his son, he could come to her place to see him. Then, at night, the man went to a place near Elizabeth's home from where he sent a message to Elizabeth to bring the son to him. She took the son there, but refused to let the boy go with his father to Johannesburg. The man then tried to take the child by force, but she called her brothers to help her. When they arrived, the man produced his gun, fired a warning shot and, thus intimidating the mother, got her to ready the child to go with him the following day.

The events above introduce us to several of the relationships which were marked by violent behaviour and violent institutions. Men dominated women and children in several ways in accordance with a system of patriarchy. If this domination was opposed, it was often enforced by violent means. Most of the violence of men on women was directed towards wives or girlfriends. Violence among men in most cases took place between non-relatives. Men directed their anger at boys who were their sons and girls who were their daughters, or at junior agnates of both sexes.

One of the most striking differences that was maintained between men and women was men's exclusive right to have extramarital affairs. A wife questioning this right was easily beaten. But she was also beaten when she engaged in an affair herself, because this infringed on the husband's exclusive right to his wife's sexuality. Her dependence was reinforced by the reluctance of the husband to give her permission to work outside the home, lest she start an affair there. However, many women did not have much of a choice in this regard. They suffered the violence of neglect by a migrant husband in town or an unemployed one at home, and they knew that salaried local men were always looking for new affairs and offering gifts of money in exchange. Even such temporary relationships could, however, end violently when the husband discovered that she, like he, had multiple sexual relationships. George could use this ambiguity of the social system with regard to his sister-in-law. She was his easy sexual prey because of her vulnerability as a neglected married woman caught in the act with another man. At a later stage he could preach to her according to the ethical guideline of chastity — applicable to married women only. Her vulnerability made her keep quiet about his sexual relationship with her, and she had to tell lies about her transactional sexual relationships, while he, on behalf of his brother whom he had recently cheated, was righteously telling her boyfriend to leave her. The onus was thus on a wife to stay in line, not on a husband.

This impossible but handy way (for men) in which gender relationships were organized, had a price: It had to be upheld by force, as it contained no moral motivating power which could urge women to act according to this male-made rule, especially if they knew that their husbands were having affairs themselves. Wives had several means of confronting their husbands, depending on circumstances, but using any of these constituted a substantial risk. Wives resisted their husbands by refusing to obey orders. They quarrelled with them, they threatened to leave them and, in exceptional cases, they fought back physically, as did George's wife, Maria. In all these cases they could expect to be beaten severely, sometimes with an instrument such as a whip or a belt, or even to be stabbed with a knife. It was to their advantage to make a lot of noise in such a fight, as this might lead to an early intervention by a relative or neighbour on behalf of the woman. As seen in the case study, both men and women intervened in fights or beatings.

While the husbands were working away from home, where they often had affairs which led to the neglect of their dependants, other men used the opportunity to have affairs with the wives. While the women were mostly beaten in such cases, the confrontation between men over affairs with a married woman seldom led to an open fight. At most, verbal threats of serious physical violence were made, such as beating, stabbing or even killing the rival. Cursing a man's mother was also considered to be an effective attack. Between men, age was an important criterion for seniority, and it was expected of older men to beat up younger men in case of a conflict, rather than *vice versa*. The stretch of street in front of a stand was the area where threats were made, while the privacy of the home was respected in most cases. Whereas physical violence between men was seldom used in a conflict about a woman, it was often resorted to in conflicts about beer or other material assets. The use of alcohol played an important role in male-on-male violence. Often fights or quarrels erupted at beer drinking, where men could become quite aggressive when somebody cheated them out of a drink in public. Conflict at beer drinking was often, but not exclusively, between local men and outsiders. Such conflict often centred on the breach of reciprocal drinking relationships between kin or friends. Kinship and neighbourhood bonds were also used as support against a perceived threat.

A man beating a boy was usually his father or a senior agnate. Non-related boys were, however, also beaten or scolded when they were caught doing something that was unacceptable in the eyes of the adult male, even on account of the slightest indication of misbehaviour. One of the most common reasons for conflict between men and boys was the alleged unsatisfactory performance of duties, especially in herding goats and other livestock. Physical violence was resorted to in most cases: beating — using a belt, whip or stick, or chasing the boy away. More rarely, the boy

was scolded or threatened only. The threat of withholding money, shelter or food was often employed, especially with teenage boys. Girls were less often beaten by their fathers or senior male kin. This was a type of violence usually acted out by their mothers.

The persistence of patriarchal relationships, and the violent means to maintain them, should be seen against the background of the powerlessness of the men themselves. They lost much of their power base through the structural violence of racism, migrant labour, and poverty. The loss of self-esteem, and the feeling of helplessness gave rise to reactive violence against available social objects, as the men could not attack the sources of their frustration (see Segel & Labe 1990; Marx 1976:80, 81).

3.3 WOMEN IN VIOLENT SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

- Sophie (31 years) was a Sotho-speaking woman from Klerksdorp where she had met her husband Ben (41 years); she was Ben's second wife. She had met him while working as a factory and later a domestic worker. He worked as a migrant, and after marrying, let her visit him regularly. At home she and the first wife (35 years) often worked on the farms without his permission in order to supplement the small remittances he was sending them. Together, the two women had nine children to care for. Ben sent them barely enough money for mealie meal, because he knew they were working without his permission, and might be having extramarital affairs as well. Once he had beaten Sophie for working without his permission. The two wives, in turn, suspected that he had a girlfriend at work. There was a reasonable level of co-operation between the two wives, who even trusted each other about their love affairs, but at the same time they gossiped about each other, speaking about acts of witchcraft, which they feared. Sophie also carried out a self-abortion because she was pregnant by another man, and she needed to prepare herself for the possibility of having to work if she suddenly had to leave her husband. She told many people about her affairs — one of which was with a man who also worked in Johannesburg — and how glad she was when her husband went back to work after a visit. She also had to live with her in-laws' remarks about the unacceptability of her abortion, especially in view of her sleeping with a lover shortly afterwards. They said she had broken a taboo and thereby caused the death of her mother-in-law.

Everyday when Sophie went working, she left her children, Tlangelani (3 years) and Sidwell (6 years) at home alone, because both wives were working, and the older children were all at school. The first wife had become tired of

looking after these children while Sophie worked. The children always cried, because they felt helpless in their neglect.

One evening, Sophie opened the valve of the water tap in Berlyn with pliers because the pump was running but the pump attendant only pumped for the new stands.

On another occasion, Sophie went to Johannesburg with the two youngest children, because she was angry. She had found out that the money she had made by selling tobacco was missing, and she accused Elsie, the daughter of the first wife, of having taken it. While quarrelling, her neighbour, the wife of her husband's brother, told them not to quarrel outside, but to go into a hut. Sophie scolded the woman, telling her she was a prostitute, and the two women nearly came to blows, but then another brother of her husband, Petrus, separated them. He wanted to know what had happened, but Sophie refused to talk and left the following day to tell her husband herself. A few days later she and her husband arrived home together. Ben beat his first wife until she bled from a wound on her head, because she had not controlled her daughter. The first wife then went to her relatives, who came back with her to confront the husband. Meanwhile Sophie went back to Johannesburg. When reprimanded for beating his wife, Ben said that she needed to be better instructed by her relatives: She needed to control her daughter better, and to answer him, as the husband, properly. "She must know that I am the husband. She must also not allow people to quarrel here at my home. I will punish her very seriously if she does not stop this foolish behaviour."

A few months later, the daughter of Sophie, Tsakani (12 years), together with her two friends, were at a shebeen in the evening where they danced to the cassette player's music. Four teenage boys pulled them to a nearby deserted house and gang-raped them twice. Sophie went looking for the girls with the older brother of one of them. When they found the girls, crying, they found out what had happened. The brother first beat the three girls for going to the shebeen, and then went to find each of the four boys and beat them thoroughly with a whip which he had been given by Sophie. After this, he reported to Sophie that he had done his job.

One day, Sophie was making bricks while the daughter of the first wife, Elsie (17 years), had gone to fetch water. An indigent man, single and unemployed, and an agnate of Sophie's husband, entered the kitchen alone, took a pan, caught one of Sophie's chickens and went to cook it in his dilapidated hut. Sophie and Elsie looked for the pan and eventually found it with the chicken still in it. (They recognized the feathers, lying on the floor.) Sophie took the pan, but the man

started complaining about her taking his things. She then scolded him for taking her property. He started to beat both her and Elsie, but they fought back and succeeded in throwing him to the ground and kick him. He was saved by a relative.

One afternoon, Elsie and her lover went to his place. Sophie, in the absence of the first wife, said that she wanted to reprimand the girl for openly going with her lover while she was seen by her "parents". When Elsie returned, she told Sophie that a man was waiting for her at the road. She knew that he was Sophie's lover, even without him sending her with a message from him. Sophie then decided against scolding the girl, and went to where she was called.

- Nyavana was very angry with her daughter Patroni (29 years) who let her lovers sleep with her in Nyavana's room. Scolding Patroni, she said that she would chase her from the stand, to go next door, where Patroni was staying with relatives, because she could have their homes set on fire by her many boyfriends. Patroni retorted that these lovers were hers, the food they ate was bought with her own money, and she needed nothing from anybody else.
- Elizabeth (21 years), the wife of a neglectful migrant husband, was sleeping with a lover at his place, and only came back in the mornings. Her mother-in-law then called some of the relatives together and confronted Elizabeth about her absence at night. She cried, but had to admit her affair. Knowing that she was being neglected, the relatives listened to her account of how she obtained money from her lover which she used to care for her children, whereas her husband did not send money or even write her a letter. She also argued that she was not an old woman, but wanted to "let her blood run, just like other women, she needed to have sex in order to stay healthy". She said that she could become ill if "her blood does not mix with that of a man". She asked her mother-in-law to allow her to *jola* (have affairs) because she was doing it to get money for taking care of her children. They then asked the mother-in-law to allow Elizabeth to *jola*. She gave her consent, saying that she herself also had had an affair, because she was being neglected as well. Her boyfriend was also supporting her and her children. Elizabeth was only asked to be discreet and keep the affairs as secret as possible. This meant that her lovers could come secretly at night in order that other relatives would not know about the affairs and tell the husband when he came back.
- Bella (17 years), a girl with a sick baby, was told by her mother that she was not allowed to go to her lover in the evening. And if she went nevertheless, she

should not come back home in the morning. Bella agreed to stay home to look after the baby. However, when the mother looked for her in the evening, Bella was absent. The mother then went looking for Bella at her friends, and later obtained the help of some boys to catch Bella, who was sitting with her boyfriend near one of the taps next to the road in Mulati. She then dragged her daughter home, and on the way wanted to know why she had not stayed at home. Bella said that she had gone to look for a girl who owed her money, but had not found her. The mother asked whether "the boy Bella had been sitting with was that girl". Reaching their home, the mother took Bella inside, closed the door and sent a boy to cut a stick for her. She then tied Bella with a rope and beat her violently, while reprimanding her. Thereafter she told Bella to go to her boyfriend, but Bella went to the neighbours' home to sleep.

Women, as already seen in the section on men, experienced a lot of violence themselves. Looking more closely at the position of women, and of children later on, we are able to see how the domination by men resulted in further levels of domination. One should not forget that the violent actions of women were to a large extent reactions to conditions and events that humiliated them. Given their position of subservience in society, it is not strange that the reactive violence shown by women was of a less physical nature than that of men. Women reacted to this violence in a number of ways, such as is shown in the case material on Sophie.

Given their social status, women had to use various ways of confronting and resisting the men, husbands or lovers, who dominated them. The confrontation was often less direct than the way men treated women in conflict situations, or the way women confronted each other. A major form of this resistance was that of entering into affairs to hit back at unfaithful husbands, and to get support for dependants. The women also went out to work without the men's permission. They sometimes refused to obey orders from a husband or they refused to speak or co-operate, as was evident in the cases presented in the previous section. A neglected wife of a migrant worker could even obtain permission from the husband's agnates to become involved in affairs, as long as these were carried out discreetly and in secret. A very effective way of sabotaging a man's household was to leave him after ill-treatment in order to get the agnatic relatives of the wife to confront him. Scolding was also effective, because it humiliated a man who realized that the verbal attacks were being heard by neighbours or onlookers.

More physically violent ways of opposition were reserved for serious situations, in which the personalities and the situation were of great importance. If, for instance, a woman was the owner of a stand, she could chase her husband away, even while

throwing stones at him or beating him, as I once witnessed, whereas this sort of behaviour would never occur if the man was the owner of the stand. Aggression towards a man who was not the husband or lover of the particular woman, was often more violent, as such a man had no legal hold on the woman, as in the case of Sophie and the thief. Women beat such men, made accusations of witchcraft against them or threatened to "call the comrades" to beat them up.

Most of the physical violence in which women engaged, was directed against other women who competed with them for the favour of a man, be it a husband involved in an affair, an ex-husband or an ex-lover. Realising that the general perception was that a man was *supposed* to have affairs, women could only attack their female counterparts with whom they competed, usually their husband's girlfriends, who, because of the prevailing gender relationships, were not supposed to have affairs, and who could therefore be called "prostitutes". In addition, many quarrels and fights in Berlyn erupted during the process of competing for scarce physical resources. A large number of fights between women occurred because of queue-jumping at the water tap or because of other serious infringements of rights. Lesser quarrels developed when firewood, left in the forest to dry, was taken by someone else. Women usually had verbal disputes, but a proper fight might also develop. Threatening another woman or ignoring her was also resorted to.

Violence of women directed at boys usually involved a mother-son relationship, and was caused by sons refusing to obey orders or misbehaving in a variety of ways. Leaving small boys or girls of 2-6 years alone at home, while the mother went to work or the grandmother, the actual care-giver, went drinking, was experienced as neglect and rejection, although harm was probably not intended. Boys were beaten by their mothers, usually with a switch or with the hand. As they developed into teenagers, the boys became more difficult to handle, and their mothers therefore had to resort to other means, such as getting an older sibling to beat a culprit, or making more use of scolding or threats, or withholding food. The girls women disciplined, were in most cases their own daughters. They were scolded, threatened or beaten, usually for not listening to their mothers or for upsetting them in other ways. Here also, women might even use the help of unrelated boys to hold or beat a teenage girl.

4 BOYS IN ACTIVE AND PASSIVE VIOLENT RELATIONSHIPS

Kulani (19 years) was the last of his parents' seven children, and relatively privileged. The parents were at last receiving disability pensions, while previously they had been living from the sale of beer and, occasionally, cattle. Kulani therefore enjoyed the family's improved economic situation and he also stood to inherit the residential stand and its buildings. Moreover, his father

frequently called on Kulani's elder brothers to help support him, and he had the use of a bicycle. Kulani was therefore able to stay in school for a longer period than his siblings had been. He was in Std 7 both in 1991 and 1992, not for lack of ability, but owing to the combination of low quality education and a lack of enthusiasm for school — so common among children. In fact, Kulani and many other children were often absent from school for a day or two. Factors in Kulani's favour were his good looks, his clean personal habits, his well-known sense of humour, and his taste for smart clothes, cigarettes, etc. On the other hand, his taste for beer, expensive clothes, the occasional use of dagga, etc. often got him into debt. His relationship with his father was fair, apart from being scolded occasionally for not performing his duties well, such as neglecting the task of herding or driving the donkeys too hard when handling the family's donkey cart. Like other boys in the settlement, Kulani had a part to play in the economic life of his household. In addition to the herding of cattle, goats and sheep, he had to plough (with donkeys), help in construction work, and transport water, firewood, beer and building materials for the household or for people who paid his father for Kulani's transport services. His mother usually protected him, as he was her last-born and therefore somewhat spoilt. Kulani was popular with girls, and had several affairs going at the same time, although one local girl, Thembi (17 years), was his "true" sweetheart.

On their way back from soccer practice one afternoon, Kulani and a friend met two local girls. Kulani held the one girl by the arm, telling her he loved her. When she refused his advances, he told her he would beat her. She challenged him to do it, but he rather went home, saying he would beat her another day. Meanwhile his friend beat the other girl for refusing his advances. Some time later, Kulani met the girl he had promised to beat — with whom he meanwhile had an affair — again on the street. He beat her with a broomstick for not coming to his room the previous night (for sex) as he had told her to do.

On another occasion, Kulani and his friends were walking in the street at the new stands. He noticed a girl visiting there, grabbed her arm and spoke to her, but she was afraid and ashamed, and covered her face with her one hand while crying. Kulani then beat her and left her there. An agnate of hers went to Kulani's father to complain, but when Kulani was called, he left home without answering his father.

One day the daughters of Kulani's two nieces (his sister's daughters) were fighting. Their mother came home, listened to their story and sent for Kulani to beat the younger sister for not obeying the elder one.

Kulani told his lover, Thembi, that she should go with him after school, but on that day she wanted to be home early to start cooking and to go to a shop in town. He promised to beat her if she refused, so she went with him after school. On the way, he beat her until she bled, saying she had avoided him and therefore she must have had another lover. When confronted by a relative of hers, Kulani denied that he had beaten her. Her elder brother also heard of this beating and scolded Thembi for not being at home to do the domestic tasks. He nevertheless also went to Kulani's parents to complain about the matter. Kulani's father then chased him (K.) out, and he had to spend the night in the veld.

Another time, Thembi and her friend were held by the arm by two boys in Mulati. When Kulani and his friend saw this, they confronted the boys: "How did it happen that you stand with Thembi and Goodness, because they are not your cherries?" The Mulati boys backed off, saying that they were just talking to these girls. Kulani and his friend told the other boys that these girls were theirs and that they should be left alone. The Mulati boys answered that these girls had not said they were the cherries of other boys, and that Kulani had not paid *ndzhovolo* (marriage goods); therefore Thembi was not his wife. Kulani took Thembi away, while accusing her of having another affair, because she had not told those other boys that she was in love with Kulani. She said that she had told them she was in love with Kulani, but the other boys had said she would be beaten "for telling lies". Her explanation that the boy would have beaten her if she had left him, did not satisfy Kulani. He cut a stick and beat her. His friend did the same with Goodness. The girls then ran home. On her way, Thembi was met by her brother who wanted to know why she was running and returning home so late. She lied to him, saying that she had been studying at school. He however, found out about the beating and afterwards when they were both home, scolded his sister. He promised to give Kulani a beating when he would be at home again over the weekend. Kulani was afraid of Thembi's brother, and therefore went to stay in Mulati with his sister for a few days. The following weekend Thembi's brother took Thembi and some relatives along, and confronted Kulani about his beating Thembi.

On an earlier occasion Thembi's brother had already told Kulani and Thembi to terminate their affair because Kulani always beat Thembi. Thembi said that Kulani was forcing her to continue the affair, and beat her from time to time. Thembi's brother asked Kulani why he did not pay *ndzhovolo* if he wanted Thembi, instead of always beating her. The brother then beat Kulani, threatening to report him at the Nkowankowa police station.

Another day, early in the evening, Kulani arrived to fetch Thembi to his place for the night. She refused, as her brother was at home. Kulani then said he needed to have sex with her, since he had not been with her for a few days; but she still refused. He then insisted on having sex right there, standing next to a tree near her home. Her brother caught them in the act, and Kulani had to run away.

