Money and violence: Financial Mutuals among the Xhosa in Cape Town, South Africa

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5 Witchcraft, and the exchange of sex, blood and money

5.1 Introduction

Democratisation and liberation from authoritarian apartheid rule have not led to a liberation from violence, nor from witchcraft. On the contrary, witchcraft is a problem that people must face on a daily basis (see Ashforth 2000; Comaroff and Comaroff 1999; Niehaus 2001). Witchcraft in South Africa appears to be more alive now than ever before. In this chapter, I will examine witchcraft narratives among Xhosa migrants in Cape Town and reveal why this type of narrative is so attractive to their present-day situation. The discourse on witchcraft reveals a central dimension of the entanglement of money and social relations.

Life for Xhosa migrants in Cape Town was difficult and insecure. Widespread unemployment, a high incidence of violence, such as rape and assault, the prevalence of HIV/AIDS, and feelings of uprootedness in a new city were only some of the problems that Xhosa migrants had to face daily. Many Xhosa men and women told me how difficult it was to maintain relations with parents, spouses, and children that lived scattered around the country or remained in the former Bantustans Ciskei and Transkei.

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

There are four reasons why the study of sexual relations is crucial for the analysis of financial mutuals. First, financial mutuals were an attempt to withdraw money from relations or invest money in them, as one could see in chapter two. Social constraint to self-constraint was used to resist some of the
obligations that the migrants felt. Men often took money from their wives or girlfriends, and women protected their money against men by putting it away in financial mutuals. Moreover, men needed money to maintain their relationships with home and, particularly, with their wives at home. Financial mutuals were, therefore, closely intertwined with flows of money between kin as well as between a boyfriend and girlfriend, or husband and wife. Second, the study of sexual relations revealed how central money was to the maintenance or establishment of close relationships. Marriage negotiations, for example, were conducted in the language of cattle exchange and the monetary value of particular beasts was negotiated (cf. Comaroff and Comaroff 1990, 209). Also, premarital sexual relations involved money from at least the 1930s onwards. Hunter (1979, 182) cited an informant who stated that:

A boy may be loved by as many as six girls. If he has many he cannot pay for them all, and then fathers will not have him. They say, “He did not pay for So-and-so’s daughter and So-and-so’s daughter. I will not have him here.”
And the girl sends him away.¹

The study of money in relation to sex shows how a wide range of socio-economic transformations led to drastic changes in gender relationships. Third, sexual relations revealed how intimacy and money were entangled. As Guyer (1995, 25) expresses in her research on West Africa: ‘[p]eople themselves could not allow money valuation to penetrate new relationships without rethinking them, probably contentiously’. The study of sexual relationships clarified how money was embedded in relationships and what kind of desires and anxieties the entanglement of money and intimacy brought about. Finally, the extent to which violence and economic insecurity affected close relationships becomes tangible. Violence was not only ‘out there’ in society, but present at all levels of social interaction, including the more intimate levels of the migrants’ lives. Violence was a constant cause of stress, anxiety, and/or fear. People’s search for money was often a reason for violent incidents. Money could also provide the way out of violence and destitution.

5.2 Conceptualising sex, blood, money, and witchcraft

Flows of money and flows of blood were pivotal to the Xhosa’s understanding of conjugal and affinal relations. When people discussed the vulnerability of these relations, it was often expressed in reference to money, sex, and the legitimacy of conjugal and affinal relations in the absence of money, sex, or parenting. Bloch and Parry (1989) suggest that one should not assume that money is corrosive to social relations, or necessarily promotes individualism. Similarly, the opposition between gifts and commodities, and the association of money with the latter, is problematic. Much more important is an analysis of how money features in particular forms of exchange and what moral ideas surround these exchanges. Bloch and Parry (1989, 7) argue that: ‘Relations between people masquerade as relations between things.’ The challenge is to see how these relations are constituted and how money is part of the interdependencies between people.²
In 'Nuer dilemmas', Hutchinson (1996) demonstrates how flows of money and conceptual understandings of blood provide insight into dramatic political, economic, and social transformations. In a fascinating and unsettling account, she shows how the analysis of the ideas about and uses of cattle, money, and blood help towards an understanding of how the Nuer tried to cope with violent changes. She examines relations between people by analysing exchanges and the ways money, war, and the state affected them. The Nuer did not regard particular things as neutral. Instead, the social or economic origin of things, such as money, was distinguished:

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

Hutchinson shows how blood, cattle, and cash (which is the title of one of her chapters) were pivotal towards an understanding of the transformation of relations under grave circumstances. The study reveals how things concerned relations with people, but also how things themselves were acquired because of the exchange with other things.

