

AN ANALYSIS OF MASCULINE SOCIALIZATION AND MALE SEXUAL ANXIETY

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ABSTRACT

This study uses autobiographical reflection to investigate the negative impact of essentialist masculine gender socialization on men's lives. In particular, I use personal recollective accounts both from my early childhood socialization—in the traditional Greek-Cypriot culture of the 1970s and 80s—and from my own introspections and analytical conceptualizations concerning intimate relationships in general. I analyze these accounts by using a feminist postmodern ideology of gender deconstruction and reconstruction. Men oftentimes fall victims of patriarchal masculine scripting by suppressing their needs for intimacy, connectedness, and self-disclosure, qualities traditionally devalued as feminine traits. Suppressing such needs exacerbates inadequacies in male intimacy with possible manifestations in the form of generalized non-clinical male sexual anxiety. Implications are also discussed in terms of the by-products of male sexual anxiety, such as non-clinical sexual addiction and male victimization.

Key words: (1) anxiety (2) abuse (3) addictions (4) masculinity (5) narrative (6) socialization (7) patriarchy (8) intimacy (9) deconstruction (10) essentialism

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AN ANALYSIS OF MASCULINE SOCIALIZATION AND MALE SEXUAL ANXIETY

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

As Denzin (1989a) suggests, the life story turns the subject into an author, an author that creates his life story by the very process of communicating it, be it a written mode of communication or an oral mode (Berger & Chaffee, 1987). The subject-as-author is given an opportunity over the life that is written about. Similarly, autobiography as communicated by the self-as-author positions the self of the teller centrally in the narrative (McLaren, 1993a). In actuality, these self-stories are stories of and about the self of the author in relation to an important experience(s) he may have had (Reason & Hawkins, 1988). Yet, the self-story is constructed by the very process of communicating it. It does not exist as a story independent of its telling; although after it has been told, it can take on the status of a story that can be retold. Its narrative form typically follows a linear format, i.e., beginning, middle, and end.

The storying of my early childhood socialization into the masculine ethos are of paramount importance in my continual molding as a heterosexual adult male as well as a researcher and teacher of human sexuality. The trauma perpetrated by the essentialist patriarchal sociocultural environment is indeed considerable to all men who, at one point or another, find themselves struggling with issues of intimacy and sexuality in the fast-paced contemporary society. The prevailing masculine ethos has been silencing men for so many decades, robbing them of their agency and their voice to bring their legitimate rights to emotional expression to the forefront (Devault, 1993; Giroux, 1988). For, as Denzin (1989a) suggests, it is through the storying and re-storying of the person's innermost and darkest secrets that he manages to make some sense of seemingly incomprehensible experience. By externalizing such secrets, the individual comes to gain the necessary control, courage, and willingness to rid himself of the negativistic attitudes of his subjugated stories of male sexual anxiety (non-clinical), relational abuse, and non-clinical sexual addiction, thus bringing positive change in his life (Freedman & Combs, 1996). Patriarchal socialization, masculinity, and male sexual anxiety constitute the main themes driving this study and will be introduced and defined in greater detail in chapters one and two. Relational abuse and sexual addiction will also be discussed as by-products of male sexual anxiety.

Briefly, patriarchal socialization refers to the process of allocating and transmitting male privilege from one generation of boys to another. Masculinity could be conceptualized as the practical application of patriarchy; the personification of patriarchy in men's everyday lives. Male sexual anxiety refers the generalized feelings of sexual unrest experienced by men as a result of their historico-socio-cultural conditioning in the patriarchal masculine ethos. Relational abuse deals with the physical, psychological, and emotional variants of abuse experienced in intimate relationships. Sexual addiction has to do with one's mental preoccupation with and physical enactment of sexual behaviors for the sake of alleviating male sexual anxiety and as a substitute of true intimacy in interpersonal relationships.