Kulani and other "comrades" went to the *ndhuna* to demand the whistle with which gatherings were called, for they wanted to call together the "comrades." They said the matter was secret and that they would tell him later what it was about. They then called a meeting where the young people discussed the poor water situation. The machine of the water pump was running, but water was not reaching the public taps, although at the few private taps water was available. They wrote a letter to the *ndhuna*, who had left meanwhile to buy stock for his cafe, to ask for an explanation of this situation. They also decided to go to the water pump attendant to confront him about the bad service he provided. The group chanted "comrade slogans" near his house to intimidate him, while a delegation of three then complained to him about the water situation. They said he was using water for his plants at his house while the people had no water to drink. His explanations about his problems with the pump were not accepted. They also wanted to know why he had not reported the problems at the offices of the Department of Works. He said he had done so, but was still awaiting their response. The young people then told him to change the flow of water from the new stands to the taps in the old section of Berlyn where the water problem was the worst. He did as he was told, and also gave them the tool for opening the sub-valves to divert the water to the public taps in the settlement, closing the valves of all the private taps.

While playing a card game, *casino*, two boys joined those playing with Kulani. One of the two started quarrelling with another boy, accusing him of taking his catapult. Kulani told them to quarrel far away, but they did not listen and quarrelled with him too. Kulani then beat the visiting boy and chased him away, saying that he did not want him there because he was troublesome.

- Simon and Robert (both 17 years) followed two young girls (both 14 years) who were gathering firewood. They held the girls and said they wanted to *gangisa* them (start a love affair), and that they should leave their previous younger boyfriends (15 years of age) and take them as lovers. The girls agreed and they had sex in the veld. When the younger boys heard about this, they looked for their ex-girlfriends and asked them to have sex with them as well, as a sign of

their claim on them, but they were refused, so they beat the girls. In the evening, the younger boys tried to take their girls back from where they were meeting with the older boys, but the younger ones were beaten and chased away. They then asked for the help of two male relatives of one of them, but when these boys got there, Simon and Robert refused to open the door of the hut where they and the girls were keeping company.

- Four boys (aged 14, 15, 16 and 17) gang-raped three young girls (two aged 12 and one aged 13) twice at an old house near a shebeen where the girls had gone to dance. These boys were beaten by the brother of one of the girls, after he had also beaten the girls. A week later, the youngest of the four once again met one of the girls, Tsakani; he pulled her by the arm, but she broke free and got injured in the process. She then told her mother, who went to the boy's mother to complain. That night the boy entered the hut where she was sleeping, pulled down her panties while she was asleep and once again had sex with her against her will. She threatened to report him, but was afraid to carry out her threat. An elder sister heard them talk, raised the alarm, and the boy fled. Tsakani told her father that the boy had tried to rape her, but had not succeeded. Tsakani's father was able to trace him through one of the boy's shoes which he had lost in flight. He found the boy at the shebeen, where he beat him, although the boy denied everything.
- Two girls from Berlyn, Sandra (15 years) and Pauline (19 years), left home to go to the agricultural project to pick wild vegetables, which were not available in the settlement, because of the drought. They did not go to school and left early in the morning. They said that when they came back from picking *guxe* (wild plants from the veld used as relish), they met two boys from Zangoma who were looking for lost cattle. Since Sandra was young, they did not do anything to her, but they held Pauline and proposed making love to her, but she did not agree. They frightened her, and insisted to have sex with her, but she still refused. Then they pulled her into a bush and had sex there.
- Boys of about 16 years of age, the junior squad, were playing an informal soccer match on the local soccer field against boys from the new stands. They were beaten 5 - 1 and realised that their bet of R3 would be gone. Simon, one of their bigger players, took the money before the game was finished and ran off with it. The boys from the new stands chased Simon so that they could get the money. Simon hid it and went back so that he could join in the fight that had erupted, and

he also called another friend to come and help them with his dogs. In this way they managed to chase the visiting boys away.

Several points emerge from the case study material which corroborate the impressions gained from the aggregates in Table 1. As was seen there, boys were involved in far more cases of violence than any other social category, both passively and actively. In the violence by boys, it was by far the more physical forms which dominated. It was also clear that boys were active in violence, mostly against other, unrelated boys, and thereafter against girls. What were the possible reasons for this specific position? It may be argued that the boys were, on account of biological factors related to sexual maturation, prone to show violent behaviour, but then we also know that boys in other circumstances show less or more of such behaviour and we therefore have to look for social and cultural factors connected to this phenomenon as well. Boys in Berlyn were frustrated by several factors which seemed to contribute to violent reactions: pressure to complete their school education was followed by pressure to start working without the prospects of getting a good job; they were severely dominated by older men, as well as by older boys; they were expected to be sexually successful; they were expected to control younger boys and girls, and they were recruited for political action by the two political movements active in the settlement: the African National Congress and the Ximoko Progressive Party.

Seniority among boys and competition for girls and other resources were often the direct cause of fights between boys. These confrontations took place where boys were together, such as at soccer exercises, cardplaying and herding. Fights among younger boys might erupt over trivialities, such as the possession of a coin or a piece of food. Although older teenage boys tried to take each other's girlfriends, this seldom led to open fights, just as in the case of men and women. The girl involved could be sure, however, of being severely beaten for having multiple relationships, by one or both of the boys involved. Even very young boys, when at play, continually used threatening phrases like: "*Ndzi ta ku ba!*" or "*Pfutseki, boy!*" (I will beat you! Voertsek, boy!). Scolding in which crude language was used, as well as threats of physical violence, was common among boys. In addition, boys laughed at one of their group when he was injured or in any other way in a difficult position. Ignoring a former friend or refusing to share resources happened easily in a situation where such resources were always scarce. Such verbal or non-physical behaviour accompanied or preceded physical confrontations in which fists, knives, whips, stones, catapults, and belts were used. Even dogs were set onto opponents. Boys often challenged younger ones to fight, and they also set dogs or bulls to fight in order to establish their own rank through their animals' victories. When the competing boys were more or less of the

same age, their own fighting was often left to run its course in order to establish a ranking order; in other cases, when one of the parties was receiving a severe beating, someone would intervene to stop the fight.

Male domination was present from an early age: Girls were expected to serve food to their brothers at all hours, and to be available for the sexual needs of their boyfriends. This was accepted as normal by all social categories. Kulani was, for instance, asked by his sister to beat her daughters, when she thought they needed punishment. Girls were seen by boys as an asset to be used, although the metaphor of "love" was used to win them, and it was regarded as proper to give small amounts of money and other presents to a girlfriend. A boy would hold a girl, even a stranger whom he fancied, by the arm, thereby suggesting a possible sexual relationship, while telling her that he loved her. When a love affair had started, the girl was expected to come to the boy's room at night when he called her, since his sexual appetite was paramount in the relationship. Even if the girl had to go home to perform household duties, the boy might refuse to let her go. She also had to inform the boyfriend of all her movements and seek his permission for major issues. Sex was sometimes forced on a girl, sometimes by several boys. This is known in the wider society as "gang rape", but in Berlyn was accepted as almost normal, and would not even lead to a report to the police. It was rather dealt with locally by the girl's agnates by beating up the boys concerned, or by getting some form of monetary compensation through local informal arbitration. Sexual harassment often occurred when girls were walking back from school or when gathering firewood. Therefore they never went out of the settlement alone.

Another way in which boys violated the rights of girls, was by denying paternity when they had made the girls pregnant. A boy could always try to circumvent his responsibilities by alleging that other boys were also involved with the pregnant girl. When girls opposed boys, they were easily beaten into submissiveness. The double standards in connection with multiple partners which were differentiated according to gender, also appeared among teenagers. Although girls might threaten to end their relationship if a boy had more than one affair, and boys tried to hide their other affairs from their *ticheri* ("cherries") by lying and cheating, the girls themselves were severely beaten when thought to be involved with another lover. Precisely because of their own unfaithfulness, boys could not trust their girlfriends. That is why Kulani insisted on Thembi walking with him from school. Girls were beaten with the flat hand and fists, or with sticks and belts. In severe cases they were also kicked when lying on the ground. Sometimes their possessions were destroyed or taken away from them. The only restriction a boy had to keep in mind, was the possible retribution by

the agnatic relatives of a girl, although she was also at risk from them if she told them about a confrontation with a boy.

Not only were girls subdued by force, they were also symbolically put down by boys. One boy I knew well, told me that he was glad when boys denied paternity, because girls were wrong to have boyfriends, clearly putting the blame for teenage pregnancies on the shoulders of girls only. On another occasion he referred to a young woman who had relationships with several men, as a "thing", a "pig", a "centipede". Only girls and women who had multiple sexual relationships were referred to as "prostitutes". Boys were constantly looking for new girls, not in their own right as people with personalities, but in terms of their physical attraction. Visiting girls were therefore always carefully observed. Boys furthermore referred to the boyfriends of girls as their "owners". Girls were regarded as free game: A young man who had raped a woman, said in mitigation during the informal hearing at his home that in the darkness of night he had thought the woman was still only a girl.

Boys in confrontations with men were usually sons who were reprimanded or disciplined physically for not performing household tasks, especially herding, according to expectation, or for other reasons, such as the complaint brought to Kulani's father because he had beaten his lover. At most, boys could try to resist punishment for a time, because in the end the father, or senior agnate, would be able to overpower them. Resistance was therefore mostly in the form of refusal to work, keeping silent when asked for explanations, stealing, or quarrelling. In a group, boys and young men, "comrades", could by their chants and slogans which suggested physical violence, effectively frighten an official or other adult, such as happened to the water pump attendant in Berlyn. Threats to chase away "witches" were also used by "comrades" against unpopular adults. Even the mother might become the object of a boy's violence when frustrated or angry, probably because the relationship was usually less hierarchical than between men and boys. When disciplined by their mothers, in the absence of their fathers, boys in Berlyn had on occasion thrown stones at them, threatened to beat them, left the home, or stolen their possessions. Also, sexual harassment and rape had been committed by teenage boys on women in the research period reported here.

3.5 GIRLS, MOSTLY, BUT NOT ONLY, ON THE RECEIVING END OF VIOLENCE

- Amukelani (18 years), Esther (16 years) and Grace (14 years) were the daughters of unskilled labourers who worked in a wholesale business and on a Gazankulu agricultural project, respectively. Amukelani and Esther had previously lived with their mother at her former husband's place, and Esther had for a time stayed

with her mother's mother as a foster child helping with household tasks. During the school boycott of 1990 Esther worked on a nearby farm to earn R17,50 a week for pocket money. At home she had to share the household duties with her sisters, as their mother was only able to undertake household tasks during weekends. These tasks included washing clothes, fetching water and firewood, and cooking. The allocation of tasks often led to conflicts. As was the case with boys also, seniority played an important part in the ranking of girls. Therefore, Amukelani, as the eldest girl, mostly did the cooking, which was seen as a more important task, while Esther and Grace mostly had the more basic tasks of fetching water and firewood. Amukelani and Esther, having the same father, were also closer to each other. They often worked together and sold atchar at school together. This relationship was temporarily dissolved when Amukelani went to stay with the father of her child in 1990, but she returned after a few months because her husband could not provide for her. Grace, the youngest sister, often complained about her "slavery" and tried, unsuccessfully, to change matters by quarrelling or putting up a fight. Usually the mother sided with the elder sisters, reinforcing their authority by threatening to withhold food from Grace, and giving them permission to beat her. The years 1991 and 1992 saw the development of Esther's first steady relationship with a boyfriend, which she tried, at all costs, to hide from her parents, until she became pregnant in 1992. The role of violence in Amukelani, Esther and Grace's relationships with their parents, with each other and with boys can be seen in the following case material.

Esther and Grace were fighting one day. The fight had started when Esther was weeding and hurt herself; then Grace laughed at her.

Another time, they came back from school, wanting to wash clothes. Grace left when she saw that Esther had started to wash, thinking that she would wash her clothes as well. This did not happen, and when she found her dirty clothes thrown on the ground by Esther, she became frustrated and threw an iron at her sister, after which Esther beat her with a hoe handle and a fight erupted. They were parted by a neighbour who threatened to tell their mother. When their mother arrived home after work, she wanted to know what had happened. She then sent for her younger brother, Kulani, to beat Grace for being disobedient to her elder sister. When Kulani arrived, Grace picked up stones and threw them at him and ran away to find refuge with her grandmother who lived at the new stands.

One day when Esther had a headache, Amukelani, who was washing her baby, sent Grace to buy pills, but she refused, saying that Amukelani could do that herself. Amukelani then sent a neighbour's daughter to buy the pills. The elder

girls did not allow Grace to eat the food Esther had cooked before school in the morning. When Grace then said that she would help herself and that Amukelani should go and live with her husband, rather than remain with her parents, the elder sisters threatened to beat her. Grace said they would not beat her. She also asked them: "Who bought the mealie-meal there at home?", meaning that they did not have full control of the food. The elder girls asked her: "Who cooked the mealie-meal, could it cook itself?" Grace said it was her mother who had bought the mealie-meal and not the sisters. Esther then said that Grace would eat when the mother had cooked and not of the food she and Amukelani had cooked. Grace was then chased away. Amukelani asked that, when Grace returned, Esther should hold Grace for her in order that she could beat Grace. When she returned, saying that she would report them to their mother, Esther beat her although Grace was throwing stones at her. In the evening, when the mother was told the story, she said that when the youngest sister refused to go on an errand, they should either not give her food or they should beat her.

One day, two boys from Bonn were sent by Esther's boyfriend to take her a message. They sent a local boy to call her, but she was at church. They then waited for her, and were seen by Esther's father when he passed them on the street. He found out from other children why the boys were there, and when Esther returned home, he asked her whether she had a boyfriend in Bonn. She denied it, after which he threatened to beat her if she started becoming disobedient. Some time thereafter, Esther went with her boyfriend after school to sit on the side of the mountain and therefore she arrived home late in the afternoon. When she asked her younger sister Grace for food, Grace asked her why she had not eaten at her boyfriend's place, and said if she wanted food, she could cook for herself. Esther then beat Grace for not answering her question about the food, which had been eaten by Grace, and for provoking her. While Grace was crying, the mother arrived home. She was told by Grace that Esther had been sitting with her boyfriend and had then demanded to eat at home. The mother then scolded Esther, telling her that she should have eaten at the boy's place.

On another day, Esther again came home late (18h00) and her father demanded to know where she had been and why she had not cooked for the family. She lied to him, saying that she had been washing her grandfather's clothes and that it was Amukelani's turn to cook. Amukelani, who was fed-up with Esther who used to arrive home late, thus leaving the household duties to the others, then told their father that Esther used to sit on the mountain-side with her boyfriend every day. The father then told Esther that he would force her to leave

the family if she did not stop going to her boyfriend. She then asked to be forgiven.

Another day, two boys brought her a message from her boyfriend, and she accompanied them to the taxi "station". When she returned home, her sister Amukelani threatened to tell their mother that she was still seeing her boyfriend. Esther then had to bribe her with some money.

On another day, when Grace was going to the cafe to buy bread, she was confronted by a girl (who now had Grace's previous boyfriend) who wanted to know why Grace had laughed at her on some previous occasion. Grace provoked the girl by telling her that she was a "*xiphukuphuku*" (stupid person/idiot) and that the boy was very black and only in Std 5, while she was having affairs with boys who were doing matric. The other girl said she would let Grace shit. They fought and Grace beat her with her shoe, injuring her on the head.

Some boys who lived in Bonn were returning from school with five girls from Berlyn, including Esther, Grace and Thembi. These boys said that the girls had said they were going to Mafarana and the boys wanted to join them. When they reached the mountain, they held Esther and Thembi, saying they loved them. They told the others they must go because they wanted to talk to Thembi and Esther. Grace and her friends ran to call their father's younger brother to tell him that the girls were being held by some boys. They found the relative and four other young men who came to confront the boys. The boy who was holding Thembi was about to beat her for refusing him, while the other one was threatening Esther with a knife. One of the boys was caught and severely beaten, while the other one ran away.

- Martha (16 years) was called by a child to her lover who was waiting for her in his car at the road. They had sex in the car, and then the man gave her money. Her younger brother saw her with the man in the car and told their mother who then went to check whether it was true and, if so, to discipline her daughter. When she met her daughter on her way home, she threatened to beat her, but on seeing the money, she stopped scolding her. Martha's elder sister also used to bring back money from her boyfriends and gave some of it (e.g. R10 or R30) to her mother. As her husband had been retrenched some time previously, this money was much needed in the household. The mother therefore kept the affairs of her daughters a secret from her husband.
- Lucia (19 years) and a certain woman from Mulati had a quarrel over water. The reason was that the woman had found Lucia's container in the queue at the tap

and had replaced it with hers. Lucia became angry and asked the woman why she had removed her container. The woman answered that she did not care about that. Lucia then became more angry and started to scold the woman. The woman also started rebuking Lucia. A man passing there stopped the quarrel. He told the woman to remove her container so that Lucia could put hers back; otherwise there would be a fight. The woman then agreed. Many people from Berlyn had to wait a long time for water, because there were many people from other settlements who fetched water until 21:30. When all the people from outside had finished, people living in Berlyn started to draw water. Some were drawing water until 01:00.

- Margaret (15 years) and Yvonne (14 years) told a boy who was visiting at another household during the school holidays to stop cutting a tree for the goats to eat the leaves. He said it was not their tree, but God's. They challenged him, saying they would beat him so that he would stop cutting trees there, as this was not his area. He said they would not beat him, he was not afraid of them. When he went for them, they together managed to bring him down and then beat him. When he returned to the household where he was visiting, the woman there laughed at him because he had been beaten by girls.

Girls constituted the bottom social stratum in Berlyn. It would be a grave mistake, however, to ignore the many ways in which girls counteracted the violence and the threat thereof to them. With regard to the research reported here, it should also be noted that the recorders of events in the settlement were boys, thus leading to a male perspective on women and girls, and a bias towards men and boys in events involving them. Nevertheless, the events recorded here do give us some indication of the relationships between the sexes and between the generations which converge in the low-status position of girls in this settlement.

Table 1 indicates that the events involving violent behaviour in 1991 and 1992 in Berlyn show that girls were the category least involved in active violence, but they came second in terms of the number of events in which they were the objects of violence. If the total of passive violence is expressed as a percentage of the total for each social category, thus minimizing the male bias factor in recording to some extent, the percentage for girls is the highest of the four categories (75,4 %, as against 34,5 % for men, 42,9 % for women, and 50,8 % for boys). This means that girls were more often than the other categories the objects, rather than the perpetrators of violence. This ratio is borne out by the specifics of the events which clearly

demonstrate that girls were doubly dominated: by their parents as well as by the males of their own generation. Violent acts were often used to affirm this domination.