For the Xhosa migrants it was not an inherent quality with which money was invested that disrupted relations, but flows of money that were entangled with economic insecurities, violence, and volatile relations. Money was not the only aspect of intimate relations, but money, and even more so its absence, definitely revealed how people tried, as well as failed, to deal with deprivation.

In chapter three, some of these tensions, and their causes, have been identified as part of the transformation from a kin-ordered mode of production to one in which the capitalist mode of production prevailed. Men and women were usually far from satisfied with regard to the relationships with their spouses, partners, children, or parents. I will show how exchanges of blood, money, and sex among the Xhosa took place and identify the anxieties and desires that accompanied these exchanges, or their absence. The dissatisfaction that people expressed about these exchanges meant that there was a model of how relations ideally should be. The complaints about existing relations, or the absence of relations, were implicitly juxtaposed with a normative or ideal view on morally proper relations.

The complex associations brought about by sex, blood, and money reveals how they were interwoven (cf. Comaroff 1985, 174). For example, sex was easily associated with eating.3 As will become apparent in the next paragraph, sex was also often associated with money. Sex was related to blood because of its reference to consanguineal relations. For example, blood formed a connection with the ancestors: people believed that disturbed relations with ancestors could lead to disturbances in the blood, which in turn could cause illness. Sex was related to blood because sexual relations, or conjugal relations, created consanguineal relations through childbirth.4 Blood was related to money because it sustained life and because it enabled consanguineal dependencies. Moreover, the English-Xhosa dictionary (Fischer et.al. 1996) translates a bloodsucker, i.e. a person who sucks blood, as umcinezeli ngemali, which literally means 'oppressor with money'. When I
asked someone about this, he told me that oppressing someone with money meant that one took the person’s blood.

In order to clarify the interconnectedness of sex, blood, and money, I refer to figure 5.1 in which sex, blood, and money are positioned on three sides of a triangle. The three intersections of the sides signify the connections between sex, blood, and money and within which social realms sex, blood, and money are exchanged. Money and sex reveal the dynamic ‘conjugal’ dependencies. For lack of a better word, this also includes dependencies between a girlfriend and boyfriend. Money and blood refer to affinal dependencies: money was needed to maintain affinal dependencies and affinal dependencies influenced the flows of money. Sex and blood were obviously related because, without sex between a man and a woman, a child could not be born. This intersection refers to the creation of life itself, or reproductive dependencies.

Figure 5.1: Nexus sex, blood, and money

This figure only serves as a guide in interpreting the exchanges and their associated concerns between men and women. The visual representation of sex, blood, and money has its limitations because they were regarded as things, or the exchangeable, as well as the exchange. Sex is not a commodity or something which one can transfer. Nevertheless, sex appeared to be regarded, at times, as if it was a commodity that could be controlled, and was accessible or not. At the same time, sex was also understood as an act in which money and blood were transmitted. Sex, just as blood and money was regarded as an exchange process as well as an exchangeable object. Therefore, figure 5.1 should not be treated as a puzzle, but as a tool that enables one to clarify what kind of exchanges occur, and how they relate to specific tensions within relations.

It was exactly the centrality of sex, blood, and money that alerted me to the extent to which people’s experiences of exchange and its centrality for intimate relations were interwoven with witchcraft. The threatening triad provoked anxieties and selfish desires that appeared to be expressed through witchcraft. Jealousy was believed to inspire the cause of witchcraft and, sometimes it appeared that witchcraft itself was an extreme form of jealousy. The jealous person (i.e. the witch) was believed to destroy the person’s life, or take from that person, what he or she wanted, such as children, a car, money, a job, and even sex. Witch familiars often assisted the witches. These beast-like witch familiars were: the thikoloshe, which roughly resembled a cross between a child and an ape: the mamlambo, which resembled...
a mermaid or beautiful woman: and the chanti, which resembled a snake. The
witch could use the thikoloshe, mamlambo, and the chanti to increase their
wealth or to harm others (cf. Hammond-Tooke 1970; 1974; Hunter 1979;
Niehaus 1995; 1997). In the realm of witchcraft, the exchange of blood,
money and sex featured in violent and gruesome ways. The witch familiars
killed kin, caused infertility, raped, and made wealthy the person with whom
they were associated.

Witchcraft was intrinsically linked to the way social relations were
reconceived and reordered, and thus offered a discourse for reflecting on the
way social changes gave rise to new social tensions as well as new opportu-
nities. By carefully examining the practised patterns of exchange and com-
paring them with the patterns of exchange that emerged in the discourse on
witchcraft, one might acquire a more intimate understanding of the specific
consequences of change.