Up until a few years ago, I have failed to consider the richness of my early childhood experiences and the abundance of epistemological, theoretical, and methodological knowledge found within them. This is mainly because the use of personal self-reflection in social science research is often trivialized by the general positivistic thinking that characterizes today's sociocultural life with its emphasis on enumeration and quantification (Baber & Allen, 1992; Krieger, 1991; Roman & Apple, 1990; Van Manen, 1990). My general purpose is fourfold. First, to illustrate how the macro historico-socio-cultural patriarchal environment constructs unrealistic masculine expectations in terms of generating idealistic meso masculine contexts, interactions, roles, and identities (see Figure 1 on the next page). Second, to show how such meso masculine idealizations and settings tend to have negative micro intrapersonal and interpersonal effects in men's everyday lives, primarily in the form of male sexual anxiety, sexual addiction, and relational abuse. Third, to show how the existent postmodern feminist ideological premises of gender deconstruction and reconstruction (Huysen, 1990; Kipnis, 1988; Lather, 1991; Levant, 1995; Rosenau, 1992; Slaughter, 1989) could be used to illuminate the darkness of men's issues, especially those having to do with emotional inadequacies and dependencies. Fourth, to increase other men's awareness of the negative physical and psychological effects of male sexual anxiety, especially those men who have received most of their socialization under patriarchal masculine sociocultural environments. Such men can utilize the storying of their painful subjugated stories as a viable means to achieve positive therapeutic ends.

Insert Figure 1 about here

Using Self-Reflection as the Epicenter of Research

In autobiographical self-reflective experiential accounts, the author undresses himself/herself in front of the audience with the ultimate goal of intuitively connecting with them, sharing a variety of ideas, abstractions, and knowledge claims (Farnsworth, 1994; Smith, 1994). This personalization of expression for the sake of knowledge generation and transmission constitutes an excellent way of negotiating deeply sensitive and personal issues. As the sometimes shameful personal “I” is brought to the forefront, in a direct and honest way, it tends to become normalized as if the author is physically present and directly speaking to the audience in a connected, accessible, and articulate way (Edel, 1979; Stanley, 1992).

In using self-reflective research, I (a) acknowledge the validity and truthfulness of personal experiences, (b) find myself slowly emerging from being a marginalized doer and spectator to becoming agentic over my past, present, and future experiences, my life, and the kind of knowledge I am passing on to others in writing and orally, and (c) come to recognize that the personal is not only self-liberating and could be converted to general awareness, but is also constraining my understanding of the topic of inquiry through my personal misconceptions and biases (Baber & Allen, 1992; Stanley, 1992). As a 34 year old ethnic heterosexual male experiencing the veracity of non-clinical male sexual anxiety and its variants, I am sensitized to the: (a) plight of men who experience the deleterious effects of masculine scripting and find themselves struggling with issues of male sexual anxiety, (b) stresses, strains, and everyday hassles of early masculine socialization, (c) long-and short-term consequences and multilevel ramifications of masculine scripting, and (d) potential for change through the deconstruction of patriarchal masculine scripts and the reconstruction (Slaughter, 1989) of emancipated sexual narratives through androgynous gender socialization.

The very perception of my early childhood experiences that fuel and enable my understanding of the problem of male sexual anxiety may make it difficult for me to understand others. It is not unusual for the evaluation of personal recollections and critical self-thinking to introduce various biases and render one's thinking inflexible (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Philips, 1990; Scheper-Hughes, 1983). This is the limitation of the personal perspective within which I work and the kind of dialectic tension that ultimately drives me to examine and re-examine the mode and nature of my self-reflexivity as well as the idea of the best way to arrive at "the truth" in any matter in social science (Bourdieu & Wacquaet, 1992; Gergen & Gergen, 1991; Steier, 1991). After all, self-reflexivity in social science research is as truthful as it can get considering that it involves self-talk, self-listening, self-evaluation, and the sharing of one's self with others thus allowing the articulation of accurate depictions of highly sensitive personal issues (Ellis & Bochner, 1992; Schon, 1987; Stanley, 1992). Through the articulations of my self-reflections, I intend to collaborate in the co-construction of valuable knowledge pertaining to the issues of male sexual anxiety; knowledge that I consider to be a mirror image of my lived experiences, thereby breaking down the barrier and acknowledging the connection between the knower and what is known (Fonow & Cook, 1991; Thompson, 1992).