While these categorical forms of domination based on gender were forced on them, girls used age as a ranking order among themselves. Many instances occurred in which girls competed with each other for resources, including relationships with boys, which led to violent behaviour. The low rung on the social ladder which girls occupied, increased the competition between them. Many quarrels and fights erupted between girls who were sisters or half-sisters because of older girls dominating younger ones. When the younger ones resisted, they were beaten by the older ones, but not without putting up a fight themselves. The case material gives us several examples of the way in which Amukelani and Esther tried to dominate Grace, their younger sister, by giving her the physically more strenuous and publicly more visible, and therefore more humiliating, household tasks. Competition between girls of different households and different settlements was mostly about relationships with boys, but also about access to taps and other resources. This usually started with quarrels, accusations and scolding bouts, but often turned physically violent, as is evident from the case material.

In addition to a beating from another girl involved with the same boy, a girl could expect to be beaten by any of her lovers or ex-lovers for "unfaithfulness" or "making him a fool". Among sisters, the knowledge about each other's affairs was strategically manipulated. This knowledge was often protected by skilful lying to the ultimate authority figure, the father, but could also be disclosed when it suited the competitor. Esther therefore thought it wise to offer her elder sister the money she had received from her boyfriend. Her younger sister, Grace, gave her away on another occasion. Sisters did also help each other to arrange meetings with lovers, which was logistically quite a task, seen against the background of the expectation that they should be performing household tasks and should be at home at all times, especially when it became dark. Walking to school, gathering firewood, and attending dance sessions at shebeens were therefore prime opportunities for meetings with boys.

Girls were afraid to go to the mountain or other places in the veld to gather firewood, because there was the possibility of being raped or sexually harassed by boys or young men. The case material shows that this was a real possibility. Their sense of vulnerability was also expressed in fears about men who were out in the veld to kill children in order to use their body parts for muti.

The violence between girls and boys occurred mostly between siblings or between lovers or ex-lovers. Girls had to be careful, because of their relatively disadvantaged social position, not to start violent confrontations, because they could expect to be beaten when perceived to oppose the accepted social hierarchy. Brothers and other

agnatic relatives were often the instruments through which the adult generation exercised their control over girls in a family. Girls therefore used mostly non-physical methods to oppose elder brothers and lovers, such as refusing to co-operate, or refusing to speak. When confronted by the violence of neglect and denial of paternity when she became pregnant, a girl sometimes resorted to abortion in order to save herself the trouble of being a single parent. Girls did try to dominate their younger brothers by quarrelling and fighting with them when conflicts occurred. Often these confrontations revolved around the control of food which the girls exercised. For example, they could refuse to give food to a brother when they needed a weapon against him. Girls also sometimes provoked and fought visiting boys who did not have the support systems of local boys, and whose relative position in the pecking order they wanted to test.

Parents tried to control their daughters strictly. They had much less control over their sons, who had the freedom to roam around and whose household tasks as well as their recreation took them away from home for long periods of time. Daughters were expected to be at home at all hours after school, except for gathering firewood or fetching water. Parents feared that their daughters might become pregnant, which nevertheless occurred frequently, even while they were still in school. Not only would they then have to repeat the school year, but the boy responsible was usually not in a position to provide for a family, with the result that the care for the daughter and her dependant remained with the parents. Parents were therefore against meetings of girls and their lovers, and when discovered, often punished the girls by beating them or refusing them shelter or food. As teenage pregnancies were so common, and meetings between lovers so difficult to control, parents often had to give in in the end and allow such relationships grudgingly. The lack of a confidential relationship between girls and their parents applied to the relationship with the father in the first place. The mother was often more aware of what was going on, and in some cases she, in collusion with the girl, hid the girl's affair from the father. Generally, the relationship between parents and their children was based on control and authority, which were also delegated to elder siblings, especially to the elder boys and girls who were given permission to beat the younger ones, as seen in the case material. Being in this position, girls could do very little else than to manipulate the knowledge they had. Lying to their parents about their whereabouts was a common strategy of girls to save their skins. Despite this, a girl was not incapable of beating a vulnerable adult male, such as happened to an elder agnatic but indigent, possibly mentally retarded, and unmarried relative of Elsie. He had beaten them when they had confronted him about stealing a chicken and a pan. Elsie and her mother then beat and kicked the man, until he was saved by another relative. Another girl, Naomi, once beat and kicked her

elder, unemployed and unmarried brother when he had taken her jacket without permission.

PART II: DIXIE

1. THE SETTING

The material on family life and violence reported here is based on research done in Dixie during the whole of 1992, although the project started in 1991. I (Kotzé) have restricted the material in this report to that of 1992, mainly for three reasons. Firstly, I have already published an article (Kotzé 1992) on the theme, based on research done during 1991; secondly, the amount of the material I gathered is so vast that I cannot report meaningfully in terms of the format I use within the space allowed for this report; and thirdly, I have elected to report on 1992 (the final year) simply because my research assistants produced better quality work after one year's experience. My research assistants were: Mrs Sekina Mnisi, a married woman who was the assistant of an M.A. student (C Scholtz) with whom I freely exchanged information, and three teenage boys, Piet Marimana, Solly Sithole and Patrick Gumede. They wrote extensive daily reports on the everyday activities in the village. The boys' reports, though inevitably male-biased, were written in xiChangana, which I found most useful for their richness in the local idiom. The material also contains information picked up by myself during visits to Dixie. The information I obtained during these visits, was sometimes new and sometimes already covered by the boys. During these short spells I was kept so well-informed in xiChangana by the children of Dixie that I was always familiar with virtually all the information recorded by the boys in their reports, sometimes over several months. The pleasure the kids derived from relating news and gossip to me, was both a delight and a great help. I owe more to these astute and perceptive little people than I can ever give them back by way of lessons in living.

Wedged in between the Manyeleti and Sabi Sand game reserves in the Eastern Transvaal Lowveld, in the remote eastern corner of the Mhala district of Gazankulu, Dixie was different from Berlyn and most other rural settlements in various respects. Though politically part of the former Gazankulu, it was socially very much a part of the surrounding game reserves or safari lodges (particularly Londolozi and Mala Mala) where virtually all the employed villagers were employed (and are still being employed). The villagers' economic and social involvement with game reserves, the fact that they did not experience unemployment despite very limited secondary school education, their geographic isolation and their relative indifference to education were mutually reinforcing factors. Since only a small proportion of Mhala's population was suitably equipped for the kind of job opportunities provided by the game reserves, the villagers of Dixie experienced virtually no unemployment at least since I started doing fieldwork there in 1985. In addition, a comparatively large percentage of Dixie's female population (around 63 % from the age of 20 years and over) were employed

by the game reserves. In this regard the position of Dixie contrasted with the situation in the former homelands generally, where unemployment was high and where women, having had few alternatives, were acutely dependent on men.

Furthermore, as the employed members of Dixie were able to return home on a monthly basis (or for short weekly visits if the need arose), their families did not suffer from the disruptive consequences of the prolonged absence of key family members associated with migrant labour (even though employed villagers were often reluctant to make use of all the opportunities to return home). Other favourable conditions for the villagers of Dixie, compared with other rural settlements, included access to abundant grazing, fuel, building material obtainable from the veld, wild fruit and game, and a person : land ratio of approximately 1 : 4,5 ha (the population figure fluctuated around 270, or 45 homesteads, on 1 245 ha).

Though the villagers of Dixie received lower wages than those generally earned in urban centres (R180 - R300 per month in the case of women, and R200 - R1 200 per month in the case of men), they derived a great sense of security from their jobs. However, these privileges were enjoyed at the cost of fierce competition for key jobs in the game reserves, ongoing conflict and illiteracy. The isolation and social homogeneity of Dixie were brought about by the fact that few residents worked outside the game reserves in the vicinity, that virtually all grew up in families that had close and prolonged ties with the game reserves, and that almost all with employment experience had worked in the private game reserves at some stage or another. Though Dixie's villagers often complained about low wages, they continued to work at the game reserves for the sake of security. Furthermore, they did not possess the necessary social skills and experience required for jobs outside the game reserves; because they did not have to be absent from home for long periods; because female residents cherished the availability of job opportunities; because of fringe benefits (such as rations, loans and liberal leave) and access to tips from the wealthy guests of the game reserves; and because of their employers' social involvement with them.

Apart from the irrelevance of education beyond the most basic level for many of the kinds of jobs they occupied at the safari lodges, and the resultant indifference of Dixie's parents to the education of their offspring, one of the most devastating effects on the social life of Dixie was the hierarchical nature of the job structure in the game reserves. Safari lodges naturally have to employ persons in a wide variety of jobs associated with the hotel as well as the farming or game industry. The number of posts involved (up to 18) at the various safari lodges generated intense competition among the employees, competition which was carried over to the social situation of Dixie in the form of conflict between individuals and families. In this way Dixie and place of employment came to form a single social universe for the villagers. Their

close involvement with the game reserves was clearly reflected in their habit of saying "I'm going home tomorrow" (or on Friday, or whatever), meaning "I shall return to work", a way of speaking I found very confusing at first.

In contrast to other settlements in the region, the people of Dixie also lacked the will to act collectively in order to improve their situation. Whereas other settlements in the vicinity of Dixie were each united in their efforts to improve the educational facilities of their children, the parents of Dixie consistently failed to do so. One may argue that they failed to escape from their circumstances not merely because of functional illiteracy, but also as a result of their particular historical experience. Up to the early 1960s the villagers of Dixie (or their parents) had been occupants of the Sabi Sand game reserves. At that time these farms were still used by their absentee owners as game farms only, which they visited during the winter months for holidays and hunting. Being non-productive farms, the owners allowed a few individual families to live on their property, to work their fields and to keep cattle in return for labour provided by one or more male members of each family during the winter. As such, these families fell outside the ambit of any comprehensive, organized political system. Had they not lacked the experience of collective political life in this marginalized way, one may argue, Dixie probably would not have its present social form. In the final instance, however, the unwillingness of Dixie residents to act collectively was the result of ample job opportunities, the security they derived from their jobs and, in the face of that, the luxury to compete only among themselves for promotion. The residents of settlements adjacent to Dixie also lacked the historical experience of an organized political system. However, in contrast to Dixie, they were dependent on migrant labour. Consequently, the latter had to co-operate socially in order to maintain their links with job opportunities in the urban areas; and consequently, they consistently and collectively managed to improve their children's schooling facilities.

The economic competition and social conflict produced by the circumstances of Dixie's inhabitants profoundly influenced the position of their children, their mutual relationships, their relationships with their families, and the social life of the settlement in general. Communities plagued by destitution all suffered from a constant paradox: Limited resources required co-operation, but precisely because resources were so limited, it produced competition and conflict. Whereas other communities were forced to harness internal conflict (because their survival critically depended on co-operation), the residents of Dixie did not have to go to this kind of trouble to the same extent because of ample job opportunities and the need to compete for key jobs. Competition in Dixie took place at all levels — between families, within families, between men and women, and between adults and children. Because of limited resources (low wages), however, competition occurred on an unequal basis as

prescribed and justified by the ideology of male and adult superiority, and female and child inferiority.

2. THE SCALE OF VIOLENCE IN DIXIE

If I count all the incidents of violence (in its widest sense) which occurred in Dixie during 1991 and 1992, they add up to $2\ 314 = 3,2$ per day. Given a population of around 270 individuals; given the fact that violence includes such disparate acts as sneers, insults, beatings, threats of beatings, withholding of food, rape, forced sex, and brawls; and given the extent and depth of poverty, clearly not all the incidents of violence came to my notice. Obviously it would be impossible for any researcher to record every single incident of violence occurring in a community. For this reason I do not take figures on violence seriously.

But there is a more important reason why one should not take figures on violence seriously. Violence is constantly inhibited precisely because of fear of violence: Individuals often obey or please other individuals under fear of violence which may be acted out against them. This very underlying threat of resort to violence (structural violence) is part of violence itself — but how does one transform it into statistics? There constantly was much anguish and agony in Dixie as a result of constraints caused by latent violence. The basic structures of society in Dixie were violent in concept.

In this sense violence is a process, and not mere incidents or acts, which cannot in any way be reflected in figures. The fact that there were more incidents of violence in Dixie than in white society, for instance, does not make Dixie more violent *per se*. It merely implies that domination in white society is more effective than in Dixie — that the persons in positions of dominance in places like Dixie and Berlyn had to resort to violence more often because they lacked the leverage required for effective domination. Does it mean that because I (I am using the hypothetical first person here) am able to control my children by means of financial leverage (care), and the parents of Dixie fail to do so, the system in which I operate is less violent than that of Dixie? Am I less violent because I do not resort to physical violence but to withholding affection and material rewards from my children when they fail to compete successfully with other children according to my standards and wishes? I may act less violently towards my children (and wife), but only because the system by which I can subdue my children is more effective. Is my system less violent merely because it is more effective than that of Dixie? Can I seriously say that there is no connection whatsoever between white families and black families in South Africa, that they do not form part of the same process? I do know that white children and their friends are more morose, much more lonely and far less jubilant than the children of Dixie

despite the high incidence of acts of violence carried out against the latter. White children are more effectively dominated than the children of places like Dixie. The point is, white children are diminished by parents' interfering in the lives of their children often to the extent that they live their children's lives for them. Thus white children develop an image of life which accepts domination or subjugation as a natural part of life; except, of course, that domination is disguised and made respectable by terms such as "education" and "socialisation".

An autocratic type of child rearing inevitably produces a society based on autocratic decision making, the domination of people by people, and voters who elect a government capable of a degree of discrimination which resulted in abject poverty amongst the vast majority of the population. One simply cannot assume that a society that includes a substantial majority of democratic families and citizens (who have the vote) is automatically capable of electing a democratic government. As the case material will demonstrate, poverty spells physical violence. In the nature of the connectedness of things (or contextually), therefore, we cannot separate domination in affluent communities from physical violence in poor communities. The logic of this is that one cannot stamp out violence in society simply by passing laws against acts of violence. One has to create experiences for the people of our society which will remove their taste for domination.

Against this background the case material bearing on violence and family life is presented. However, unlike the case of Berlyn, the material on Dixie is not presented in the form of rubrics according to men, women, boys and girls. It is categorized under specific individual members of families or families as a whole, followed by an indiscriminate potpourri of incidents in chronological order according to the days and dates on which they occurred, in order to contextualize family life within Dixie. Doubtless, this is due to differences in perception and inclination between the two authors, but we also believe that it renders this report less monotonous and lacking in alternative perspectives and balance. Though we wished, and enjoyed, working together, we found our mutual differences refreshing.

3. PERSPECTIVES ON VIOLENCE

3.1 Two cousins: Bendy Chauke and Constance Ndlovu

Bendy (14) and Constance (16) were cousins (Bendy's mother was a sister of Constance's father) who lived together at the homestead of their grandmother during 1992. However, whereas Bendy lived with her divorced mother and siblings at this homestead (with her family, therefore), Constance came to this homestead from her family (her mother's) home at Acornhoek (her mother was not married to her father).

Bendy Chauke was her mother's second child. Her mother, Linka Ndlovu (34), was divorced and employed as a waitress at a game lodge. All six of her children (five daughters and a baby boy) had been fathered by a man from a neighbouring village (Utah). Since children took the surname of their father, whether merely biological or social as well, the surname of Linka's children differed from her own.

Linka and her five youngest children (forming a single family) resided at the homestead of her mother, Ananda Ndlovu (68). Her eldest daughter, Trudie (16), was married and living with her husband at Utah. Since Bendy was the eldest of her mother's children at Dixie, she was supposed to look after her younger siblings together with her grandmother, Ananda.

Like all her mother's children, Bendy was particularly attractive, though much more resourceful and alert than the rest. This accounts for her high social visibility as reflected in this report.

Being a single parent, and having much the same type of personality as her daughter Bendy, Linka tried to keep a tight reign on her children. In this she largely failed, particularly in the case of Bendy. She and her children were part of a wider kin group consisting of the families of her brothers and sisters with their children, as well as their mother (old Ananda), who competed successfully for the best jobs at the game lodges. Being a member of probably the strongest kin group in Dixie, financially speaking, Linka clearly wanted to keep up with her sisters and brothers. But she also did not want to let them down and thereby weaken the group's position. This fact, coupled with her personality, led to nervousness and much tension over her children and their behaviour.

Constance Ndlovu came to Dixie in 1992 to live with her grandmother. She could not live next door in the home of her father (Monle Ndlovu, the man earning the highest salary in Dixie) since her father's wife, like most women, would have refused to take care of another woman's child. Her father's wife, that is, wanted to prevent her from becoming a member of the family formed by her and her husband. Constance had left her mother's home in Acornhoek not merely because her mother failed to provide her with sufficient care, but also to escape from her mother's interference with her efforts to gain security through sexual relationships with boys and men. Without sexual relationships and the material benefits they obtained from this, girls could not survive.

Constance, also a very attractive girl, and Bendy became good friends. They both suffered from a lack of security, but Constance more so than Bendy. (That is why Constance was prepared to leave her mother's home and why Bendy, despite severe punishment at the hands of her mother, still remained in her mother's home.) It will

become evident from the information on these two girls that they suffered violence in different ways precisely because the one lived with her family and the other did not.

Since all incidents are reported under the days and dates on which they occurred, they are presented in the present tense. An analysis is provided at the end of each section — I have tried to interfere (often unsuccessfully) as little as possible with the information while presenting it.

Wednesday, 8 January 1992

Linka Ndlovu goes to Xiviti School at Utah with her two daughters, Bendy and Tracey Chauke, to be registered for this year. She tells the principal of the school that if her children stay away from school without being ill, he must beat them — she does not want them to fool around with their schooling because she pays dearly for their studies. The teachers of Xiviti, she says, must not be afraid to beat her children if necessary; she wants them to be serious with their studies and not to engage in sexual relationships with boys, because they are still too young for that (that is, strictly according to her opinion, and not the girls'). She goes on about this, telling the principal he and the teachers must watch her girls because she is tired of working, she wants to quit her job in order to stay at home and to be looked after by her children. She says she works only to keep them at school.

Friday, 10 January 1992

Linka threatens to beat her daughter Bendy because she has spent the night with her regular boyfriend, Danny Sithole (17). Since she is to return to work at Londolosi Game Reserve today, she manages to control herself, much to Bendy's relief.

Saturday, 11 January 1992

Bendy gets up late (late in this case means after daybreak, when people have already started building their fires and are able to spot lovers returning from their amorous outings) at Danny's place where she spent the night with him. Flo Ndlovu (the daughter of Bendy's grandmother, Ananda Ndlovu) wants to beat her for sleeping at a boy's place, but then changes her mind, saying they will discuss the matter when she gets out of bed.

Sunday, 12 January 1992

Bendy has slept with Danny at his place again despite Aunt Flo's threats of yesterday to beat her if she does so again. When she returns home, she is faced by her waiting aunt. Bendy flees to the veld and enters Manyelethi Game Reserve through the fence, more scared of her aunt than of the possibility of being killed

by lions. She stays there until late afternoon when she is forced to return home. She is very hungry since she has had nothing to eat all day. Her aunt realizes that she has suffered sufficient punishment, and gives her porridge and dried meat to eat. Bendy has now also started an affair with another boy, Sanios Nhlongo.