The study of modernity has provided insight into the diverging ways
in which people deal with new sources of capital, technological develop-
ments, and information (Appadurai 1990; 1997; Comaroff and Comaroff
1993). Moreover, the study of witchcraft has also revealed that homogeneity
should not be assumed. Witchcraft is very much alive today and has found its
way in new technologies, media, and forms of inequality in South Africa as
elsewhere in Africa (cf. Ashforth 2000; Bähre 2000b; Comaroff and Comaroff

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

It is quite a challenge to ascertain precisely the relation that moder-
nity and globalisation has with witchcraft. In South Africa, the shift towards
democracy has resulted in many changes that were not part of globalisation,
or can only partly be attributed to globalisation. Furthermore, there are sig-
nificant methodological issues. In order to relate witchcraft to globalisation
one should have insight into the historicity of this discourse. But the limited
historical material on the iconography of witch-familiars makes such an inves-
tigation difficult. Ethnographic accounts are mostly fragmented and some-
times not precise enough to enable such historical comparisons. Moreover,
the witchcraft discourse has its own ambiguities and contradictions, which
complicate any serious study. It appears that, among the Xhosa, the
thikoloshe, the mamlambo, and the chanti have hardly changed over the past
sixty years (see Laubscher 1959; Hunter 1979). The only noteworthy differ-
ence is that in the 1930s the thikoloshe was presented as a free creature that
was captured by witches. Nowadays, it is always seen to be made and pos-
sessed by witches (cf. Laubscher 1959, 8-9; Hunter 1979, 276). This could
indicate that witch familiars were increasingly placed within human relation-
ships, but one cannot be certain.

Witch familiars might be modernity’s malcontents to the extent that
they highlight very specific problems encountered by people within close
relationships that, at least analytically, cannot be disassociated from global
forces constantly challenging people’s lives. Xhosa migrants expressed their

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worries about violence, economic insecurities, as well as the inability to maintain relations. My argument is that witchcraft fantasies can be interpreted more directly in relation to specific, perhaps structural, problems which come to the fore in the exchange of sex, blood, and money among partners.

5.3 No money, no honey

In informal conversations with men and women, it became clear that without money a man would have no girlfriend: the desire for sex and money were closely related. Generally, people expressed that men wanted sex and women wanted money in return. This might convey a simplistic idea that men were not interested in women’s money and that, for women, sex could not be associated with pleasure. These gender differences, however, were due to hierarchical relations coupled with widespread misogyny. This meant that men could hold on to their own money, take money from a wife or girlfriend, or force a woman to have sex with them. For a woman, this was much more impossible and sex was part of the woman’s ability to make claims on a man’s money. Women often felt that a sexual partner was a way to gain access to (his) money. After all, during labour migration, particularly under apartheid, many wives were waiting for their husbands to return home with desperately needed cash. Wives who were left behind in the Bantustans feared that their migrant husbands might have been having sexual relations with women in town who also desperately needed cash. During apartheid, women’s illegal status in most cases prevented them from gaining money through employment, a situation which made them very dependent on relations with men.

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

CASE 1
Thandi was not one of the most respectable neighbours in her street. It was not that she and her children lived in a shack or because she was unemployed. Many found themselves in a similar position. Her neighbours talked badly about her because they felt that Thandi treated them disrespectfully. Thandi once borrowed money from a neighbour to buy meat at the local ‘spaza’ shop, as the small grocery shop was called. She failed to return the money because her husband had left her. Some neighbours felt that this was just a bad excuse. They also gossiped about how she once borrowed a pick-up truck from a neighbour and promised to pay for the loan. Again, the owner of the pick-up truck never received any money, possibly because Thandi did not have it.
Another event in January once again highlighted Thandi's way of dealing with money and relations. She took the minibus - a shared taxi with a fixed route - from Indawo Yoxolo to Nyanga Junction where she always took the train to the centre of Cape Town. She related the following story, much to the amusement of her fellow passengers, among who was my research assistant.