The Damage of the Masculine Ethos

My personal experiences with the cruelty of early masculine socialization may possibly resemble those of other men who find themselves in similar predicaments experiencing the trauma, stresses, and strains of male sexual anxiety. Many men, like myself, being the products of the prevailing masculine ethos of independence, autonomy, and self-sufficiency, find themselves in an almost perpetual automatic mode of emotional passivity as evidenced by the great lengths they go to silence their own cries for true intimacy and connectedness with partners, friends, parents, and children (Mac An Ghail, 1994; Tierney & McLaughlin, 1993). They become numb and unable to identify and express their own spectrum of emotional wants and needs (Hite, 1981; Gilmore, 1990; Levant & Pollack, 1995).

Even though this research is based solely on placing myself in the center of analysis, I believe that explicating the etiology of my painful early childhood experiences, through self-reflection, constitutes a viable way to investigate the phenomenon of male sexual anxiety. Of course, it takes considerable boldness, determination, and courage to help break men's silence

(Tierney & McLaughlin, 1993) especially considering the enormity of the historico-socio-cultural currents of the emotionally limiting masculine ethos. Under such circumstances of almost essentialist masculine dictatorship, the personal becomes the most viable way to bring such sensitive, secretive, and taboo topic as male sexual anxiety to the forefront thus stimulating the generation of more knowledge through the ripple effect of communicative media and effectuating general awareness action.

Interviewing other men would have rendered more validity and reliability in my research but due to the delicate and sensitive nature of the issue at hand, it would have indeed been a difficult task. It is not only difficult to get men to open up when talking about their emotional, psychological, and sexual selves, it also becomes especially hard to get them to tell the truth concerning these aspects of themselves. For example, in Hite's (1981) report on male sexuality, a total of 119,000 questionnaires were distributed and only 7,239 were returned. The report included an open-ended questionnaire that asked men questions pertaining to their sexuality in general, and in particular, how they felt and dealt with issues about their sexual experiences and close interpersonal relationships. As the author suggests, most men are brought up feeling uncomfortable answering questions that are too personal. Instead, the cultural ethos of masculinity (Collier, 1995) socializes men to be tough and to avoid any kind of public or interpersonal display of emotional pain or upset, a tendency that quite often extrapolates into other aspects of their lives, particularly their psychosexual selves. As one man suggested in Hite's (1981) study:

The clashes between what I'd like to feel and what I do feel have been the basis of my most anguished sexual conflicts. This leads to silence and isolation in me. It has taken much struggle for me to come to terms with my feelings, and learn to have more confidence and practice in expressing and expanding them. (p. 63)

Unfortunately, the prevailing masculine ethos teaches men to repress and deny their emotional aspects to such a degree that they often experience feelings of isolation and loneliness. They end up contemplating and ruminating the superficiality that characterizes their personal relationships as well as their overall inability to replicate the strong intimate relationships of their female friends and partners. "Are men even able to have strong intimate relationships?" or

“Would they even recognize healthy relationships to replicate?” are questions that usually arise concerning men’s relational predicament amidst the sociocultural ethos of masculinity. Unfortunately, I believe the answer is no, as only few men have been fortunate enough to have received the necessary early childhood socialization that would have enabled them to adequately develop their skills for intimacy and connectedness.

Transforming Personal Experiences to Academic Knowledge

Professionals and lay people alike tend to conceptualize the sociocultural milieu (Moerman, 1988) and attempt to explain the social phenomena that take place in it, from their uniquely personal and academic perspective and particular hierarchical position in the ladder of social life (Devault, 1993; Ellis & Bochner, 1992; Featherstone, Hepworth, & Turner, 1991). It is liberating to realize that there are multiple realities in this milieu, which can be tapped into through one’s personal experiences thus bringing them to the forefront of consciousness and, hopefully, to life through writing (Clifford & Marcus, 1986). The multitude of realities and perspectives provide the researcher with the much needed security, agency, and legitimacy to transform personal issues of inquiry into formal scientific knowledge (Fuchs, 1993).