Saturday, 18 January 1992

Danny Sithole sends his cousin and go-between (*ndhuna*), Connie Ntimana (a girl of 15), to call his girlfriend, Bendy. If a girl is called, it means her boyfriend wants her to come and sleep with him. Bendy's grandmother, Ananda, overhears the message and scolds Bendy for having an affair with two boys at the same time. Old Ananda says: "Me, I only know Sanios Nhlongo, the one who buys me beer. I don't want to hear about the other boyfriends, no!" Ananda, therefore, is not against Bendy having more than one boyfriend at the same time in this case as such, but because Bendy may jeopardize her chances of getting free beer.

Tuesday, 11 February 1992

Darren Sithole (19) and Georgie Sithole (16) follow Bendy. They want to lay her, they say. Bendy runs home because she is scared of being made love to by Darren. At her home she locks herself in her aunt's hut. Darren and Georgie arrive at the Ndlovu homestead. They call Jeffrey Ndlovu and tell him to call his cousin Bendy. They want to tell her something. She must not be afraid. Bendy's grandmother, old Ananda, asks the boys what they want. They answer her:

"**Kokwana** (Grandmother), Bendy has told Danny [her boyfriend] lies about us. We only want to ask her about it in order to get the truth. But she does not want to talk to us. She just runs away from us even though we don't want to hit her. We only want to ask her about the matter."

"I know nothing about this, talk to her yourself," says Ananda.

Bendy, however, is not stupid when it comes to matters of boys, and she refuses to get out of the hut. Darren and Georgie eventually leave, furious because Bendy has frustrated their male privilege of boys forcing themselves on girls. They promise each other that they will get her tomorrow — they will first beat her up and then *kundza* (have intercourse with) her until she cannot stand it anymore.

Sunday, 16 February 1992

Bendy is in trouble with her regular boyfriend, Danny Sithole, and Darren Sithole for having sexual relationships with both of them. Darren (whose 1992 history

will also be related) has a regular girlfriend, besides sexual affairs with two other girls (Darren is seldom short of pocket money). After sunset the two boys prowled around the village together, looking for Bendy. They say they want to beat her because she should not have an affair with two boys who are "brothers" (cousins). Bendy's younger sister, Tammy, spots the boys hiding behind the maroela tree near their home, realizes what they are up to, and runs to warn Bendy. Bendy runs to hide at her maternal uncle's home — she uses the footpath at the back of her uncle's home and not the street. At 11 o'clock at night Danny and Darren give up their vigilance and return to their respective homes. They tell their friends that Bendy is not clever: They will find her one day, and they will beat her so that she ends up in hospital.

Friday, 21 February 1992

Danny again sends his cousin Connie Ntimana to go and call his girlfriend, Bendy. He wants to sleep with her tonight because his abstinence from sex is "several weeks" old, says Danny. "Several weeks" means "several days", because a few days of abstinence is such a horrifically long time that it can only be phrased in terms of weeks. A boy who later talks about this event, gives it a most offensive twist: "Yes indeed, he sent someone to fetch his vagina." However, they use the rude expression for "vagina". In this way a human being is reduced to a sexual organ.

Monday, 24 February 1992

Bendy and her sister Tracey have been dismissed from school at Utah because they did not pay their R3 each to travel to athletics at Thulamahashe. They ask their grandmother Ananda for money, but Ananda tells them that she finished her pension money on beer that she bought last week. She used all her pension money on beer last week, she says, when Sithazo (her sister, also a widow) visited her.

"Your money is not finished, Grandmother. You only hate our mother [Linka] and love mother Linah [their aunt, Ananda's eldest daughter]. If it was mother Linah's children asking for money, you would have given it to them."

"I know where you hide your money," says Tracey. "I will steal it and pay the R3 at school."

Bendy decides on a more tactful strategy. She tells her grandmother: "All the kids at school have paid their money, it is only me and Tracey who have been chased away at school."

Tracey takes Bendy's example — she kneels in front of Ananda and says: "I pray you, Grandmother, give it to us. Mother will pay you when she returns from work for her holiday."

Ananda remains adamant: "I have really finished my money."

It is hard to say whether old Ananda is telling the truth or not, since she knows all the finer points of the struggle for survival.

Tuesday, 25 February 1992

Senga Ndlovu threatens to beat Bendy, her husband's sister's daughter:

"Where have you slept last night? While you were sleeping with your lovers, the small kids were sleeping by themselves at home."

Friday, 6 March 1992

Bendy is no longer attending school. She slept with her boyfriend, Danny, last night. Before daybreak she went to sleep with Connie Ntimana in the latter's room. Bendy's mother, Linka, arrived home on leave last night and she is afraid to face her mother because she has quit school. However, her mother enters Connie's room before they wake up. Without a word or the slightest hesitation, Linka attacks Bendy with fists and her flat hand. Then she gets hold of Bendy's throat and starts choking the girl. Bendy is so terrified that she manages to break free. She flees towards the river to hide there in the dense shrubs. Linka returns to her home where she tells Bendy's cousin, Palo Maxele, to go and catch Bendy and bring her home; she wants to finish beating her daughter. Palo follows Bendy, but she runs so fast that Palo has to give up the chase. When Bendy knows that Palo has left for school, she returns home but keeps a safe distance from her mother.

Linka is frustrated because Bendy does not attend school, and because she does not sleep at home. She wants her daughter to get educated, preparatory to looking after her mother; and she fears that if her daughter gets pregnant, not only will her school career be destroyed, but she may also have to put up with the care of both her daughter and her baby.

Saturday, 7 March 1992

Linka Ndlovu sends older boys, Chargo Maxele and Jabulani Chavangu, to go and catch Bendy.

"But you must catch her by surprise, otherwise she will run away. I want to beat her for sleeping at boyfriends' homes and not here at home. She must be taught to stop that harlotry of hers."

The boys find Bendy at the tuck-shop where she is sitting with another girl. They catch her and take her home. At home Linka takes Bendy into her sister's room and beats Bendy so much with a plastic sjambok that her sister-in-law deems it necessary to rescue Bendy from her mother. Bendy's skin is torn on various parts of her body, also on her head. She keeps lying on the floor, waiting for the pain to subside. After a while she gets up, and goes to ask her mother for ointment to put on her wounds.

Thursday, 12 March 1992

Linka returns to work because her leave has come to an end. When Bendy sees her mother leave, she is exuberant.

"Now I will go around again wherever I please. I will be controlled by nobody, only by myself. No person is going to prevent me from going around, seeing my boyfriends." Her remarks end in giggles of joy.

Wednesday, 1 April 1992

Mambana, the gatekeeper at the Sabi Sand gate, arrives at Dixie with his bicycle to fetch Constance Ndlovu during the evening. She is going to sleep with him at the gate. Mambana's attraction to girls and women is the fact that he has a constant supply of meat as gatekeeper of the Sabi Sand game farms.

Sunday, 5 April 1992

Constance Ndlovu (17) and Bendy leave Dixie in Richard Mdluli's car (Richard, an entrepreneur from Hluvukani, came to Dixie to check his cattle herd of about 200 as he usually does almost daily). Before they left, the girls told their friends that they were going to Gottenburg (a settlement about 15 kilometres from Dixie), but not what they were going to do there. Everybody knowing them well, says they are going to their boyfriends. They say this on the basis of the fact that two "boys" from Gottenburg came to Dixie some time ago looking for Constance and Bendy; and quite possibly on the basis of still other facts not known to me.

Wednesday, 8 April 1992

While Constance and Bendy are still away, a boy (Jerry) from Sondela village comes to Dixie looking for Constance. Besides this Jerry, a man from Utah, Albert Mathebula (another boyfriend of hers), is also at Dixie looking for Constance. Mambana from the Sabi Sand gate is also annoyed with Constance's absence.

Constance has several boyfriends precisely because she has always lacked security (the reason why she lives at her father's homestead at Dixie, and not with her mother at Acornhoek), and because none of her boyfriends are able to give her the security she needs. She enters into multiple sexual relationships for the sake of her survival, but this brings her into trouble with all her boyfriends.

Late afternoon Constance and Bendy return from Gottenburg. Fortunately all Constance's boyfriends have left.

Sunday, 12 April 1992

Jan Sithole (21, not attending school and unemployed) pulls Constance around, demanding that they go and have sex. But Constance does not want to have sex with Jan. Jan insists, saying that they will make love in his room. He will chase his wife out. Constance pulls herself free and runs to Jan's maternal uncle, Elmon Khosa, and tells him that Jan wants to force her to have sex with him. Elmon calls Jan and asks him, not without a substantial measure of hypocrisy, what he thinks he is doing. Does it mean that he does not want his wife anymore? Jan does the predictable thing and tells his uncle that Constance is lying; he never pulled her around.

Later during the day four cousins, Thandi Nkuna, Xithelegwana Khosa, Robin Khosa and Rossert Khosa, go to Constance to demand the money she borrowed from them. They tell Constance that they want their money because Constance always gossips about them.

The real reason for their aggression, however, is the fact that Constance is having an affair with Edward Khumalo, whilst Edward is having an affair with Xithelegwana as well. Xithelegwana is actually regarded as the wife of Bennet Nduvana who is employed and not at his home in a neighbouring settlement. It means that he, Bennet, has the first claim to Xithelegwana, but like all women, Xithelegwana and Constance compete for men in pursuance of security.

Tuesday, 14 April 1992

Constance Ndlovu and Bendy go to the veld to collect firewood. They have been sent by their aunt, Linah Maxele, who told them to get up off their arses and start working.

"You never work, the two of you. You are always washing yourself, only to go and sit at the road to wait for your boyfriends, while Trudie does all your work for you. And you, Bendy, you have learned your whoring from Constance. Your mother said she will take off from work to come home and beat you until you end up in hospital. She says you fail at school because you do not attend

school. Nobody does worse at school than you because you are being made stupid by your whoring."

Wednesday, 15 April 1992

Mhlahla Mthabane from Utah, Jan Sithole and Ndoza Siwele go around the village looking for Constance. They say they want to beat her up because she is a whore. She courted all three of them, but now she only wants Albert Mathebula (a married man from Utah). Eventually they find Constance with Albert. They are afraid of Albert, and walk on. Constance has however told all three of them that she does not want them anymore, before she started her relationship with Albert.

Coming from the sports fields later during the day, where they were preparing for the tournament, Constance is called by Jan. Jan is now slightly drunk and not afraid of Albert. Albert tells Jan that he cannot take his girlfriend.

"That is not the point," says Jan. "I have had an affair with Constance long before you started courting her."

"Yes," says Constance, "but I have told you long ago that I do not want you anymore. But you keep forcing yourself on me."

Because she dares tell Jan that she does not want him, Jan grabs Constance's arm with one hand and slaps her face with the other hand. Constance then hides behind Albert. Several people gather around them to see what is going to happen next. Loyida Maxele says Jan and Albert must stop fighting. They must beat Constance because she is a whore who is having affairs with many boys simultaneously. Elmon Khosa asks Constance whom she prefers, and she says she wants Albert because he does not beat her. Jan slaps Constance's face again, apparently for her impudence. When she turns her back to hide her face, he punches her on her back. Constance starts crying, saying Jan is going to kill her. Albert takes out a knife and threatens to stab Jan. Jan takes out his own knife and says he is going to kill Albert today. Elmon interferes and asks them why they fight about a girl whilst they both have wives — a silly question in the light of realities in Dixie. Someone else says they must stop their fighting because one of them will get killed and the other one will be jailed. Elmon tells them to just stop their nonsense and go home. A girl says they are fools; they fight because they are having an affair with the same girl, instead of beating that girl. She says Constance is having affairs with Fannie Siwele, Edward Khumalo, Ndoza Siwele and Albert Mathebula, she is a whore. Elmon again tells them to go home to their wives. Albert leaves for Utah with his friend. Constance goes home.

After a while Nomsa Mathebula, the wife of Albert, arrives on foot from Utah, looking for her husband — she says she has been told by two girls that her husband is having an affair with Constance. She tells Linah Maxele and Senga Ndlovu that she is taking Constance home with her to Utah. They give her permission to do so, saying it may put an end to her whoring. Nomsa then strips Constance of all her clothes, and beats her with a stick until Constance falls to the ground and rolls around, all covered in dust. Nomsa then literally drives the naked Constance with a stick all the way to Utah in the dark of night. She tells Constance that she will have to come and live at her (Nomsa's) home because she (Nomsa) cannot cook food for Albert and wash his clothes while Constance is having an affair with him; Constance must help her with that. She also hits Constance between the legs with the stick. At one o'clock at night Nomsa releases Constance.

Wednesday, 22 April 1992

While Constance was at Hluvukani, her niece Bendy slept with Sanios Nhlongo, her other lover, at the latter's home the previous night. At first Bendy said she did not want Sanios because he beats girls; that she loved Danny better than Sanios. Thereafter she did not talk about it anymore, "because she has seen Sanios's money, the money with which he *diza's* [to bribe or to buy sexual favours] her," the boys say.

How do I and other people know that Bendy slept with Sanios the previous night? Another woman, a relative of Sanios, went to his place very early in the morning to borrow money from Sanios, and she saw Bendy coming out of Sanios's hut. Therefore nothing can stop it from becoming common knowledge in the village, and the subject of casual gossip. Being deprived of privacy in this way, is part of the violent nature of social life in Dixie.

Towards evening Constance comes home from Hluvukani. Her aunt (father's sister), Linah Maxele, greets her as she passes Linah's home on her way to her grandmother's homestead, and then Linah adds a piece of nastiness:

"So where are you coming from?"

"I was at Hluvukani."

"Then get back to where you are coming from. You have love affairs with men and boys from all over, from Hlalakahle, Gottenburg, Dixie, Huntington, Utah and Somerset. We do not want to be shot at with guns [by competing boyfriends]. These days people do not hesitate to shoot. It would be better if you just take all your clothes and leave. You are known wherever you go because you never

refuse boys. You do not know [how to say] 'no'; you only know 'yes' [when boys ask her to make love]. Every evening boys come to my mother's place to ask for you. They do not respect her; they just ask her directly [they do not send a child secretly] for you. And if my mother is drunk, they simply remain and make a noise together with you and Bendy."

Thursday, 23 April 1992

Ruka Nkuna (18) pulls at Bendy. He wants to make love to her at his home despite the fact that they do not have a love affair. Because Bendy persists in her refusal, Ruka slaps her face. Bendy grabs a brick, hits Ruka with it, and runs home. Ruka runs after her, but Bendy reaches her home before he can catch her. When Bendy tells her mother, Linka, that Ruka has slapped her, her mother insults him horribly ("she curses him by his parents"). Ruka does the usual thing — lying instantly:

"Bendy is lying, I never slapped her. I was only playing with her."

On this day, Constance suffers a fate similar to that of her cousin, Bendy: She is pulled by the arm by Jan Sithole towards the veld where he wants to have intercourse with her, no matter how much Constance tries to refuse. Bendy, who sees Jan dragging Constance towards the veld (and remembering her own experience earlier during the day), runs to her home where she tells her aunt that Jan is forcing Constance to go into the veld (the "bushes"). Her Aunt Lilly goes in the direction they went and calls out Constance's name. But Constance does not answer, no doubt because she is threatened by Jan. Then Lilly calls Bendy and her sister, Trudie, and they all run to go and look for Constance and Jan. When Jan hears them coming, he runs away pretending that Constance is alone in the veld. When Lilly asks Constance what happened, she tells them that Jan wanted to have sex with her against her will. When she told him that she did not want him, Jan insisted that they had a love affair a long time ago — boys' eternal claim over their erstwhile girlfriends.

Friday, 24 April 1992

Bendy and Constance accompany their boyfriends, Sanios and Patrick Ndlovu, to Sabi Sand where Sanios's father is employed. They have told their cousins and friends that they are not going to return. They will be going to Pretoria with their boyfriends when these boys return to their work with their employer. The girls' cousin, Palo Maxele, remarks hypocritically:

"Indeed, Bendy has told herself that she is not going to school any longer, and that she is going to live in Pretoria. They said they are leaving on Sunday with

the whites. The two of them have been sleeping at their boyfriends' place quite a while." This he says as if it is a horrible sin in Dixie. Boys take joy attributing sins to girls; one could almost believe the girls commit these sins boys from another planet.

Monday, 27 April 1992

Bendy and Constance did not go to Pretoria with their boyfriends yesterday. They remained behind at the Sabi Sand gate because their boyfriends' employers had refused to take them along — and already everybody in Dixie knows it. One girl from Dixie says that she saw them cooking porridge late yesterday afternoon at the gatekeepers' huts at the gate. When Constance and Bendy saw her, they hurriedly went to hide inside a hut, not knowing that they had already been spotted. Clearly the two girls were embarrassed and disappointed. Going to live with their boyfriends in Pretoria would have given them the security and esteem they desperately needed.

Tuesday, 28 April 1992

Tracey Chauke (Bendy's younger sister) tells her grandmother, Ananda, that the principal has told her that if Bendy stays away from school this whole week as well, she will be forbidden to attend school any longer.

"They [the principal; Dixie people often use the plural in this way if they wish to attach importance to a subject] say they are tired of running after Bendy, she upsets them with her dodging school all the time. I have told the principal there at school that Bendy has left for Pretoria with her lover. So they said if Bendy does not show up this week, there is no other way, they will have to delete her name from the register."

By this time old Ananda is cynical about her granddaughter, Bendy. "I don't know. Bendy's things are known to her mother, it is she who will talk them out. I don't know Bendy's matters because she is now grown up. She will think for herself whether the things she does are good or bad. Bendy is encouraged by that crook of a Constance. She has now also entered that whoring of not looking behind herself [meaning Bendy prostitutes herself without thinking twice]. They should take her to the police so they can beat the shit out of her. Perhaps she will stop her whoring of going to other places without returning home."

However, when Pfalo Nhlongo (the father of Bendy's boyfriend) comes from Gowrie, Ananda goes to see him. She asks Pfalo about Bendy and Constance.

"I have chased them away long ago, and I told them that I do not want to get into trouble because of them."

"You must tell the truth," answers Ananda, "because when Linka comes from work, she is going to report you for allowing your sons to stay with my granddaughters."

"I know nothing about the girls, I did not see them at work [on the game farm] because they were either sleeping inside or going around in the bush with the boys."

At seven in the evening Bendy and Constance arrive with three loaves of bread from Hluvukani. Ananda and her grandchildren are sitting in the boma at the fire. Ananda is angry and rude: "Where do you come from, you dogs?" The girls answer that they have come from Hluvukani.

"I do not even want to speak to you. Bendy, you must go and work and pay your mother for the expensive school uniforms she bought you. Constance, you are always on the 'boyfriend business' and want to teach Bendy that business as well. And Bendy does not think for herself. Linka [Bendy's mother] is coming home this week and she said she was going to hire boys to go and look for the two of you. Trudie [Bendy's younger sister] does not do things like Bendy. She sleeps with her boyfriend at Utah but she always returns to do her chores. You are always washing yourself to go around looking for boys, and when Trudie has finished cooking, you return and wash yourself again with the water carried by Trudie and eat the food prepared by her."