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

Thandi's story reveals how money had sexual connotations and the suggestive way in which sex and money were blended together metaphorically. She explicitly stated that money had to be given in exchange for sex. The discussion about the exchange of money and sex is not new to anthropology. Mauss, for example, reinterpreted Malinowski's fieldwork on the Trobriand Islanders. Malinowski argued that the gifts a man gave to his wife were 'free gifts', which meant that the woman was not required to reciprocate. Mauss, however, argued that the man's gifts were returned with sexual favours, and were therefore not free, but reciprocated with sex (Gouldner 1973, 298-299; Mauss 1954). In the above case, Thandi stated unambiguously that her relationship with her boyfriend was characterised only by the exchange of money for sexual favours. If the man was not going to give her money, possibly because he did not have any, he was not going to get sex. Instead, Thandi felt that he should have intercourse with his money, at least metaphorically.
CASE 2

This case is about a minister of a small church who was criticised for the way in which he dealt with money and women. Reverend Magazi had a small independent church in his shack. Neighbours sometimes called it jokingly the 'Holy Baptist Vagina Church'. The minister was married but had many girlfriends, whom he often got to know via his church. Reverend Magazi was reputedly very unscrupulous and inconsiderate. For example, he had an affair with a teenage girl who attended his church. After some time, the girl found out that Reverend Magazi was having an affair with her mother. She told her neighbours about this, which damaged Magazi's reputation even more. Many times, however, he had kept girlfriends without being caught. He lied to the women about his whereabouts, was considered to be a smooth talker, and people held him in some esteem for his role as the minister of the local church.

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

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

Women frequently complained among each other about their husbands or boyfriends and particularly the fact that they were unemployed and did not support the household financially. Even if the husband or boyfriend did have a job - many women complained to me - he used it for other purposes, such as supporting his family in the Eastern Cape, buying presents for secret girlfriends, or wasting it on beer and brandy. Regularly, women argued that their partner was just like one of their children because they failed to contribute financially. The women had to buy and cook food for the men and their children, while the former just sat at home being bored. The women simultaneously felt that their partners were pathetic. Unemployed men especially had a low status within the household and the neighbourhood. Their self-esteem was low and they were constantly afraid that their wives or girl-
friends were going to leave them because they had no money. Some men clearly had social and emotional problems and were often regarded as sick by their wives or girlfriends, who felt that it was the husband's or boyfriend's own fault that he was ill as it was caused by his own laziness. Instead of drinking, smoking cigarettes, and being bored, the women felt that the men should get up early and search for jobs. Nevertheless, women often argued that they had to nurture men like they would nurture children.

CASE 3
The third case concerns Nomahobe and her husband Zuko. This example clearly shows how easily the transfer of money, in this case wages, from a man to a woman was associated with sexual favours.

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

After a few very depressing weeks at home, Nomahobe found a job opportunity. Nomahobe discussed this with her husband and asked him if he approved. He was quite happy about Nomahobe's job. They desperately needed money and he was pleased that she was going to work closer by in the area, instead of in the city centre, so he could keep an eye on her. During the next months, however, tensions rose up again between Nomahobe and her husband. He complained about Nomahobe's irregular working hours and started to interrogate her again about her whereabouts. Moreover, he became concerned about Nomahobe's safety. He felt it was not safe for her to work in the evenings and felt that she should no longer attend the development consultations where the wishes of local residents were discussed. He tried to be informed about Nomahobe's whereabouts through their child. When their child did not attend school, he had to join Nomahobe and her boss on their visits to community representatives, suppliers, and subcontractors. Whenever Nomahobe left, the child would cry, scream, and beg to join her. After some time, Nomahobe realised that Zuko again suspected her of having an affair at work. Zuko's suspicions were fed by some of his male friends (for a male to have female friends is virtually impossible) with whom he drank beer or brandy, or watched videos over the weekend. Zuko's sister in Cape Town also contributed to Zuko's fears because she informed him that she saw Nomahobe together with someone else. Zuko once said that he did not really think that his wife was having an affair but that, as a 'proper man',
he had to make the accusation.

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

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

Unfortunately, relational problems such as these occurred frequently. All too often, women carefully made remarks to me about the abuses they suffered from their boyfriends or husbands, and mentioned the destructive impact that financial insecurity had on their relations. Even if both partners had a job, it was difficult to get by financially, but if the husband had no job, the marriage tended to become a nightmare. The marriage problems revealed a discrepancy between the ideal, or normative, socio-economic expectation and a violent, insecure reality. The man having no income caused tremendous anxiety and stress. It made it very difficult for him to assert his position as a husband and father. Like Bank noted on fatherhood among the Xhosa in East London: “[F]atherhood is conceptualised in very materialistic terms - the image of a ‘good father’ is a man who can support his family financially” (Bank 1997, 175). In the above case, the man did not provide any money and was completely dependent on his wife’s earnings. Therefore, he was regarded as a child who receives less respect and needs to be nurtured. Moreover, according to the wife, he (the husband turned into a child) had no sexual rights: the only way in which he could have sex with his wife was through rape. The normative transfer, the exchange of money and maintenance of kin, especially children, through sexual activity, did not take place. Instead, money was transferred from the wife to the husband, among other ways through theft, and the man’s status as husband and father reverted to that of an irresponsible child. Moreover, because the man did not earn anything the woman had increasingly experienced problems setting aside some of her money in order to support her kin in Emaxhoseni.
In addition to the relationship between husband and wife, there was the relationship between the male employer and the female employee. Money, in the form of a salary, was transferred from a man to a woman. This was immediately associated with sexual activity and the woman's labour could not be regarded as a sufficient exchange. Instead, the husband, some of his male friends, and his sister saw sex as the only logical return for the money.