For the academic researcher, this externalization and transformation process (Torbert, 1991a) constitutes a turning point with much liberation and exhilaration involved. This is because, writing experiential knowledge enables the person (the researcher) to better deal with the complexity and perplexity of his/her personal life (Reason & Marshall, 1987), in addition to enabling him/her to convert personal issues to topics of general awareness. At this point, the person and researcher dichotomy ceases to exist as the person and the researcher blend into one benefiting from their symbiosis. Externalization is the first and most important step in the narrating process of explaining the vicissitudes of complex personal experiences in a cathartic, therapeutic, and in this case, scientifically valid way (Denzin, 1989b; Edelman, 1979, 1984; Riessman, 1993; White & Epston, 1990). Scientifically valid because the questions the therapist poses to his client, or the autobiographer to himself, involve careful conceptualization and planning—using formal and experiential social science knowledge—in order to help bring some order and meaning to the otherwise hidden and complex psycho-emotional labyrinth of the personal experiential world. As Freedman and Combs (1996) suggest:

We believe that people can most easily examine the effects of problem-saturated

stories on their lives when they do it in the context of an externalizing conversation...The first step in this process is simply taking the language the person uses to describe the problem, modifying it so that the problem is objectified, and asking the person questions about it. (pp. 58-59)

The key in turning personal experiential knowledge into professional academic knowledge is to allow the person, or the researcher, to become not only a keen observer of the surrounding social phenomena, but above all, to become a legitimate person with enough authority to elevate the construction of self-knowledge to a worthy status in the eyes of the social science community, just like with any other mainstream quantitative or qualitative research agenda (Kracauer, 1993). Another important aspect in the process of generating new knowledge through self-reflection is the continued ability of the person or the researcher to commit to intellectual critique; it is through self-critique that he/she will become capable of sculpting the amorphous stone of personal experiential knowledge into the well-defined and detailed statue of professional social science knowledge.

As the best personal knower and expert of myself—with the capability to step outside my experiences, view them, reflect on them, and ultimately construct them during my writings (Steier, 1991)—I find myself subscribing to the constructivist (Knorr-Cetina, 1981; Von Glasersfeld, 1989) approach to knowledge generation which purports that what is known is created by human knowers rather than discovered. Discovery assumes *apriori* existence of knowledge as being out there and separated from the consciousness of the actor (Baber & Allen, 1992; Hare-Mustin & Marecek, 1990). This self-construction of knowledge is preceded by the active selection, ordering, and organization of personal thoughts (Baber & Allen, 1992) as will be demonstrated during the explication of my early childhood experiences that have led to my falling in the predicament of male sexual anxiety. As Thompson (1992) points out:

Constructed knowers weave together what they know from personal experience with what they learn from others. They move beyond academic disciplines and their methods as the sole source of authority, and reclaim themselves as sources of knowledge. The self is allowed back into the process of science. Constructed knowers consult and listen to the self. (p. 10)

For the first time during my academic training, I am able to find myself in my work and turn my self into my work. When this happens, it's as if all the pieces of one's personal and professional puzzle come to fit together harmoniously in an integrated, whole, and, above all, satisfying manner. There is a certain amount of satisfaction associated with understanding my personal tribulations with male sexual anxiety and putting them into perspective. The arduous task remains though of having to link such tribulations theoretically and methodologically in contextual ways of knowing; of having to formally articulate my early childhood experiences and generalize them to other men of similar circumstance. Of course, one man's perspective is never enough to arrive at holistic understandings regarding the issues of male sexual anxiety. If such perspective is rooted in the person's legitimate micro and macro, short-term and long-term contexts and is arrived at by the careful mapping out of the process of personological inquiry of lived experiences, then, it may lead to the fruition of useful social scientific knowledge. With the careful explication of the associated emotional overtones and the research findings, in terms of their long-term ramifications in the person's life, it may be safe to at least extrapolate from one person's experiences to general perspectives on the issues concerned (Denzin, 1989a, b, c).

The point of interpretative work in general is to come to an understanding of lived experience, personological events, social situations, or any form of written and oral text by first understanding the background conditions and meanings that situate activities and contextualize the self (Heron, 1971, 1992; Ronai, 1992; Sussman, Steinmetz, & Peterson, 1999). As Wax (1971) points out: "Understanding ... does not refer to a mysterious empathy between human beings. Nor does it refer to an intuitive or rationalistic ascription of motivations. Instead, it is a social phenomenon—a phenomenon of shared meanings" (p. 11).