Wednesday, 29 April 1992

A teenage boy from the village tells me the following about Constance and Bendy in his own biased way:

"They went to Gottenburg to Mackson Ntimana's previous homestead. Bendy left because she is scared of being beaten by her mother when she returns from work on the first of May. She said she wanted to hide at Gottenburg. But they also went to Gottenburg to go and flirt with the boys there since they are big whores. There really is no place they may go where they do not have lovers."

Friday, 1 May 1992 (Workers' Day)

Linka Ndlovu arrives home at Dixie on leave for 12 days. The moment she arrives home and hears about her daughter, Bendy's, behaviour, Linka is furious. She speaks heatedly.

"I now just want the police to go and look for her. When they find her, I will tell them to beat the shit out of her. They must not play with her. I will give her to them because she is my child and she is giving me a bad time. It is necessary that they also beat Constance because she is the champion of whoring [*champi-*

yoni ya vungwadla]. I want to tell the police to put them into jail for six months so that they may sit there and feel what it is like to be naughty without looking behind them to see whether what they are doing is pretty or ugly. I suffer for my children by working to care for them. But what do they do? They turn around and throw their schooling away, no matter whether I have spent a lot of money on their expensive school uniforms. I want them to go to school to study so that they can also work to help me, because I am making myself old working for them. I am not going to live for a thousand years and still look after them. From Pfalo Nhlongo I want R1 000 for Bendy's schooling, because his son has taken my daughter to go and stay with him at Sabi Sand, making her stupid [causing her not to think for herself anymore, and to quit school]. I just want that money, I do not want to hear his stories. I am only waiting for brother Monle to go and discuss this matter with Pfalo."

Linka's mother, old Ananda, says: "Bendy looked so nice in her school uniform, she should have studied to become a nurse, but now she is not attending school anymore. She will just go and work on the game farms and she will not get a good job because she cannot write properly and she only speaks Fanakalo. I do not want Constance at my home any longer, not even for a single day, because people are shooting with AK47s nowadays — Constance may bring stolen things to my home and I will be killed for that."

The two girls are the subject of much gossip. One woman says that if they were her daughters, she would have taken them to the police or the magistrate or the social worker at Thulamahashe to tell them about the bad ways of the girls and the way they run away from school. They will never do that again. She says her daughter must try that nonsense and she will get what she is looking for. She says the women of Dixie allow their daughters to wash their boyfriends' clothes at their homes (meaning they have no shame anymore).

Bendy's boyfriend, Danny, is also despondent about Bendy.

"I will find myself another girlfriend because if Bendy gets pregnant she will say it is 'my' pregnancy. When I decide to marry, I will marry an educated girl. But I will first complete my school education. I do not mind about that foolish Bendy."

Lindiwe Nkuna, however, knows him better. "You are lying. The moment you set eyes on her again, you are going to smile broadly."

"It does not bother me if I do not sleep with a girl. I do not get ill if I do not have sex. And there are many prettier girls than Bendy at Hluvukani [where he is at school]."

"But Bendy is also beautiful," says Lindiwe.

"Even if she is beautiful, I do not want her anymore because all people know that she ran away with Sanios Nhlongo. Many boys look at me as if I am a fool. They say I am a widower now."

Saturday, 2 May 1992

Linka leaves for Utah to tell the father of her daughters that she wants to ask the police to look for Bendy, and to beat the dirty whorishness out of her. Albert Chauke tells her to do whatever she wishes with that whorish child of Gazankulu.

Wednesday, 6 May 1992

Linka departs for Mhala where she wants to ask the police for their assistance in tracking Bendy down. When she arrives at the police station, she tells the police that her daughter Bendy has run away from school because of whoring. She is going around, Linka says, with a thieving girl and they may steal people's things. They may flee and wander around all over the place. The police say they understand and they will go and look for the girls. They leave for Acornhoek (with Linka) where Constance's mother lives, and find the girls there, to their own surprise.

Back at Dixie, Linka relates what happened when they found the girls.

"When Constance saw the police vehicle, she shouted: 'Mercy! Mother, I am going to be killed! I am tired of being scared that the police may beat me!' But the police only took Bendy, they left Constance. They did not want to beat Bendy, they only wrote a letter to her principal."

Thursday, 7 May 1992

Linka escorts Bendy to the school at Utah in the morning. She says she wants to tell the teachers today to beat that whoring out of her, "that whoring of never stopping to look behind her".

In the afternoon, back at Dixie, Linka says: "We arrived at school and took Bendy into the principal's office, where I explained everything to them. I told them not to play with Bendy, they must beat the shit out of her. When they sent a few boys to fetch them rods with which to beat Bendy, I went outside. Then I started to feel my heart aching for Bendy, the way they were beating."

Bendy's cousin, a boy, relates the incident in the following way:

"They say the teachers took turns to beat Bendy with the rod on her buttocks. They made her lie down on the desk. Bendy shrieked loudly, yelling that she was never going to do it again. After the first beating she was given time to rest — she was crying very hard. She rolled on the floor, feeling the sweetness [pain] of

the rod where it had licked her buttocks. When she stopped crying, they started beating her again, more than 50 strokes this time [the first time they did not count]. Tracey [Bendy's younger sister] cried because of the way they were beating her sister. And when Bendy fainted, Tracey thought Bendy had died.

"The boys said they could hardly restrain themselves because Bendy's uniform and pantie were torn by the rod, and they could see her thighs. Many of the boys got erections from seeing Bendy's thighs."

Nothing demonstrates and explains boys' perception of girls, and their indifference towards the feelings of girls, better than their attitude in this brutal incident. Of course, boys will become excited by the sight of female thighs. But the way in which they stressed this aspect of the episode, with no effort at all to conceal their enjoyment of it, is distressing for someone not used to such violence.

Bendy's mother Linka, I believe, forced herself to harden her feelings when she said:

"I do not care even if Bendy dies. I work hard for my children's future, and for them to be educated. When I heard from people at work that Bendy went to Pretoria, I started drinking. I worried very much. When I was drunk, it was better, because then I just slept. But she makes me so angry, I am too afraid to beat her myself because I may kill her." She has to harden her feelings if she wants to survive her hopeless struggle to bring up her children without a husband, and with low wages.

Child beating may also have another explanation. Mothers like Linka, I believe, deep down blame themselves — and not their circumstances — for failing to care sufficiently for their children. Bendy constantly reminds Linka that she is a failure as a mother, and gets beaten for it. Punishing her daughter is a way of punishing herself because I know that she loves her daughter from the numerous occasions I observed her genuine concern for Bendy's well-being.

Tuesday, 12 May 1992

Linka has returned to her work at the game lodge. She left, telling her mother, old Ananda, that if her daughter Bendy ever did not sleep at home again, she had to send her a message immediately. She would take Bendy to school and give her to the teachers again to beat the shit out of her, even more than on the previous occasion.

Thursday, 28 May 1992

Palo Maxele (15) passes Bendy, her little sister Tammy, and Connie Ntimana in the street. He notices Bendy eating sweets, and asks her for one. Bendy answers him that she is not giving any sweets to any person. Little Tammy starts provoking Palo, and then runs away. Palo runs after her, catches her and hits her with his belt. So Bendy yells at Palo — what is he beating the child for? For this, Palo hits Bendy on her back with his belt. Bendy pulls the belt out of Palo's hand (Palo is a small boy for his age of 16), hits him with it and runs away. From a safe distance she curses Palo, and then runs to her home. Palo follows her to her home, and finds Bendy sitting on a chair outside. Without further ado he punches her in the face, saying:

"Take this and taste it!" They start wrestling, and Bendy gets hold of a long, dry bone with which she hits Palo on the head. Palo starts bleeding and Bendy flees into a hut where she locks herself in from the inside. Palo goes home to wash the blood off his face.

In previous drafts of this document I managed to overcome the overpowering urge to make a gleeful remark about this physical feat by a girl, but I can resist the urge only so many times. If Bendy's, albeit single, triumph over a boy in a fight does not deserve a monument, nothing does.

Wednesday, 3 June 1992

Bendy has slept with Danny Sithole at his place the night before. Some time ago Danny told another girl that he did not want Bendy any longer because she had had an affair with one of the Nhlongo boys working in Pretoria. That girl told him then that he was lying, that the moment he saw Bendy again, he would be all smiles.

Later during the day Bendy meets Jan Sithole (21) and Susa Ntimana (19) at the first bend in the street. She was called by Jan to meet him there. A woman and a girl coming from the tuckshop, overhear the conversation between Jan, Susa and Bendy. Susa is telling Jan that when he is through talking to Bendy, he also wants to talk to her, he wants to tell her some good news. The girl tells the woman that Bendy's vagina must be very big because Jan's penis is very big — another girl told her this when she and Jan were still having an affair. The woman remarks that she cannot understand how girls can have an affair with Jan because she has heard that Jan is still wetting his bed at night.

"He gives the girls money which he gets from his [employed] mother."

Friday, 26 June 1992

Three boys eavesdrop at the window of Bendy and her sister Tracey. Bendy tells Tracey in detail how she had trouble making love to a heavy fat boy while she was at Acornhoek with Constance (when she was fetched by the police and her mother). She says she allowed that fat boy to have sex with her because he was employed at one of the shops at Acornhoek, and she wanted him to give her money.

"I enjoyed it so much with that fat boy's money at Acornhoek, that I forgot about returning to Dixie. I do not want Danny anymore. He does not give me money. I will end our relationship and continue my affair with Sanios only. Sanios always gives me money, even though I do not ask him for it." (Sanios is employed, and Danny is still at school.)

Sunday, 5 July 1992

Bendy nowadays always remains at home, working hard. She does not leave their homestead even for a moment to socialize with other girls. The reason for her strange behaviour is the fact that her mother Linka is on leave, and Bendy does not want to be caught on the wrong foot by her mother.

"But the moment Linka returns to work," someone says, "Bendy will soon start to *ronta* (wander around) with Constance because they are lazy and like boyfriends. Tracey [Bendy's younger sister] will have to do all the work again, Bendy will just wash herself all day long to smell nice for the boys."

Most other pretty girls like Bendy who suffer equally from a sense of insecurity, I am sure, would have used their good looks in the same way Bendy did.

Tuesday, 14 July 1992

Linka's leave is over. Before she returns to work, she talks to her mother, Ananda, and her daughter, Bendy. She says if Bendy does not sleep at home, if she leaves the small kids at home to sleep by themselves — if she sleeps with her boyfriends — she wants her mother to send her a message. If Bendy starts her nonsense again, says Linka, she will take her and her boyfriends to the police at Hazyview to be beaten close to death (it is believed at Dixie that the police of Hazyview are not as "soft" as other police). Bendy tells her mother she will not behave badly again because she might be beaten to death.

Later during the day, Monle Ndlovu (Bendy's uncle) comes across Sanios Nhlongo, the latter's brother Bukani Nhlongo, and Sanios's friend who works with him in Pretoria, on the street. First he greets them politely, and then asks them which one of them is having an affair with Bendy. They all keep quiet.

Monle repeats his question. Bukani answers that his younger brother Sanios is the one who used to have an affair with Bendy, but he does not know whether they are still having an affair. Monle asks Sanios whether he is still courting Bendy, and Sanios admits that it is true. When Monle asks Sanios's friend whether he is the one who courts his daughter Constance Ndlovu, he also admits that he is the one.

"Why do you take my children to go and stay with you on the farms if you know that they are still in school?" The boys keep quiet again.

"If you take them with you to the farms, do you think that they are your wives? Do you have money with which to *lovola* them? You try that again, and I will beat the shit out of you."

Monle is doing his sister (Bendy's mother) and himself a favour, but not Bendy who has to survive her own circumstances: She did say that she liked Sanios because he gave her money.

Wednesday, 15 July 1992

Late last night Bendy and Constance "ran away" with their new boyfriends, Shadrack Siwele and Albert Mathebula, to sleep with them at Utah. They return to Dixie at four o'clock in the morning because they are afraid of being beaten by their uncle/father, Monle Ndlovu.

Thursday, 16 July 1992

While Bendy stands with her new boyfriend from Utah, Shadrack Siwele, in the dark during the evening, holding hands, her regular boyfriend, Danny, stands behind a tree, listening to what they are talking about. Shadrack asks Bendy to go with him to Utah again for the night. Bendy says she cannot take that chance again. Her Uncle Monle checks on her in the evening to see if she is sleeping at home. If he does not find her at home, she will be in big trouble. Shadrack says he understands and asks her to walk with him to the road. Danny does not make his presence known to them, but waits for Bendy to return from the road instead. When she returns, he asks her where she has come from. Bendy tells Danny that she is returning from the veld (she went to relieve herself). Danny threatens to beat Bendy — does she think that what she is doing is the right thing? Bendy pleads with Danny to forgive her. Danny, who is not as violent as the average boy, leaves the matter alone.

Friday, 17 July 1992

Danny finds Bendy talking to Thomas Sithole, a boy visiting his relatives at Dixie. He asks Thomas politely whether he is courting Bendy. Thomas says yes, he is courting her.

"Did she not tell you that she is having an affair with a boy here at Dixie?"

"She told me that she had been having an affair with a boy, but that she ended the affair long ago."

"Well, I tell you that she is my girlfriend and that we still have an affair. If you do not want trouble, do not call her again." Thomas is very surprised by what he hears from Danny, and leaves. Danny goes home with Bendy to sleep with her.

Tuesday, 21 July 1992

Sanios Nhlongo has heard that Thomas Sithole of Belfast who is visiting his relatives at the Ngobeni homestead, is having an affair with Bendy. He goes to Derrick Mnisi (where Thomas is staying) and finds him and Thomas sitting on the bed. He tells Thomas that he has heard from his younger sisters that Thomas is having an affair with Bendy — does Thomas not know that Bendy is his girlfriend? Thomas says no. When he told her that he wanted her the first time, he asked Bendy whether she had a boyfriend, and she said no. Sanios is very angry, and leaves. He tells his friends that he is going to beat Bendy.

Bendy will never be able to stay out of trouble with her four boyfriends, Danny Sithole, Sanios Nhlongo, Thomas Sithole and Shadrack Siwele from Utah (besides the trouble she gets into with her mother because of her sexual relationships with boys). But she, like most girls, has to take risks in this regard in order to maximize her limited opportunities.

Thursday, 25 July 1992

Sanios Nhlongo asks Palo Maxele to take him to Bendy. Bendy is Palo's cousin and he knows how to take Sanios to Bendy without being detected. (Ever since Bendy's uncle asked him whether he was married to Bendy, since he took her to stay at his home as he pleased, Sanios has been more careful.) When Palo finds Bendy, she goes with Sanios to her mother's room.

"They make love on her mother's bed — they do not respect that bed," says Palo.

Palo then calls his friends to the window to listen to what Bendy and Sanios are doing.

Thursday, 1 August 1992

Sanios Nhlongo gives R5 to Chargo Maxele. Chargo is the cousin of Bendy, with whom Sanios is having an affair. He knows that if he gives Chargo money, Chargo will attempt to influence Bendy to remain his lover. What this means is that Chargo will tell Bendy how bad her other boyfriends are, and what a fine boy Sanios is.

Chargo is very happy about the R5, and Sanios says: "It is a gift I received from God." He does not really believe that he received the money from God, only that he received money unexpectedly.

Saturday, 3 August 1992

Bendy was beaten by her mother Linka at Londolozi where she was visiting for the holidays. Linka had given her money to return to Dixie for the reopening of the schools. But Bendy stayed on and slept with a man from Huntington. During the day she remained inside the hut of her lover. Eventually her mother learned about this from someone else. One evening when the man returned to his hut, Linka followed him and entered his hut. She found Bendy there and first assaulted her with her fists, and then gave her a severe beating with a stick. Bendy is still ill because of the beating, but her mother has sent her home without money to go for treatment at the clinic. Bendy says her mother has beaten her with a stick on her stomach. She has been menstruating ever since. She sleeps all day long and does not attend school. Her uncle's wife, Senga, is unsympathetic and tells Bendy that if she gets pregnant some time, no boy is going to accept responsibility, because she sleeps with many boys.

Sunday, 4 August 1992

Jan Sithole (who, on the 23rd of April pulled Constance away into the veld in order to force himself upon her) calls Constance, but she refuses to go to him.

"Why do you call me? I only know that we have ended our relationship a long time ago. I am betrothed to another man now, not to you. I don't want to be disturbed. You want to make a whore of me even though I am betrothed. You will only spoil my marriage. I will be beaten by my husband. Just leave me alone."

"Don't fool around with me. You were my lover long before you became Palo's lover. Come here."

"But don't you hear what I tell you?"

So Jan goes to where Constance is sitting, grabs her hand and drags her off. Constance cries and tries to pull back, but Jan just pulls harder and slaps her face and head. He drags her to the dry river bed where he has sex with her.

It will never occur to Jan that this act of his constitutes the rape of a minor, because Constance is his erstwhile girlfriend who owes him sexual favours.

Friday, 7 August 1992

Constance and Bendy went to sleep with their boyfriends, Albert Mathebula and Shadrack Siwele, at Utah last night (indicating that Bendy is well again). When they are asked by their aunt and grandmother where they were last night, the girls tell them that they went to sleep with Betty Khosa who is looking after small kids while their mother is away.

"They try to close the adults' eyes so that they can see nothing," a boy remarks.

Thursday, 20 August 1992

Fanuel Ndlovu and two other young men from Ireagh arrive at Dixie with a mobile disco. The boys and girls of Dixie, and many from Utah, attend the disco at Elmon Khosa's place (Elmon is unemployed and sells liquor to support him and his family). The owners of the disco, three young men (called *vafana*: (boys) by everyone), charge a R1,50 entrance fee, and do disco dancing for entertainment. The majority of the boys get drunk in various degrees. The disco is also an occasion for sexual licence. The three dancers ask girls from the village, Bendy, Constance, Connie Ntimana and Luzile Sithole to be their lovers. Despite the noise, two small boys elsewhere at the disco overhear Darren Sithole asking Thandi Mathebula to make love to him, and they follow them to the veld. But one of the two boys sneezes while Darren and Thandi are making love, and the couple go off to another place. Thandi, however, is still having an affair with Rurumela Ntimana. The kids say Rurumela and Darren like to make love to Thandi because she is so black and boys nowadays like black girls.

The disco is to dominate social life in Dixie for some time to come. The disco boys will move to Utah on Sunday, and from there to Makrepeni. And everywhere they go, they are followed by the boys and girls of Dixie. The disco is a welcome relief from an otherwise dreary social life.

Sunday, 23 August 1992

Constance tells Chargo and Palo about one day when she came from the Sabi Sand gate in the dark of the evening. At the little bridge near the hillock she was

accosted by three soldiers. They were hiding there and when she approached the bridge, they jumped out from all sides and asked her what her name was. So she told them her name. One of them then took her by the arm, saying he was taking her home because it was night. What is more, he said, there were white soldiers as well, and they might shoot her, thinking that she was a Mozambican. While she was walking home with him, he started asking her to make love to him. She refused, telling him that he did not respect her. He answered her that all people are not the same; it is because they are different that he was asking her, not out of disrespect. When she persisted refusing him, he threatened to turn back and let her walk home on her own and again said the white soldiers might mistake her for a Mozambican refugee and shoot her. In the end, therefore, she submitted to him. Afterwards he gave her his ration packet and escorted her home.