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

**CASE 4**

In October 1997, Themba moved to Cape Town to live with Nomahobe, who was his mother's sister, Nomahobe's husband Zuko, and their child. Themba desperately needed a job and could, in the meantime stay at Nomahobe's place free-of-charge. To show his appreciation, Themba regularly did chores around the house, such as washing dishes or minding the child. He got up around six o'clock in the morning and took the train or the taxi to town to visit companies, offices, and private homes in search of a job. He had worked at a petrol station in Johannesburg before and hoped to find a similar job in Cape Town, but he was also prepared to work as a cleaner. Themba's hope was that someone would fail to appear for work and that he could step in. After searching for a few months, he found a cleaning job at a shopping centre. At first he worked on a temporary basis, but after a while he had a permanent position and earned around R1,100 a month due to the many hours of overtime.

Once he was earning money, his relationships with women changed. Themba stopped helping out with the household activities as he used to do before. Furthermore, Nomahobe (his mother's sister) argued that Themba had to use some of his income to contribute to the household expenses. Themba, however, was reluctant to do this. Sometimes he gave a few hundred rand, maybe R300, of his salary to Nomahobe so she could buy groceries, but frequently he gave less. The amount of money that Nomahobe received was even less because Themba started to borrow money from Nomahobe. But, to Nomahobe's tremendous frustration, he never returned the loans. She felt reluctant to ask him straight out for the money. Instead, she felt that Themba ought to know that he had to pay his debt and should not pretend that it was a gift. Nomahobe considered informing her sister about her son's behaviour, but eventually decided not to. It was difficult to involve her sister, who lived about 1,000 km away. Moreover, Themba started to send money to his mother. She desperately needed it because she had just finished her prison sentence for killing a customer in her shebeen in Johannesburg. She worked six to seven days a week of often more than ten hours a day as a live-in domestic worker, but she earned only a little bit of money. Nomahobe figured that her sister was not going to be very enthusiastic about getting involved in the struggle over money because she was relying on her son's remittances.

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

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

It was striking how Themba's relations with women changed when he started to earn money. During his period of unemployment, he had no girlfriends and needed his mother's sister's support. In return, he helped her in the household. Once Themba started earning money, he was able to have girlfriends and sex and support his mother financially. He stopped most of his household activities and became less supportive toward his mother's sister. He actually kept on living off Nomahobe and even started to ask her for loans without ever repaying them.

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

Many intimate relations have the potential to give rise to tensions around sex and money. What was remarkable about these instances was that these tensions around sex and money were intertwined, symbolically as well as practically, through a particular pattern of exchange. The socio-economic and symbolic associations pertaining to the exchange of sex with money were central to the pressures, anxieties, as well as desires concerning intimate relationships. Through exchange, sex and money became suggestively blended, thus showing how difficult it was to establish an enduring relationship. If the man did not give money, he was not going to have a girlfriend or was compared to a child or dog that is not familiar with the responsibilities of a man. The comparison between a man and a dog draws on pervasive notions of masculinity. A dog is not circumcised and is, very much like a child, regarded as irresponsible. In general, the uncircumcised can be referred to as dogs to highlight the absence of responsibilities. Because the Zulu, unlike Xhosa men, do not practice circumcision anymore, the Xhosa could insult Zulu men by calling them dogs. Moodie, moreover, notes that migrant work-
ers in the gold mines felt that only dogs paid for sex. In contrast to dogs, men give gifts of money in return for sex (1988, 242-243).

Based on her research on Yoruba texts, Barber argues: '[A]t a more definitely metaphorical or symbolic level, money represented the support of “people” in a further sense: gifts of money very often betokened social acknowledgement or regard ... [T]he handing-over of money was both an actual transfer of resources and a symbolic act of recognition’ (Barber 1995, 215). Only by giving money or other gifts can a man be a man (and not a child or dog). Although many women tried to earn their own income, the man's money was important for her to raise her children and support kin in a situation of poverty.