Getting across self-perspectives and self-meanings to audiences is what self-interpretive researchers strive for by getting audiences to understand their lives, actions, and self-meanings as they understand them, rather than presenting audiences with outsider perspectives and then asking them to come up with generalizable meanings, a process that oftentimes misconstrues and obscures (Bruner, 1990; Fals-Borda & Rahman, 1991; SmithBattle, 1996; Whyte, 1991).

Statement of the Problem

As a young adult male, researcher, and teacher of human sexuality—who finds himself living and doing research at the rather confusing historico-socio-cultural junction of modernity

and postmodernity (Harvey, 1989)—I have always been intrigued and perplexed as to why a considerable number of men are unable to initiate and sustain healthy intimate relationships. The sociocultural context embedded in any given historical milieu considers the externalization of men's emotional and sexual experiences a taboo due to the lingering effects of traditional masculine gender scripting (Gilmore, 1990; Moerman, 1988). Ideally, postmodernism advocates androgyny and the equal valuing of the competitive masculine and the emotional feminine (Flax, 1990b; Harvey, 1989; Huyssen, 1990; Rosenau, 1992; Singer, 1972). In reality, though, a great deal of stigma still surrounds the emotional realm, especially when it comes to the experiences of men (Brody & Hall, 1993; Eagly, 1987; Fabes & Martin, 1991; Shields, 1991). As part of my formal educational molding as a researcher, I came to realize that personal issues could help create general awareness as well as help stimulate the generation of social scientific knowledge concerning neglected areas of study.

This account will ultimately explore the various links between the traditional, patriarchal, and considerably oppressive gender milieu—which I found myself subjected to as a young male growing up in the Greek-Cypriot culture of the 1970s and 1980s—with general issues pertaining to non-clinical male sexual anxiety (Aboud, 1987). In particular, I will use my autobiography as a mirror to reflect the oppressive gender and sexual narratives (Kleinman, 1988) that were structured in the prevailing patriarchal social arrangements, internalized by most men, and transmitted from one generation of boys to the next in the Greek-Cypriot culture for the past several decades. Such limiting and traumatic narratives continue to assume considerable importance in the agenda of early male childhood socialization—though to a lesser extent due to extensive modernization brought about by massive economic growth—and dominate the major cultural, economic, and religious institutions of the Greek-Cypriot society (McLaren, 1993a). The emerging theme will be gender discrimination and sexual oppression due to the widespread entrenchment of patriarchy (Lipman-Blumen, 1984; O'Donovan, 1993; Yllo & Straus, 1990). Using my early childhood socialization as a benchmark, I will proceed to describe how such traditional gender scripting and sexual oppression can lead to male sexual anxiety (Beck, Gayle, & Bozman, 1995; Buchbinder, 1998; Goodman, 1998). Finally, I will present evidence as to how sexual emancipation can be attained through the reconstruction process by re-narrating lifelong sexual scripts. Ultimately, this study will address the following research question,

“What contributes to male sexual anxiety and induces men with considerable emotional and psychological pain?”

Throughout this work, it is my intention to show how the socialized masculine ethic—and the internalization of its attendant essentialist masculine gender scripting—has affected men negatively by rendering them emotionally and psychologically vulnerable when dealing with issues of intimacy and connectedness. This internalization may render some men susceptible to developing what I refer to as non-clinical male sexual anxiety. Men’s vulnerability stems primarily from their relative inability to effectuate adequately healthy intimate relationships with their significant others. Eventually, this state of isolation, loneliness, and anxiety forces men to seek alternative avenues to fill their emotional and psychological void through, primarily, substance, object, and behavioral addictions (Goodman, 1998; Levant & Pollack, 1995). In doing so, I will use my early childhood and adolescent psychosexual autobiography (a micro perspective) as a window into the greater picture of unresolved essentialist male gender sexual issues and how such issues are linked to the overarching concept of male sexual anxiety. In particular, I intend to use my recollections of my early socialization experiences as a historico-socio-cultural benchmark to help illuminate the problematic aspects of men’s psycho-emotional and psychosexual lives, especially their struggles with intimacy and sexuality.