Thursday, 27 August 1992

Bendy and Constance are still having their love affairs with the "disco boys". Someone from the village says Bendy and Constance like those two boys so much because they are able to dance very well.

"They desire the boys because they see them dancing. Constance's boyfriend is the owner of taxis and cafes. He is so rich he could have been her father. She said she is going to be betrothed where she is not going to suffer from poverty. Bendy and her boyfriend borrow Jan Sithole's room when they want to make love. They like those boys because they prefer boys from far-away places."

Saturday, 29 August 1992

Constance has been chased away from the Nhlongo homestead where she was betrothed to Patrick Nhlongo. She was chased away by Patrick's father, Pfalo, because, as he said, he did not want her there any longer (Patrick works in Pretoria). When he sent meat from the farm where he is working, she took all that meat and prepared it for her boyfriends only. His children's stomachs never got full. And what is more, when he came home to Dixie, he never found her at home. Sometimes she stayed away for two days; he was told that she was spending those days with her boyfriends at Utah. He did not want a whore at his place, Pfalo said. Another reason why he did not want her at his home was because he did not want to be beaten up by lovers if he clashed with Constance about her affairs. (They also use the plural when they want to exaggerate, like her "lovers" in this case.)

Constance arrives with all her belongings at Linka Ndlovu's home where she previously lived with Bendy.

“Constance and her friend Bendy are going to live together again. They will whore together, time and time again. They are going to wake up [open up] their way of going to Utah every day to their boyfriends again. But perhaps they will not go to Utah so regularly because Bendy’s mother will come home shortly, at the end of the month. They are afraid of being beaten.” This wisdom is expressed, warts and all, by a 16-year-old boy.

Saturday, 5 September 1992

I describe the following events in the words of Palo Maxele as I translated them more or less directly from *xiChangana*:

“Bendy is no longer attending school at Utah. When she talks [about the matter] she says she quitted school and she is certainly never going to attend school. She just gets up [in the morning] and remains at home. She says the reason why she is not going to school any longer is because she lacks a white and a blue shirt and black shoes to wear with her uniform to school. And now that she has left school, she gets up early in the morning to build a fire and to cook for the kids at their home. After that she goes to the veld, collects firewood and carries it to their home. She says she is afraid because they [her mother; the plural form again] may scold her very much for quitting school. She believes she will be trusted, that they will say she works very hard. When her mother comes home, she says, she will find that her homestead is always clean, and her mother is not going to suffer because of a lack of firewood for cooking food. But Bendy is still always in the company of her friends Constance, Languta Ndlovu and Thandi Mathebula. They wander around [*ku ronta*; from Afrikaans] together, going to their lovers. And now that she has quit school, she is very happy; she has been telling people for a long time that she wants to quit school. The problem was that she was afraid of her mother. She was scared that they [her mother] would take her to the police at Thulamahashe so that they could ‘trample’ her. But now she got this plan to ward off that danger — she will tell them that she does not have a uniform, and she will do the chores at home.”

Friday, 11 September 1992

Bendy resumed her relationship with her regular boyfriend, Danny. They slept in his room. Danny is like his cousin and best friend, Rhulani. He does not carry on with more than one relationship at a time. But unlike Rhulani, it is not above him to beat a girl.

Wednesday, 16 September 1992

Linka Ndlovu tells her daughter Bendy that she will not buy her clothes for Christmas because she quit school. She will only buy clothes for her other children. If Bendy wants clothes for Christmas, Linka says, she must ask her boyfriends to buy them for her. Linka at last realizes that she is beaten by Bendy, and tells her daughter grudgingly:

"I am tired of speaking to you about schooling. I can now see that it does not help me at all to try and force you to go to school. I have tried everything in my power to get you to attend school, but I only failed. That is why I have given your school uniform to Tracey [Bendy's younger sister]."

Constance is now having an affair with a Swazi boy who is working on contract at Buffelshoek where they build houses for the owner of the game farm.

Friday, 18 September 1992

Constance tells her cousin, Palo Maxele, about her affair with the Swazi boy who is working on contract at Buffelshoek.

"His name is Jabulani Nkosi. When he first asked me to be his lover, he gave me R40. He said: 'Take it.' Then I told him that I do not want the money, he can give it to me some other time because I did not accept him as a lover in order to get money from him. I told him like that. He then insisted that I should take the money, but I still refused. You see, had I accepted that money from him, he would have noticed that I love money. Therefore I did not take his money, though I wanted that money very much. He told me that he gets pay every two weeks. When he gets his next pay, I want to go to Hluvukani on that day to have my hair permed. I want to look pretty. But I want to sponge on him before he comes to know me well, you see. He is coming to Dixie this evening to drink beer. Because he is coming this evening, I am not going anywhere. I want to be here at home when he comes. He must not think that I like to walk around the village in the evening [looking for boys]. I do not want to make a mistake with that boy."

ANALYSIS

There were far more girls than boys in Dixie who had left their family homes elsewhere. Girls from Dixie also more often than boys left their family homes to go and reside with relatives elsewhere — boys did not as often as Bendy and Constance leave Dixie to roam around from place to place in search of sexual relationships. This was not because girls were more free than boys, but because they were forced to do so to a larger extent than boys. Sons were better cared for than daughters, precisely

the reason why they were able to buy sexual favours from girls, and therefore they were more effectively tied to their family homes. Men, who are in control of material resources, prefer sons to daughters. When a man and his wife become separated, the wife returns to her family (father or mother's home) with the smaller children whilst the man remains at his home. Since men are more often employed than women, and because men earn higher wages than women, daughters are more likely to be a burden at the home of their parents.

Bendy and Constance shared the same home, a strong friendship and many needs and experiences. But their experience of violence differed vastly because Bendy lived with her family, and Constance did not. Bendy was subjected to the worst acts of violence imaginable at the hands of her mother, and less at the hands of boys (like Constance). Constance clearly and ironically enjoyed more freedom than Bendy, and suffered less from acts of violence against her, because she was not living with her mother (family).

Girls' struggle for survival was aggravated by a central paradox in their lives. On the one hand, parents forced daughters to compensate for parents' failure to care for their daughters sufficiently, but then the daughters were punished for it. They were punished because their sexual relationships might result in pregnancies and babies which would require additional material support from their parents who had already failed to care for the mothers of those babies.

It is also evident that girls were promiscuous because no single boy was able, or willing, to care for a girl adequately. Because of their failure in this regard, boys (like girls' parents) assaulted girls.

The message from the material on Bendy and Constance is clear:

- Girls suffered from acts of violence because the persons from whom they required or sought care (boys and parents), failed to care for them adequately, forcing them to seek care from a variety of boys, which in turn brought them into trouble with parents and boyfriends who considered them to be prostitutes. They were subjected to violence because those who dominated them, lacked the means to dominate them so effectively that acts of violence would not be required.
- Girls were subjected to acts of violence more often because they were dominated more than any other social category, and dominated by every other social category — they were forced to transgress the rules of dominance by the incumbents of all other social categories.

3.2 THE NKUNA ORPHANS

When the mother of Solly Nkuna (17) and his sister, Brenda Nkuna (15), died in 1987, they were sent from their home at Acornhoek by their eldest brother to their maternal grandparents, Rex and Sophie Mkhanchwa, at Dixie. Ever since their arrival at Dixie, they were treated like slaves, particularly by their grandmother: Apart from the fact that Solly and Brenda were a daughter's (and not a son's) children who did not bear the surname of their grandfather, Sophie, like most women, was loathe to care for children other than her own by refusing to accept them as true members of her family. Her youngest son, Fred (18), left school at the end of 1991 after he had failed Std 7, and after he had unsuccessfully tried to "promote" himself to Std 8 by devious means. He was still unemployed in 1992, but the father of two children, one by his wife and one by a previous girlfriend. His parents therefore had to support him, his wife and two children until he could find employment and start his own homestead; hence Sophie and Fred's deep-seated resentment of Solly and Brenda.

On the basis of the treatment they received at the hands of their grandparents and Fred, the people of the village commonly and spontaneously referred to Solly and Brenda as "orphans", and seldom as "grandchildren". These two children were forced to endure harsh treatment at the home of their grandparents since nobody else cared to accept the financial burden of supporting them — precisely the reason which caused their grandparents to ill-treat them.

Sunday, 16 February 1992

Brenda has been sweeping the yard since early morning when Solly drove the cattle and donkeys to the veld. Later their grandmother, Sophie Mkhanchwa, orders Brenda to finish sweeping and to fetch water from the tap. Brenda tells Sophie that she cannot fetch water since there are many grown-up women at the tap.

"You are mad. All people fetch water even if there are many people at the tap."

"You are lying," Solly shouts at his sister from a distance. He does not hate or resent his sister, but this morning Solly seems in need of venting his anger on someone, and he chooses a vulnerable person. "Your problem is that you are a fool!"

"You are the one who is the fool!" Brenda shouts back. "You always wear filthy trousers and shirts!"

"I will beat you this evening when grandfather is asleep!"

By abusing one another, they reveal their need to get back at a world and life without mercy and compassion. At the same time, I believe, hurting one another

in this way they, deep down, wish to inflict pain on themselves as a way of blaming themselves for failing to be liked by the parents of their late mother.

Wednesday, 19 February 1992

Rex and his wife, Sophie, are not at home. Rex went to the Tribal Office, and Sophie went to collect maroela fruit to brew maroela beer. Brenda has been left at home with instructions from Sophie to look after Fred's baby, and also to guard the fields against goats and cattle. In addition, she was ordered to wash the dishes, but she apparently used her time to play. When she now sees Sophie returning, she quickly gathers the dishes to wash them. In response, Sophie grabs a stick with which to beat Brenda, and Brenda flees towards the veld, crying all the way. Sophie calls her to come back and wash the dishes because she is very hungry. Brenda returns, still crying, and Sophie informs her that she will not get porridge today.

When people from the village talk about Brenda, they say Brenda is treated like a slave by Sophie; that she does not get time to play with other girls, to wash herself or her clothes.

Tuesday, 25 February 1992

Fred is beating Solly mercilessly with his belt on the instruction of his mother because Solly was seen opening the water tap at the tanks while it was still dark, without telling them. Solly only told other people, who then finished the water, before his grandmother, Sophie, could get some. Solly confesses to Fred that he was encouraged by Chargo Maxele to open the water tap, Chargo had given him two cigarettes to persuade him. (I will not put it beyond Chargo to devise a scheme like this, and enjoy it thoroughly.) Solly wails loudly while Fred hits him with his fists. When Solly falls to the ground, Fred starts kicking him. Afterwards Solly's one eye is badly swollen and his mouth bleeding on the inside. He is also limping. Sophie displays her total lack of sympathy for Solly by telling him:

"Go and stay at Chargo's place! I cannot stay with baboons who cannot think about their future."

Fred stops thrashing Solly only after he gets exhausted himself. Solly stops crying and leaves. He goes to the old, small shop on the outer edge of the village to sit there by himself. While he is leaving, Sophie yells after him:

"You will not get porridge today! You will eat at Chargo's place."

"What about the cattle?" Fred also shouts after him. "What will they drink today? You refuse to take the cattle to Sondela [about 10 km from Dixie], but you are able to open the water at night!"

"Solly and Brenda are just the same," Sophie tells her son. "They do not listen when a person tells them something. Solly is having an affair with a mature person [she is referring to a woman of 38]. It shows that he is mad."

Solly remains sitting by himself at the old shop for a long time, and does not attend school. Later he opens the kraals for the donkeys and cattle and takes them to Sondela for water. He gets nothing to eat all day.

Saturday, 29 February 1992

Brenda is sitting in the shade of a tree in the field to guard the crops against cattle and goats. Her grandparents, Rex and Sophie, are sitting in the shade of a hut, drinking cold drink. Because Brenda is exhausted, and because she has no one to talk to (it is uncommon for any person in Dixie to be without company for any length of time) she falls asleep. So the goats get into the field and start eating the peanut plants. Sophie grabs a big stick and ambles over to Brenda, yelling furiously:

"You are sleeping during daytime because you have sex with boys all night long! You sleep with boys much older than yourself! You have put the washing in soap water, but you do not wash the clothes! Tomorrow you are going to wash yourself with your own urine since you do not help us to fetch water!"

Tuesday, 3 March 1992

Solly is not going to attend school today. When his grandparents leave, he moves to sit at the back of a hut facing towards the tap in the street, and falls asleep. Fred, his teenage uncle, finds him there, wakes him up and orders him to go to school. Solly is brave because there are several women at the tap who can hear and see them (or perhaps he has had enough anyway). He asks Fred:

"What about yourself? Why don't you go to school? You only go around smoking dagga and cigarettes. You have a wife and a baby but you stopped attending school."

"At least I have passed Std 7."

"You are lying. You did not pass Std 7. You promoted yourself, you only studied by plans."

The women at the tap start laughing, enjoying Solly's apt answers to Fred. Solly derives more courage from this:

"You and your mother just mess around with me and Brenda because we are orphans. I shall go and look for a job on the farms and earn my own money. I will use that money to buy myself and Brenda clothes. When I am grown-up, I will get myself a site next to the school [far away from the Mkhanchwas]. I will marry Tracey Chauke and take her and Brenda to go and stay with me at my own homestead. Brenda always gets beaten up here at your homestead. You never give her a chance to play with other girls. You want her to work all day long without a chance to play. Other girls collect firewood in groups of their own age, but Brenda is forced to collect firewood with your wife. Brenda is not clever like other girls, but how can she learn if she can't play with other girls? Brenda is always by herself or with your mother, she will learn to gossip because your mother likes to gossip about people, saying they are poor and know too much about witchcraft."

A woman at the tap tells Solly that he should attend school for the sake of his future.

"I do not want to go to school to be beaten by boys. All the teachers, except the principal, are still boys [*vafana*: unmarried young men]. When I come from school, I have to go to the veld to look for donkeys and cattle. And when the women fetch water, I also have to fetch water. Had I known the person who killed my mother by witchcraft, I would have killed that person. It is because of my mother's death that we had to come and live here at Dixie where we are only suffering. All the children of our age here at Dixie are still growing, but look at us, Brenda and me. We have stopped growing and we look like an old man and an old woman. I think of hanging myself."

Sophie arrives and chases Solly off. "Do not speak about hanging yourself. We do not want to touch your shit with our hands."

Friday, 8 May 1992

The children of the local school will be going on a trip to Manyelethi Game Reserve today. Solly and Brenda, however, cannot go because their grandmother, Sophie, refuses to give them the R7 they each need to pay for the trip. She says she will not give them the money because when she sends them on errands, they refuse to go (covering up the fact that they work very hard).

"I cannot give you money because you are fools and will only get lost anyway."

"Yes," says Sophie's son, Fred, "you cannot be allowed even to go to Hluvukani. You will be so surprised by seeing working people, you will not look where you are going and then get run over by cars."

"It is not fair. You should have given me some of the money I earned for you by transporting firewood for people," Solly says.

"That money," Sophie says, "is used to buy bread in the morning, and both of you eat of that bread. My husband is tired of working for you."

Fred echoes his mother once again: "When you are grown-up and working, you will not help my father as he is helping you now."

"I want to become a nurse," Brenda retorts out of tune and naively.

Sophie starts laughing. "You must be mad. You are always dirty, and at Acornhoek [at the hospital] people are clean. They will not allow dirty people there."

"One day," Fred says perversely, "I want to take the two of you to Acornhoek where the road is full of traffic so that you may be hit by cars. Perhaps then you will start becoming a little intelligent."

"It does not matter," says Solly, "if you do not want to give us money to go to Manyelethi. There is still going to be another trip to the Kruger National Park. I will fetch wood for many people with the donkeys, and keep that money for Brenda and myself to go on that trip."

"All kids of Dixie are clean," Fred continues again, "only you and Brenda are always dirty."

Sophie interrupts Fred. "The people of the Kruger Park will be amazed to see fools like you."

But Fred continues as if he has never been interrupted by his mother. "You, Brenda, you look just like a small monkey, and Solly looks like a big baboon."

Women fetching water at the tap on the street adjacent to the Mkhanchwa homestead overhear this conversation, and start commenting on it.

"If a child's mother is dead, it is a tragedy. The foster parents will tell that kid just what they want."

"Those two orphans are not ugly, they are dirty because they always work and never get time to wash themselves."

"It is true that the Mkhanchwas bewitch people. Look how badly they treat these kids. Fred does not work, but they support his wife and give him money for dagga and cigarettes. They never give him work. He would refuse to work anyway."

Friday, 15 May 1992

Solly Nkuna tells two other boys that he will return to his late mother's home at Acornhoek as soon as the man who operates the water engine has given him his money (he opens the water at the tanks for this man).

"They trouble me very much at the Mkhanchwas homestead. They always beat me, even though I am not guilty of anything. I am tired of Fred who always beats me for nothing."

When the engine operator recently gave him his money, he used it to buy cigarettes. Then early this morning Fred asked Solly to lend him money. When he told Fred that he had spent it on cigarettes, Fred asked him where the cigarettes were. So Solly gave him one. Then, while Solly was still rolling up his blankets, Fred all of a sudden took him by the arm, took him to his own room and beat him with a rod. Solly was beaten until his body was full of cuts and bruises. After a while Fred left his room, locking Solly inside, apparently in order to get his breath back. Then he returned, now with soccer togs on his feet, to kick Solly. Sophie was also at home at the time. According to Solly it means she wanted her son to beat him up.

"It is because they want me to hand the money I earn over to them, or because it annoys them that I earn money. But when I earn money for them with the donkeys and the cart, they do not give me even one cent. I also always do other work for them as well. I work like a slave for food only. Once they withheld food from me for three days because I could not find the donkeys. They told me that if I wanted to eat, or if I wanted to sleep at home, I first had to bring the donkeys home. When my brother came to visit us some time ago, I told him how we suffered at the Mkhanchwas. Then he promised to come and fetch us at the end of the month. When my brother comes to fetch us, I will only come to visit other people here at Dixie. I will never sleep at my grandparents' home again. If they try to fetch me back, I will just refuse bluntly. They have to understand that I am never going to return to slavery at the Mkhanchwas."

But Solly's brother never came to fetch them.

ANALYSIS

Solly and Brenda's case once again demonstrates that some of the worst acts of violence were suffered at the hands of close kin. But in contrast to the case of Constance, it shows that not living in one's own family home could also result in subjection to horrific acts of violence. The differences, however, between Solly and Brenda, on the one hand, and Constance, on the other hand, were:

- Solly and Brenda's grandfather was a powerful figure in Dixie; Constance's grandmother was not. And their grandfather allowed his son and wife to abuse the orphaned children.