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

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

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

long-term reproduction, whether it encompasses the entire process that is implied in the Xhosa nation of 'building the umzi'. The responsibilities for conception within the homestead structure and in the consciousness of rural-based men were such, however, that the reproductive sterility of 'mine marriages' were viewed as an advantage: 'At least one can't get pregnant' (Moodie, 1988, 254).
Moodie (1988, 255) furthermore noted that "Town women" were not safe ... Men maintained "town women" through "gifts", monetary or otherwise, in exchange for services, sexual and domestic, whereas the relationship with the "wife of the mine" was contractual, exclusive, an aspect of status and authority. The 'mine marriages' enabled men to avoid a major cause of conflict and anxiety between men and women. Sexual relations between men and women, unlike those at the mines, involved 'blood' because of the possibility of childbirth, which necessitated men to continue financial relations. Otherwise there was also the risk that a man ignored financial/paternal demands, either because of lack of money or because it would have been at the expense of other relations. If women discussed infidelity, it was mostly in financial terms. If a man had another girlfriend, he would be spending his money on other women, which increased the financial constraints. Moreover, women expressed their worries about AIDS. They were scared that their husband or boyfriend would be infected and in turn infect them. The dramatic increase of AIDS in South Africa meant that sexual relations could result in a long lasting disease and social exclusion from kin and neighbours.

5.4 Witch familiars and exchange

Certain events, such as unexpected or peculiar deaths and diseases, might be blamed on witchcraft. Witchcraft and witch familiars can be considered collective fantasies which, as Thoden van Velzen (1995) put it, compose an imaginary - not necessarily homogenised - space of daydreams, desires, and fears. The existence of witchcraft and witch-familiars are the explanation for misfortune caused by jealousy. Jealous people are said to use witchcraft, or rather, witchcraft is an extreme form of jealousy that allows the witch to profit at the expense of others. Jealousy can be about money, children, or consumer products such as a car or cellular phone.

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

5.4.1 Chanti

The chanti resembled a snake that the witch kept in her womb or vagina. According to Hunter's informants, the chanti lived in the water and caused
harm through staring, but I did not encounter this description (1979, 286). Again, this might indicate the historicity of evil forces that moved from the realm of nature to the realm of close relations. A woman once told me about an experience she had when she took the train home from work. Suddenly, a snake was crawling on the floor of the carriage. All the women were shocked and started screaming and every woman tried to assure the others that it was not her snake. Quickly, one of the women spread her legs and the snake was crawling back under her skirt.

People told me that before a witch has sex, she would usually remove the snake from her vagina or womb. In order to remove the snake unnoticed, she would tell the man that she needs to go to the toilet quickly to urinate. She takes out the snake and hides it somewhere. After having had intercourse, she will return to the toilet in order to fetch the snake. Others told me that the witch could also leave the snake in her vagina or womb during intercourse. The snake would open its mouth and the man would unknowingly penetrate the snake’s mouth. The snake would collect the semen, which therefore would not enter the woman. This explains why witches seldom become pregnant. In the unlikely event that the witch does become pregnant the snake will terminate the pregnancy by eating the foetus. The chanti is believed to help the witch get wealthy and powerful. Accumulation is only possible if one refuses to share wealth with others. The witch, thus, receives money or other things through sex, but she does not have to share it with a child. The chanti, therefore, is having sex, getting wealthy, and without incurring the risk of sharing it with affines, even the witch’s own child.

5.4.2 Thikoloshe

People said that the thikoloshe was a nasty, half-human, half ape-like, hairy creature the size of a child. It had a huge sexual organ, only one buttock, and spoke with a lisp. The thikoloshe carried a stick in one hand and a charm, which resembled a marble and makes him invisible, in the other. It was said that the thikoloshe was breastfed by the witch and Hunter notes that the witch had a sexual relation with the thikoloshe (1979, 277-278). The thikoloshe was said to steal everything, especially money, but some informants said it did not steal coins because they were too heavy. Others, however, disagreed and stated that the thikoloshe did steal coins. In addition to theft, the Thikoloshe attempted to have sex with women while they were fast asleep. In order to prevent the thikoloshe from raping them, women sometimes elevated the bed by putting stones under the beds’ legs, thus making it impossible for the small thikoloshe to get onto the bed. For the same reason, women sometimes slept in different positions in order to confuse the thikoloshe and make it more difficult for the thikoloshe to rape them. Although the thikoloshe was believed to be harmful, stories about the thikoloshe were often accompanied by laughter. The thikoloshe was almost child-like in its behaviour and, although it was nasty and malicious, it rarely caused death.
5 Witchcraft, and the exchange of sex, blood, and money