- Solly and Brenda were placed in the full care of their grandparents who did not wish to support someone else's children, to accept someone else's children as members of their family. Constance went to live with her grandmother of her own free will, which implied that her grandmother was not responsible for Constance's full care. There was no danger of Constance being regarded as a member of her grandmother's family — at most Constance could lay claim to some assistance from her grandmother. Her grandmother therefore did not, and could not, fail to support her, and therefore did not submit her to acts of violence. The grandparents of Solly and Brenda often had other children of relatives who visited or lived with them for extended periods of time, children to whom they did not owe comprehensive support, without harassing these children in any way.

Therefore: Mkhanchwa, his wife and son could treat Solly and Brenda violently because they could dominate the latter. They were in a position to dominate the orphans because the latter were fully dependent on them (in contrast to visitors). Though they could dominate the orphans on the basis of their full dependence on the Mkhanchwas, the latter could not meet that responsibility in practical terms (failed to "buy" the children's acceptance of their dominance), and therefore resorted to acts of violence with which to force the children into submissiveness.

3.3 ELVIRA MAKUKULE AND HER CHILDREN

In 1992, Elvira Makukule (36) was still unmarried, but she was the mother of seven children together with whom she formed a single family: Agnes (19), Georgie (14), Morris (12), Jerry (9), Fonny (8), Sally (6) and Thulisile Mathonsi (2). Though her children all had the same surname, it was rumoured that they did not all have the same father. This might quite well have been true, since Elvira was not supported by Mathonsi and had to spend much of her time and energy on sexual liaisons with men in an effort to obtain financial support. She and her children lived at the homestead of her married brother, Ronny Makukule (39). As Elvira was often unemployed, and not supported by the father(s) of her children, her children were some of the most neglected children in Dixie.

Elvira's predicament was particularly bad. The care of her smaller children interfered with her efforts to manage her relationships with men (which she needed to support herself and her children, together with whom she formed a family as prescribed by cultural norm); and her relationships with men had led to the birth of her many children. As she was the mother of seven children, men did not develop anything more than a casual or fleeting interest in her. This in turn crippled her self-confidence severely, adversely affected her personality and made her prone to relationships with less stable men. Elvira, like several other women of Dixie, could

never hope to escape from her dilemma. She became so entangled in her circumstances and experiences in ever increasing intensity, that even her hope of miracles faded.

Friday, 6 March 1992

Elvira Makukule returns from the hospital at Acornhoek where she visited her six-year-old daughter, Sally Mathonsi, who is still in hospital because of severe burns she sustained last year during July. It happened when Sally was sent by Elvira to ask her grandmother for paraffin. Sally got the paraffin, but the tin was heavy and she was too small to carry it properly. Consequently she spilled paraffin all over her dress. Back at home she put the tin of paraffin in the hut and went to sit at the fire because it was cold (July). Her dress caught fire and Sally ran inside the hut and fell on top of the blankets. She was alone at home — her mother was in the bush relieving herself. Because she could not extinguish the fire on herself, she ran outside and called the neighbours for help. But nobody heard her because it was late (six o'clock) and the wind was blowing fiercely. Elvira was coming from the veld when she heard Sally screaming. Sally often cried hysterically and Elvira thought she was crying again because she was alone at home. When she reached home, Elvira found several people there. The fire was now smothered, but the dress Sally was wearing clung to her skin. A man who came to see Agnes Mathonsi, Sally's sister, took Sally and her mother to hospital in his car.

The medical staff of the hospital now want Elvira to visit Sally in hospital because it seems as if her psychological condition is now as bad as her physical condition after several operations and the continuous absence of her mother. Last week they operated on her to separate her arm from her body where the skin had become attached. Since the operation her condition has deteriorated to such an extent that she does not talk anymore.

Saturday, 30 May 1992

Little Sally Mathonsi, who sustained severe burns (see 6 March), is brought from the hospital at Acornhoek by a medical doctor and two nurses. They tell Elvira, Sally's mother, that they do not seem to be able to heal Sally. Therefore they brought her home; perhaps Elvira would have more success with her child. In the hospital she is just getting worse. At first she talked, but presently she is completely quiet and apparently unable to speak, says the doctor. They have tried by several means to improve Sally's condition, he says, but they consistently fail. They brought her a wheelchair, her food and everything else she may need. Elvira is not eager to have a handicapped child at home who needs her constant

care, because she needs to engage in love affairs in order to survive. Therefore she asks the doctor who is going to look after Sally, because she (Elvira) has to go and look for a job. Some women gossip about Elvira, saying Sally is going to die here at home because Elvira is always absent or drunk and nobody is going to look after Sally.

Love and sympathy are luxuries which one can only afford when one's own security has to some extent been achieved.

Saturday, 6 June 1992

The principal of the local school sends boys to look for Jerry Mathonsi and to bring him to school. His smaller brother, Fonny, volunteers to go with the search party. Both Jerry and Fonny, however, are apt to play truant from time to time, because they are always hungry; and their mother is unemployed and mostly drunk. Despite a lack of security, these two little boys are very tough and do not easily submit to domination.

The boys find Jerry at his mother's home, but he flees before they can catch him. When Jerry sees that his mother is also chasing after him, he feels betrayed and throws stones at her. He then hits one of the boys (several years older than himself) with a piece of wood over the head. The boy starts bleeding profusely, and they have to return to the school. The principal then sends a much bigger search party of boys to look for Jerry in the veld, while he takes the injured boy to the clinic at Hluvukani. Eventually Jerry is caught and carried, screaming and kicking, to the school. When the principal returns from the clinic, he gives Jerry 20 lashes with a rod.

There is no way Jerry's recalcitrance can be stopped, no matter how much or how badly he is beaten, because the circumstances and experiences which force him to be recalcitrant, are overwhelming. The lashes he received merely served to reinforce his conviction that the world was an unfriendly place to live in — at a later stage he is going to attempt to set himself alight.

Monday, 12 October 1992

Xidudu Nkuna beats his little half-brother Jerry Mathonsi with a flaming stick because Jerry was disrespectful towards another elder brother. Jerry cries bitterly, goes inside the ancestral hut, takes a bottle of paraffin and pours it over himself. While he is busy fumbling with matches, he is seen by Jabulani Chavangu. Jabulani runs towards Jerry and takes the matches from him.

"What are you doing, boy?"

"I want to burn myself so I can die."

"But why do you want to kill yourself?"

"Because the people of Dixie are tired of me. My buttocks are burning where Xidudu hit me with the burning stick. I have despaired of life."

Jabulani takes Jerry by the hand and leads him outside. He calls Jerry's mother, Elvira Makukule, and tells her what happened. Elvira instructs Xidudu to beat Jerry. Xidudu takes a rod and beats Jerry until he begs for mercy, saying he is never going to do it again. But Xidudu keeps on beating him no matter how much Jerry struggles to free himself. Then Jerry first calls Palo Maxele, and then Chargo Maxele, to come and save him. Chargo stops Xidudu and then washes Jerry to remove the paraffin from his skin, with the assistance of Jabulani.

Monday, 30 November 1992

Elvira Makukule's lover comes to fetch her from Dixie with his lorry, much to the despair of her small sons. Jerry Mathonsi, the boy who attempted to set himself alight, and his even smaller brother, Fonny, yell insults at their mother's lover while she gets into the lorry with him. When the lorry starts moving, the boys throw stones at it while still yelling the most offensive insults at the driver. They know their mother is going to sleep with her lover at some other place, while they and their incapacitated little sister (who got burnt severely the previous year) will remain behind without her for the umpteenth time.

ANALYSIS

These few incidents concerning Elvira and her seven children demonstrate another, most significant, face of violence — the inherently violent nature of poverty. Elvira was forced to engage in multiple sexual relationships by circumstances beyond her control, and to neglect her children. Precisely because she was responsible for looking after her family, she engaged in sexual relationships with men which, in turn, led to the neglect of her family, the continuous expansion of her family (more children), the aggravation of her failure, etc. She was forced to act in an inherently violent way towards her children (apart from the beating of Jerry for which she was responsible). This, in turn, led to Sally's burns, Jerry's act of violence against himself, his mother and others, and his and Fonny's act of violence against their mother's lover. Poverty had reduced Elvira and her children to a state in which humanity was hardly recognizable.

3.4 CROSS-SECTION

This section is intended to counter the selective nature of the previous examples of individuals and families. Whereas the previous sections presented specific perspectives, this section is broad and non-specific. It also covers all social categories: men, women, girls, boys; husbands, wives, sons, daughters, girlfriends, boyfriends, teachers, school children. As such they are intended to illuminate the notion of violence in its broadest and fundamental sense, as forwarded in this report (see the analysis at the end of this section).

Friday, 17 January 1992

Georgie Mathonsi (17) pulls Lamasonto (14) by the arm; he wants to have sex with her. This is the way it is done: If one wants to have sex with a girl, you *koka-koka* (literally: "pull-pull") her by one or both her arms, even if you have to drag or beat her half-way there. Lamasonto is very scared and starts crying. Then people who observe the "spectacle" start laughing at her, saying she is spoilt. They say it is the first time they have seen such a thing here on earth. It must be a bad omen.

Wednesday, 5 February 1992

Lenny Chavangu (16) pulls Rosie Khosa (15) by the arm. He wants them to make love. But Rosie is scared to have sexual intercourse with Lenny. She begs him to let her go free, because his penis is too big for her (she does not know this from experience but from common public knowledge). He will hurt her, she says, and she will end up in hospital. Lenny refuses to let go of her and he drags her towards his room. As he tries to open the door of his room with one hand, Rosie manages to break free and runs off. Lenny gives chase after her, but she is too fast for him.

Tuesday, 11 February 1992

Jeffrey Ndlovu and Morris Mathonsi (both 10 years old) play on the heap of sand at Monle Ndlovu's with two smaller girls, Hilda Mnisi (6) and Tammy Chauke (7). When it gets dark, the two girls put their sleeping mats and blankets outside because it is too hot to sleep inside a house. On mutual agreement the two boys get into bed with the two girls, Morris with Tammy and Jeffrey with Hilda, his cousin. While they are making love, a girl passes by and spots the moving blankets. She gets closer to inspect the wriggling spectacle. Then she suspects "nonsense going on", but nevertheless pulls the blankets off the kids. There they are lying, the two boys on top of the two girls, exposed to anybody close enough

to see them. Morris and Jeffrey naturally are extremely embarrassed, particularly because they are caught making love to girls who are of the same age as their own smaller brothers. Palo Maxele arrives at the scene, and while he walks off with Morris and Jeffrey, asks them whether they really fit the girls. They answer: "Yes they fit us, and they like it." They have been doing this for quite some time, the boys tell Palo — "*A ku na siku ra mahala*" ("there is not a free day", meaning they do not skip a single day). Morris says if the girls want to give it to them, they are not going to refuse to make love to them, no matter how small they are. And what is more, he says, the little girls always call them and then tease them until they get an erection. "They [the girls] are now used to it. They take us to be their husbands. They are spoilt by it because they get it every day."

What this incident starkly illustrates, is the almost total lack of a stable and supportive family life, and the absence of key family members and critically important social bonds. Children who are left to their own devices, compensate for the lack of crucial emotional bonds within their families, with sexual bonds.

Friday, 14 February 1992

Sammy Sithole (17) first pours beer from a bottle over Stacey Mathonsi while she is filling her container with water at the tap on the side of the street, and then beats her up — why did she refuse to obey him when he called her yesterday?

However, Stacey, poor girl, did not know what to do when Sammy called her and pulled her around: He was with Stan Marimana when he called her. Stan is her present boyfriend, and Sammy her first boyfriend. Stan started courting Stacey after Sammy sacked her. But as things stand with male privilege, once a girl was the *cherry* of a boy, she remains his girlfriend indefinitely whether he has told her that he does not want her anymore or not. If he calls her, she has to obey or gets beaten up. And the erstwhile boyfriend will always base his claim on the statement that he was her boyfriend before the other one became her boyfriend. Since a girl has to survive (as was also clear in the case of Bendy), she engages in multiple sexual relationships with boys to provide for her material needs in the face of inadequate parental care. Boys fail to provide for the material needs of girls for two reasons: Firstly, because they lack the financial means to do so and, secondly, because male privilege allows and expects boys to be "clever" — to engage in multiple sexual relationships. For a girl to be called "clever" in the sense of being sexually active, is an insult. For a boy to be called "clever" for the same reason, is a great compliment. Girls engage in multiple relationships for the sake of survival, and at the cost of social esteem. Boys do so for the sake of pleasure and social prestige. Girls therefore always live under the

threat of physical assault, because they have old and new boyfriends, and because anyone of them may call her at any time. Some or other time she has to refuse one of them. Obviously it does not matter which boyfriend a girl refuses, because she will still be assaulted. To put it differently: If she had only one boyfriend, it would have made a difference to obey him when he called her. Stacey only chose to disobey Sammy because Stan's reputation with a sjambok was notorious.

When Sammy pulled Stacey by the arm yesterday in the presence of Stan, Stan kept perfectly quiet. He had no case against Sammy. Sammy is a male person and as such entitled to pull around an old girlfriend. But he watched Stacey closely.

Besides being assaulted by a boyfriend, a girl is also in danger of being assaulted by the boy's other girlfriends. Boys seldom beat rival lovers. Girls, on the other hand, often fight with their rivals.

Friday, 21 February 1992

Chris Sibuyi, Giyani Sibuyi and Oscar Marimana from Utah come to Dixie to find Phumzile Sithole. They have been sent by her elder brother to take her back home to Utah. They say she ran away from home because she did not want to attend school any longer. The boys say in the first place her brother wants her to return to school. In the second place, they want to beat her up because she has not been attending school for a whole week. She just sits at home, faking illness. She has also told them that she got permission from the teachers to remain at home while she is ill. But all these stories, the three boys say, about being ill and getting permission from the teachers, are lies. The boys further say that when they find Phumzile, they will first beat her up properly. After that, on their way home, all three of them are going to lay her because Utah is far when you have to walk on foot and one cannot trouble oneself for nothing. "Now, this is why she has to be screwed." Unfortunately, according to the boys of the village, the three boys fail to find Phumzile. She has spotted them before they could spot her, and hides in her sister-in-law's home. They go all around the village looking for Phumzile, but cannot find her. They get tired and decide to give it up. When they leave, they tell the boys of the village that they will return after dark. But they are not going to walk back all the way for nothing. They will come with Phumzile's brother in a car. When they find her, they will lash her with a sjambok so she will stop running away from school.

Today has been declared a national day of prayer for rain. Only a few villagers attend the prayer meeting at the school (which has been closed for the day). The other villagers, by far the majority, say there is no need to pray for rain. They

have never before prayed for rain, and the rains come on their own all the same. Or, in other words: "We do not suffer because of a lack of rain. Government may wish to hide their share in the system of domination behind drought, but they are not going to convince us of their innocence by prayer meetings."

Saturday, 21 March 1992

Dora Mathonsi wanted to beat her daughter Stacey yesterday afternoon. Yesterday morning Stacey asked for R3 from her mother to pay for her travelling costs to Thulamahashe for athletics. Dora gave her the R3, as well as biscuits to sell at the athletics. Stacey sold the biscuits but spent the money. Dora was very distressed and said Stacey always spent the money she got from selling biscuits at school at Utah as well — she should have killed her with a big stick. Instead of beating Stacey, her mother sent her to bed without food yesterday. This morning Dora is still cross. She tells Stacey that she gives her biscuits to sell because her (Stacey's) father is unemployed, and she has no other money to buy food with. She is not going to get food today either, says Stacey's mother; she must go and ask her friends for food, the ones who encouraged her to "eat" the money. Stacey lies in the shade, keeping quiet. At 9:00 her mother decides she has suffered enough, and gives her food.

Monday, 30 March 1992

Nina Xiluvana and her daughter, Jessie Xiluvana (8) return from the veld where they went to collect firewood. Jessie carries the entire bundle of firewood; her mother carries none. The bundle gets too heavy for Jessie, and when her legs start wobbling, she lets the bundle fall. Her mother grabs her by the arm and hits her all over her head while Jessie tries to cover her face and head with her free arm. When Nina thinks Jessie has received her message clearly, she lets go of her daughter and tells her to pick up the wood because it is not heavy. Jessie carries the bundle all the way home, "proving" that a beating at the right time, particularly on the head, takes the nonsense out of a child.

Monday, 18 May 1992

While her mother has gone to visit her parents at Utah, Jessie Xiluvana (8) takes some of her mother's avocados and gives them to her friends. She is seen by her elder sister, Girty, who tells their mother, Ania, when she returns from Utah that Jessie has stolen her avocados. Ania calls Jessie as if she does not know that Jessie has taken the avocados, in order not to scare Jessie. When Jessie arrives, her mother tells her to go inside the hut and to count the avocados because she

wants her to go and sell some more today. Ania quickly follows her daughter and locks the door of the hut from the inside. Then she starts pinching Jessie with her finger nails wherever she can, until the child screams for forgiveness. Pinching is Ania's pet form of punishment.

Saturday, 6 June 1992

During the evening Zondiwe, Betty, Nellie Khosa and Felicia walk to Utah. At Utah they drink beer and walk around with their boyfriends. All of them are with their lovers, except Betty, whose boyfriend is married and with his wife at his homestead. The other girls tell her that they must go and fetch her lover at his home, wife or no wife.

When they get to his homestead, they stand at the gate and call Betty's lover (something they would not dare do if they were sober). When the lover's wife appears, the girls do not beat about the bush:

"We want your husband."

The wife is very upset and says she will stab them with a knife. Then the drunken girls start yelling at the woman in rotation:

"We cannot be stabbed by a fool!"

"You are very ugly, nobody is as ugly as you are!"

"You pauper!"

"You ill-mannered woman!"

"Your father witches far too much!"

"We will stab you full of holes!"

"Yes, we will stab you to death!"

Betty's lover is there, but wisely keeps quiet.

Girls or women are more regularly involved in disputes with one another than boys or men are, because they have to compete with one another for boys or men. Like all recipients of violence, Betty also requires opportunities to hand out violence. Life in Dixie has taught her to remove obstacles in her way through violent means. It must be near impossible to be considerate in a thoughtless world brought about by a constant struggle for survival.

Monday, 8 June 1992

Small boys have a clear-cut pecking order among themselves which they continuously establish through fights with one another. Being males, they also have a need to establish which of the older girls they are able to beat. Therefore, since Sibongile Ngobeneni has recently arrived at Dixie, the smaller boys are eager to

find out how strong she is. The children are dancing at the Siwele homestead, and two of the smaller boys send another boy.

"Go and tell Sibongile we want to beat her, we want to kill her. Tell her to come to the road and fight."

When Sibongile appears, John Khosa tells her that he has fought with girls many times; he cannot be beaten by girls. When they start fighting, other boys encourage John:

"Hit her on the eye so people can laugh at her tomorrow!"

Alas, John gets licked by Sibongile.