CASE 5

Inspired by Hunter (1979, 281), I asked a diviner (igqirha) if she had ever heard about a thikoloshe being captured. The diviner lived in a small shack made out of metal sheets on a wooden frame in Paula Park, Guguletu. The beads she was wearing and a little altar with some medicine indicated her status. The diviner told me the following story about how she captured a female thikoloshe that a witch must have sent to harm someone.9

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

Hlathi left the female thikoloshe locked inside his room and came to my place. He told me what had happened and that he kept body parts of the thikoloshe and asked if I wanted some. I accompanied him to his place and asked him to cut out the vagina for me because I wanted it. I was so scared! The vagina was taken out. The thikoloshe is short and has only one big buttock. These are no lies, it is true. I used to hear about the thikoloshe; it has ingqithi [half a finger].10 I wanted to use the vagina for luck because I want to win. When I arrived at my place in Nyanga East [township in Cape Town], in those brick hostels, I tried to burn the vagina but I think I did not count the yard [I underestimated it]. I placed the vagina on a piece of metal sheet and I do not know what happened. I ran out of the building and became mad. That day the thikoloshe defeated me. The fire did not burn the vagina but instead the house was full of smoke and there was a strong wind. The sheet blew away and we all ran out and never saw the vagina again. I do not know where it went. The thikoloshe defeated me. Even now I don't want to see a thikoloshe alive. I am good in healing people but thikoloshe defeated me. Maybe I can try something if the thikoloshe is alive but if it is dead: no way! But I can push him away from a person.

The event focused on the sexual powers of the female thikoloshe and by telling the story to me the igqirha appeared to convey her powers to me, as well as its limitations. The igqirha wanted to win. She also told me she could cure cancer and showed me an identity card that proved she was an officially registered diviner that co-operated with a hospital. Her business seemed to be far from prosperous at the time and she saw me probably as a prospective client.

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

5.4.3 Mamlambo

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

He distinguished a male mamlambo (inkuzi) from a female mamlambo and having had different powers. The male mamlambo made its owner rich and in the process it harmed others. The female mamlambo was greedy: she ate children as well as everything else that contained blood. So if a person wanted to get rich, he should keep a male mamlambo. The owner would get rich, but at the expense of others. If, however, the primary aim was to harm someone else, one should give that person a greedy female mamlambo. The following story was related to me by a migrant in Cape Town and gives an impression of the workings of a mamlambo.

CASE 6

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

The man anxiously waited until he could get some days off from work and when it was time to go he picked up the picture. The igqirha gave him the picture, an envelope, and instructions. The diviner told him that he was not allowed to phone his family to tell them about his plans to visit them.

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The envelope contained a piece of herb and the diviner instructed the man to open the envelope upon arrival but that he had to throw the envelope away without looking inside it. He also told him to slaughter a chicken for the girl and to stay with her in the same room. If he would follow the diviner’s advice, the beautiful woman was going to be his. The igqirha assured the man that he should not worry about meeting her: she would be waiting for him at the train station.

The man went home and, to his great surprise, he found her waiting for him at the station. She was still beautiful, and actually even more beautiful than he remembered her. She had a black birthmark on her cheek that he had not noticed before, but it made her only more attractive. She accompanied him to his home and together they spent a few days making love in the back room. He was very happy but noticed something strange. She did not eat as other people did and once he saw her eat a raw chicken. Apparently, she liked slaughtered meat and blood. This was very strange, but he did not want to disrupt his happiness by worrying too much. After a few days, he decided he wanted to marry the girl and asked his parents to notify the girl’s parents. When his parents arrived at the girl’s parents’ home they were shocked: they saw the girl making coffee for the guests! The girl’s parents said that she had not left home. She could not have been with their son and there must be a mistake.

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

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

In this horrific story, in which the man’s desire threatened to destroy his family, or himself, particular exchanges feature. The migrant worker fell in love with a woman and searched for help from a diviner who turned out to be a witch. When the migrant returned home, he did not give anything to his fam-
ily, like he should have, and instead of spending time with them he locked himself up with his girlfriend. Instead of bringing home money and joy, he brought death and disaster. He ignored the obligations towards his family and instead had sex with a beautiful, desirable woman who was actually a mamlambo eager to take blood in return for sex.