Tuesday, 7 July 1992

Lenny Chavangu is boasting and lying to his friend Palo Maxele, telling him that he made love to Stacey at my homestead yesterday evening. He says he went to visit Lofty Maxele at my homestead (Lofty is employed by me to look after my homestead during my absence, and also sleeps there). While he was sitting there, Stacey arrived, looking for Nelia (an M.A. student also doing research in the village). She told Lofty that she had a headache and wanted to ask Nelia for tablets, but Lofty told her that Nelia had gone to Buffelshoek (up till here Lenny's story is still true). Then, Lenny says, he asked Stacey to make love to him in Lofty's room, but she refused, saying Nelia may return any moment and catch them (which is unlikely, if they used Lofty's room). So he lied to Stacey, telling her that Nelia told Lofty that she would return only the next day. She believed him, and followed him into Lofty's room where she took off her clothes. That girl "tastes good", Lenny tells Palo, because she is not skinny.

It is a major pastime of boys to tell lies to one another with great enthusiasm, even if they know that their listeners know the truth. The truth does not matter, as long as it is a good story.

Lenny's story may be a lie, but not the way in which he "diminished" a girl.

Thursday, 16 July 1992

Xidudu Nkuna tells his friend that he has just made love to Stacey. At first she refused to make love to him, but when he gave her money, she agreed. He says it is always like that — if he wants to make love to her he must first *diza* (bribe) her with money or something else.

Fact is, Stacey cannot afford to refuse money. Xidudu knows this, otherwise he would not have exploited her vulnerability. However, I do not believe Xidudu told his friend this story out of meanness, but because he was very happy that

Stacey agreed to a relationship. As will become evident, he became attached to her. She is, after all, not a bad girl.

Monday, 20 July 1992

Two boys (11 and 10 years old) are making love to two small girls of 6 and 7 years old, in the hut of the little girls' mother. The girls do not have a father. Their mother is employed and therefore only at home for short periods. Their 16-year-old sister is supposed to look after them, but since she engages in love affairs for the sake of security, the little girls often sleep by themselves. They have discovered that their bodies are the only assets that attract the attention of some people (boys). Boys cannot take the place of parents and other persons, but I imagine that boys do fill a tiny part of the vast emptiness in their lives. Without boys they will surely feel useless and not needed by a single person.

Tuesday, 1 September 1992

Elsie Mnisi is beating her 7-year-old daughter, Busi Mnisi, with a piece of scrap metal indiscriminately all over her body until she bleeds profusely from a blow on the head. She is beating Busi, she says, because she is never at home when she (Elsie) wants her; she goes around the village asking and eating other people's porridge. When Elsie sees the blood all over Busi's face, she stops beating her and says, even though she has injured her child, she does not have money to take her to the clinic at Hluvukani.

Monday, 14 September 1992

Lenny Chavangu tells Tessie Sithole that her eyes are so big, they look like the bangles of old women. Because he says this insultingly, Tessie responds with:

"Your mother's arse."

Lenny attacks her with his fists and lands blows everywhere on her body: "Why do you curse me by my mother? It means you are talking to [cursing] my mother though she is very far from here."

Tessie cries and says: "I shall tell my father that you have beaten me. He will beat the shit out of you, because you are the one who started the insults."

Saturday, 19 September 1992

Elsie Mnisi attacks her daughter Katie Mnisi (9) with her fists and then, without taking her shoes off, kicks Katie.

"Why don't you stay at home? What do you want at Mkhanchwa, are you perhaps betrothed by Solly Nkuna? There is no porridge here at home. You never cook because you are always at the homes of other people."

Elsie takes the piece of scrap metal which she previously used on her younger daughter, and tells Katie:

"I want to break your leg with this thing so that you will not be able to leave your home."

Before Elsie can use the piece of metal on her daughter, another woman takes it from her — she has heard Katie's screaming. The girl's eyes are swollen from the blows she has received from her mother. When Elsie beats a child, she does not hold back, but hits like she would hit somebody of her own size. It is said that she hits her children like that because she always beats them up when she is drunk, and because she is drunk most of the time.

Monday, 21 September 1992

Elias Mathonsi (Stacey's father) is drinking beer at Sandros Mnisi in the evening. Dora, his wife, sends a child to call Elias for supper, because it is late. But Elias leaves Sandros's homestead before the boy arrives to call him. So Sandros tells the boy that Elias has gone home already.

Elias only returns home late at night. When Dora asks him where he has been, he says he has been drinking beer at Sandros. Dora says she has sent a child to call him but he was not there. Elias gets angry and tells Dora that he does not want a woman to ask him stupid questions. Dora, who is anguished, does not keep quiet and says she knows he was at Meslinah Nkuna to tell her that he is returning to work the following day; she knows that they have been having an affair for a long time. Elias, who is sitting down, gets up, throws Dora to the ground and chokes her. The sound escaping from Dora's throat is so frightening to the second wife, Dollie, that she actually grabs a stick and starts beating Elias's hands. Elias releases his first wife and chases his second wife. When his daughter Stacey then arrives at home to see what is going on, Elias chases her as well, saying she behaves like the mothers. She is always at the disco. The two wives and daughter scream so loudly that the kids of the village converge on Elias's place to enjoy the spectacle of three women in danger of being killed by their husband and father. Elias stops chasing his wives and daughter and starts chasing the kids while throwing stones at them. They all run away to a safer distance, whereupon Elias resumes the pursuit of his daughter, Stacey. But he flounders and falls down. The children laugh hysterically at Elias. Two older boys, Stan Marimana and Rurumela Ntimana, who pass Elias's homestead,

innocently flash their torch light on the prone figure of Elias. Elias gets up and charges at them in fury, screaming fiercely that he wants to kill a person. Stan and Rurumela run away, overcome by fright. Elias then starts chasing the children who are teasing him with their hysterical laughter. But they are much too fast for him, and Elias returns to his homestead, shouting out loudly that he wants to kill his wives, and that he is not afraid of going to jail for that.

Later, when he has calmed down sufficiently, Elias goes to look for his wives in the bush. He finds them and tells them to come home so that they can discuss the matter. When they arrive, he tells them that he has made a mistake in beating and chasing them away, but they have injured his hands, that is why he has chased them away.

Sunday, 11 October 1992

Lenny Chavangu tells his friends that the children of his school who are having love affairs were beaten by the teachers that day. Tracey Chauke was the only one among the kids of Dixie who was beaten. She was beaten because of her affair with Packson Mathonsi from Utah. The teachers gave Tracey 35 lashes, because she is only 13 years old but is having a love affair with a "boy" of 21. Packson, however, only received 20 lashes. The teachers said they were giving Tracey more lashes than her lover because she was having an affair with a boy much older than herself.

Tracey, therefore, was more guilty in the eyes of the teachers than Packson, despite the fact that she was his junior by eight years, and despite the fact that boys force themselves on girls and not the other way round. How does one understand this apparently skewed perception of justice among teachers? The answer, again, lies in the ideology of male superiority. A girl who has sex with more than one boy, or with a much older boy, is a slut. Boys, however, should have sex with several girls, no matter what their ages are, if they do not want to be regarded as "stupid". Obviously Tracey accepts this rule, because it was beaten into her; as her "whoring" was beaten out of her.

Tracey cried very much, says Lenny. While she was beaten, she cried that she was never going to sleep with Packson again, and that she did not want him anymore. Lenny says it was so funny, he laughed a lot. But he was also scared because he was having an affair with a girl from Utah. Fortunately, the teachers did not know about his affair.

Wednesday, 21 October 1992

The kids are dancing at Sammy Sithole's place — everyday he plays his hi-fi for the kids to dance, and also because it is just nice to have all the kids congregating at one's home. Xidudu also arrives and finds Palo Maxele, John Ndlovu and Lenny Chavangu sitting on the side of the street next to Sammy's place. Then Xidudu sees a boy standing with his girlfriend, Rosie Khosa.

"Who is that boy," Xidudu asks the other boys.

"It is Jeffrey Gumede from Nkunyamahembe and your cherry," John informs him.

"I have to go there and ask her from Jeffrey. She is my cherry. I am not going to let her stand there with boys. It seems as if she wants to disrespect me in ways only known by her. I want to go and take her there, and then take her to the bushes to lay her first. After laying her, I will beat the shit out of her in order to remove that whoring out of her."

"Go and take her, man," says Palo; and several boys start prodding Xidudu to go and "beat the shit out" of her.

"She disrespects you. What is more, she is making a fool of you."

Having his adrenaline sufficiently pumped up by his friends, Xidudu approaches his girlfriend and Jeffrey Gumede. To Jeffrey he says very politely (because Jeffrey has done nothing wrong, he is merely acting as a boy should):

"I want Rosie because she is my cherry from long ago."

Rosie, however, tells Jeffrey that she is not Xidudu's girlfriend anymore, and that they have ended their relationship some time ago. And Xidudu immediately assaults Rosie with his fists and feet all at the same time. Rosie cries and says:

"Even though you may beat me, I still do not want you."

Jeffrey tries to stop Xidudu, but the latter tells him not to interfere:

"We want to beat one another properly," he says euphemistically, as he is the only one who is doing the beating.

Rosie runs away to her home and tells her cousins, Betty and Zondiwe, that Xidudu has beaten her up. Her cousins call Xidudu and ask him why he has beaten Rosie. When Xidudu explains the matter to them in full, they side with him and tell Rosie that she is in the wrong.

Why should both boys and girls deem it necessary for girls to be beaten by boys? Because they live by a system laid down by males — the rule of male domination and superiority. They have to resort to violence mainly because they demand the impossible from females. They demand free sexual licence for themselves, and at the same time forbid females sexual freedom. How on earth can boys practise sexual freedom with girls who are not allowed sexual freedom?

They cannot. But they can beat the girls to remind them of the rule, however unfeasible this rule may be. The rule is so contradictory in itself that it cannot be upheld with normal mechanisms. All contradictory rules require violence if they are to be maintained.

Sunday, 1 November 1992

Bukani Nhlongo has recently betrothed Connie Sibuyi from Acornhoek (which means that he took her to live at his home), but he is already tired of her. Bukani, his brother Sanios, and a friend, Vuta Nkuna, are sitting at their homestead watching Connie who tries to turn over meat in a pot. Sanios remarks:

“Hey Bukani, look at your wife. She is unable to turn that meat over. Do you see it?”

“Yes. I want to chase her away. She is very lazy. Vuta, will you write me a letter to tell her that I do not want her anymore because of her laziness? She has run away from her home at Acornhoek without telling her mother where she went, anyway.”

Vuta writes the letter and gives it to Bukani's sister, to give it to Connie in turn. When she reads the letter, Connie becomes angry. She asks Bukani's sister who has written the letter, and the latter tells her that it was written by Vuta. So Connie writes a letter to Vuta in which she tells him that the letter was not written by Bukani, that it is all a pack of lies, and that Vuta is as black as a toad anyway. She gives the letter to Bukani's sister and asks her to give it to Vuta. Vuta is now also angry. He walks to Connie and asks her why she insults him like that. Connie tells him to beat her. He would have beaten her anyway.

ANALYSIS

All the above incidents amplify the notion of violence as a process revolving around domination; around a system which is “competitive, hierarchical, non-democratic and at times unjust”; as a system of unequal relationships which allows individuals to be diminished by those in a position of domination. All the above incidents, in other words, demonstrate diminishing — diminishing which does not occur of its own accord, but which is as much a part of the system from which it derives as sweetness is a part of sugar. The diminishing, therefore, did not start with the actual acts of violence; it preceded these acts, analytically speaking. This is evident in:

- Small children who engaged in regular sex in the face of constantly absent parents.

- A young girl who was scorned and laughed at because she cried when a boy pulled her by the arm in order to go and have sex with her ("a bad omen") — girls were not supposed to cry when boys wished to have sex with them.
- A boy who dragged a girl to his room to have sex with her against her will on the basis of the dominant position of boys over girls.
- A boy who beat up a former girlfriend for refusing him but nonetheless maintained an amicable relationship with her present lover.
- A boy who claimed his girlfriend from another suitor and who assaulted her while being polite to the suitor in terms of the rules of male domination — as underscored by girls who sanctioned his violent behaviour against their female cousin.
- Boys who misused girls' need of money in order to have sex with them, and thereafter talked about these girls derogatorily.
- Three boys who claimed the right to force sex on a girl on the basis of the trouble they took to fetch her on foot from a neighbouring village.
- Mothers who assaulted their children because it was a mother's right to do so.
- Girls who yelled abuse at a married woman, demonstrating the competition between women over men and material gain in the face of male domination.
- A boy who beat up a girl because she had returned his insult — on the basis of the fact that he was a boy and she a girl who had to accept his insult.
- A man who assaulted his wives because one wife questioned his affair with another woman, and because the other wife came to the rescue of the first when she was choked by their husband.
- A 13-year-old girl receiving 35 lashes from teachers because of her affair with a young man of 20 years old (who only received 20 lashes) on the basis of the fact that she was a female.
- A young wife who got chased away by her husband simply because he grew tired of her, and then got beaten up by his friend for insulting him because of his involvement in the termination of her marriage.

CONCLUSION

Berlyn and Dixie differed from places of affluence not in terms of the pervasiveness of violence itself, but in terms of raw acts of violence. Only in this sense were these two settlements more violent — because their inhabitants lacked sufficient leverage with which to wield the degree of domination required to inhibit resistance against this domination. The children of Berlyn and Dixie, and similar places, were burdened by their parents in ways different from the children of affluent families: The former children wished to escape from parental tyranny; the latter children dared not escape from parental tyranny. The difference between Berlyn/Dixie and places of affluence, therefore, was the difference between poverty and affluence. Both Berlyn/Dixie and places of affluence in South Africa were part of the same, total, violent system. All were violent places; but Berlyn and Dixie lacked the means to camouflage the violent nature of their social life.

The high levels of actual, social violence in a rural African settlement related to a macrocontext which was structurally violent in various ways: politically undemocratic, economically exploitative and dependent on the support of an affluent, but undemocratic, family process, giving rise to high levels of insecurity on the personal level for those living in poverty (Wilson & Ramphela 1989). The structural violence gave rise to political violence, especially in the urban areas, but also to domestic or social violence, such as is reported here. One can also argue that social violence reinforced the capacity for political violence, such as occurred in the urban areas.

Several layers of violence could be discerned in the microcontext of the everyday life in the settlements, relating to violence resorted to by (a) outside administrators, officials, employers, and landowners who all surely must have had the experience of an authoritarian family life, (b) men (husbands/fathers), (c) women (wives/mothers), (d) boys (sons/brothers/boyfriends), and (e) girls (daughters/sisters/girlfriends). The relative position in this hierarchy was based on and maintained by the control of economic and symbolic resources. Relations in the family were structured in a hierarchical, patriarchal way. Children were seen as an important source of labour. In family conflicts, violent means were easily used to discipline children, especially the teenagers. Elder siblings were often expected to discipline younger siblings on behalf of parents who had to be away from home for long periods. Apart from the age categorization, gender was used to discriminate between those who had authority and those who were on the receiving end. The combination of these two criteria (age and gender) in the position of girls, made their position especially vulnerable.

Relationships between family members were first of all of a practical nature. Given the lack of security in wage labour and in the level of remuneration, families could not afford the luxury of operating as relatively closed systems. Often members of a

family were away for long periods to work, or had to stay with relatives in other households in order to find material support or care. The family in Berlyn and Dixie was thus not a fixed and bounded entity, but rather a set of fluid relationships in which relations of violence based on gender and age were important ingredients. Much of the social interaction between young people occurred outside the family circle. Support against the demands or violence of parents or other family members was often found with other relatives or among members of the peer group.

In the circumstances of everyday family and social life in Berlyn and Dixie, violence was a social and economic strategy in the unequal competition for scarce resources within and between families. Lacking other resources, such as education, economic influence, accepted rights of women and children, etc., threat, neglect and physical or symbolic violence were effective ways to keep the social hierarchy in place or, on the other hand, to challenge it.

Acts of violence need to be understood in their social context — a moral condemnation of them does not bring understanding of the way the relationships of violence were structured in Berlyn and Dixie. Nevertheless, given the suffering that accompanies violent relations, the way towards social healing needs to be explored. The political empowerment of rural Africans through their democratic participation in the political process is the first step, and this has recently been achieved on the national level, but still needs to take place at the lower levels of government, as well as at the level of the workplace (business). Economic and educational empowerment, through the intensified development of infrastructure, job security, and the upgrading of educational opportunities, needs to accompany this political process. It is thus only by incorporation into the wider society and access to its resources that communities in the rural areas can be expected to react positively to efforts aimed at diminishing social violence (McKendrick & Hoffmann 1990). For all this to take place, adjustments towards true democracy need to reach the most basic level of family life of those who still control material resources in South Africa. That is to say, a truly democratic society at every single level of relationships needs to replace domination and exploitation. The extent of violence in South Africa reflects this much: At heart, in our homes and in our places of work, we are still authoritarian. This authoritarianism, in itself a form of violence, triggers violence. However, talking, education or whatever alone will not convince people of the need to change. In the end they will be changed by new experiences which are bound to happen. Whether affluent managers/directors/ decision-makers like it or not, they are going to be forced into a much more democratic style in the workplace. This in turn will force them to prepare their children for the new requirements and tactics of survival in South Africa. On the other hand, though, by understanding human phenomena, by presenting another

image of people or of human society, we may considerably hasten the process of change.

We wanted to demonstrate through case material that people are not born violent — neither are they born non-violent. They are rendered violent or non-violent by their experiences. We cannot tell to what extent our studies are representative of family and community life in South Africa. But then, we did not want to be statistically representative; we wanted to analyze and understand a phenomenon, the scale and depth of which we all know are horrific in South Africa.

We should also repeat that relationships are not violent only, because people resort to violence only when they are compelled to do so for reasons beyond or outside themselves. We presented case material selectively by excluding case studies which reflected the positive side of life in these settlements, simply because of a lack of space (as it is, this research report covers more pages than the limit specified). From the experience in Berlyn and Dixie we know that people are not inherently violent. Mostly, when they acted violently, they were bewildered and miserable because they did not know or understand why they acted like that. It made them feel bad although they did not regard themselves as bad persons. They were used to ongoing, mutual assistance and co-operation, they were very forgiving because they rejected a person's deeds but not the person him/herself (they could not afford to do so because they needed people for their survival), and they were democratic in a profound sense: They loved consultation as much as they hated decisions being taken by individuals on behalf of other persons also involved in matters relevant to the circumstances in question. In other words, like all people, they were neither inherently good nor bad (*cf.* Kotzé 1993). Whether people will be good or evil is dependent on the society they live in, the basic structures on which that society is built and the personal choices they make within the limits of this framework. The members of the families of Berlyn and Dixie were not crippled, therefore, by inherent deficiencies which prevented them from refraining from violence. We need to look beyond these people, to that part of society which is largely in control of people's destinies.

What this report aimed to achieve, was (a) to develop a particular image of violence, and therefore of people and society, by (b) describing the ghastly fruits of our society by way of two rural settlements in a former homeland. We did not want to shock. We needed to shock, partly for the sake of the "whole truth", partly because we are all in different ways involved in places like Berlyn and Dixie and therefore should know about everyday life in those places in all its gory details; and partly for the sake of trying to put an end to the grossly naive image of society dominating current thinking in South Africa, particularly around the topic of violence.

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