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

5.5 A pattern of exchange

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

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

‘Conjugal’ relations were highly unstable and a constant source of anxiety, in which sex, money, and kin were crucial. Many women were raped, many men did not share money, and some men were regarded as too destitute to be desirable and could not engage in intimate relationships with women. Fatherhood, in a socio-economic sense, was virtually absent and women had to take care of the children on their own while they tried to disguise the complicated circumstances of an absent, or uncaring father. This jeopardised the initiation of a boy who became initiated by his mother’s brother in his mother’s clan instead of his father’s clan. 12 This, together with
the difficulty to control the sexual escapades of a husband/boyfriend or wife/girlfriend, created tremendous anxieties.

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

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

The witch familiars should be regarded as fantasies about the practice and experiences of exchange between man and woman in the context of wider kinship networks. The greedy and selfish witch used the *chanti* (snake) in such a way that sex was not related to procreation but to accumulation. The snake enabled the witch to accumulate by eating the semen or foetus, which made the witch barren. Accumulation was thus possible by having sex without having to take care of kin. The *thikoloshe* stole money and things, as well as raped women. However gruesome, this was a reality that many women had to cope with. Moreover, the *thikoloshe* satisfied the witch’s sexual desires and was breastfed. The *mamlambo* gave sexual gratification or money to its owner in return for the blood of kin. Again, sex and accumulation have a strained relation with affinal obligations. The migrant worker harmed his kin because he was engaged with a *mamlambo* who was disguised as a desirable woman. The *mamlambo* fed on the migrant's kin by drinking their blood, just as a girlfriend or wife was in competition with her affines over the same restricted money. In the story, the competition between conjugal and affinal relations could only come to an end by breaking the conjugal bond, which caused the death of their son.

The exchange, desires, and anxieties of sex, blood - as a symbol of life and consanguineal ties - and money featured in the imaginations of the thieving, blood-drinking, rapist witch familiars that the witch created out of jealousy. Talking about witchcraft was therefore a way to make some sense of everyday life and an attempt to explain the gruesome experiences of everyday life.

It has been argued before that the fantasies of witch familiars represent sexual desires (Hammond-Tooke 1974; Niehaus 1995; Wilson 1951 in Niehaus 1997, 272). Wilson (née Hunter) considered them to be women’s repressed sexual desires that were caused by clan exogamy. Hammond-Tooke interprets the *thikoloshe* as a male fantasy that is part of inter-sexual relations and the man’s awareness of feminine deprivation (Hammond-Tooke 1974, 132; Niehaus 1995; 524). According to Niehaus, both Wilson's argument and Hammond-Tooke's argument are not sufficiently general to explain the *thikoloshe* in the Lowveld, South Africa, an area where the belief in the *thikoloshe* is relatively new. Niehaus (1995, 526, 529) argues that
it seems more plausible that the tokolose symbolizes illicit sexual desires which are very general ... The apelike tokolose present an apt symbol for unrestrained sexual desire ... Being unable to support dependants, jobless men tend to be single and not to be desired as husbands. Such men are thought to use the tokolose to compensate for their lack of sexual fulfilment.13

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

'crying hysteria' and nightmares of a sexual nature tended to take place while husbands were at home (i.e. not away on migrant labour) and that there was evidence of strong dissatisfaction on the part of women with their sexual role in marriage (Lee 1969, 149-150 in Hammond-Tooke 1974, 135n6).

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

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

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

5.6 Conclusion

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

Violence, economic insecurity, and volatile relations disturbed even the intimate sexual relations between men and women. Large-scale unemployment, labour migration, rape, uprootedness, social constraints by relatives - and agnates in particular - made it impossible for most Xhosa migrants to have the kind of relationship they would like. The nexus of sex, blood, and money revealed that it was very difficult to have a long lasting relation with a lover under such conditions. It was rather an exception to find people who were fairly happy about their relationships. For most people, it was impossible to create a home and have satisfactory relationships. The tragedy was that violence and insecurity had penetrated even the most intimate aspects of relationships.

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

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

The significance of financial mutuals becomes much clearer if one appreciates how volatile these interdependencies were. Financial mutuals were about the accumulation and relocation of money, as well as people's attempts to build a safe haven in a turbulent environment. Obviously, the women who organised financial mutuals would not allow any man into the group. As this chapter has made clear, many problems arose from the relationship with a boyfriend or husband. This was also the reason for excluding kin from financial mutuals. Affinal relations were also fraught with tensions and the competing interests of affinal and conjugal relations should not be brought into the financial mutual. Instead, financial mutuals were an opportunity to redirect flows of money and somewhat renegotiate these relations, and build new ones in the process.