The explication of the etiology of my tribulations with traditional masculine socialization and male sexual anxiety will hopefully:

- Increase general awareness regarding the negative impact of such occurrences in men’s lives
- Help other men, who have been traumatized in a similar manner, gain enough emotional and psychological strength to externalize their trauma by bringing it to the forefront of their attention and personal agenda
- Unify the weak and sparsely dispersed voices (Devault, 1993; Giroux, 1988) of traumatized men by helping them form various awareness groups where the considerable sociocultural stigma surrounding these issues would be alleviated through mutual conversations and the exchange of social support.

Defining Male Sexual Anxiety

The purpose of this qualitative investigation is to shed some light into the etiology and ramifications of non-clinical male sexual anxiety. What makes the study of male sexual anxiety important and worthy of investigation is the consideration of the issue of sexual anxiety from a non-clinical point of view and its relatively common occurrence among the non-clinical population of men. The importance of such theme also lies in its origin as a historico-socio-cultural by-product of masculinity and existing patriarchal arrangements (Collier, 1995) and its considerable impact in the public and private lives of a considerable number of everyday men as well as powerful politicians and businessmen.

Non-Clinical Male Sexual Anxiety

In the current study, I introduce the term non-clinical male sexual anxiety, the primary theme of my research agenda, as the non-clinical counterpart of generalized anxiety disorder. DSM-IV defines generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) as the condition whereby there exists chronic, unfocused worrying about everything and anything in the person's life, accompanied by low-key chronic nervousness but without panic attacks (Morrison, 1995). Male sexual anxiety revolves around the constant preoccupation and worrying about sex and may even include symptoms resembling those found in GAD, such as:

- Feeling restlessness from constant sexual fantasizing and the haunting of sexual thoughts.
- Feeling considerable guilt for resorting to masturbation, sex with unattractive partners, paid sex, forcing oneself, or manipulating a partner into sex.
- Getting easily tired from expending considerable physical and mental energy in the pursuit of sex.
- Having trouble concentrating and/or sleeping as a result of being constantly preoccupied with sex.
- Being easily distracted from everyday sexual stimuli.
- Experiencing generalized irritability from not actualizing one's sexual desire.

I consider the term non-clinical male sexual anxiety as appropriate nomenclature for describing this kind of anxiety syndrome given that it does not fully abide by the symptomatology premises of DSM's diagnostic criteria. Even though non-clinical male sexual

anxiety may include symptoms found in GAD, they, nonetheless, are of a far weaker magnitude and extent of influence. An important difference between male sexual anxiety and GAD is that the former tends not to overtly interfere with men's everyday functioning and does not usually require hospitalization or medication. Instead, it refers to chronic, generalized, asymptomatic, anxiety that operates "as background noise" in men's lives and manifested in the form of uncontrolled desires and longings in the sexual realm.

Based on my personal experiences—growing up under the influence of heavily patriarchal gender arrangements—a considerable number of men experience male sexual anxiety to varying degrees depending on their developmental level and maturation stage. According to some of my personal relational experiences with male sexuality and intimacy issues, the underlying symptom of male sexual anxiety tends to be manifested as both a chronic physical desire for multiple partners and risky sex as well as a cognitive preoccupation and ideation with sex in general. In some men, male sexual anxiety may advance over and beyond the generalized physical sexual desire and ideation levels manifesting itself as a constant worry about sex that may be hard to control (Beck et al. 1995; Buchbinder, 1998; Goodman, 1998). Such sexual worrying has no objective basis but is fueled, instead, by a constant preoccupation—a constant yearning—to live up to the idealized and unattainable sociocultural standards of masculinity in a vain effort to satisfy one's need for intimacy. Male sexual anxiety may also come to bear a modest indirect influence in other areas of a person's interpersonal life including his relationships with his significant others and his workplace and daily functioning; not as much as generalized anxiety disorder or any other psychiatric disorder.

Since the majority of men find it difficult to externalize their innermost fears and desires—and even more difficult to openly discuss sexuality and intimacy issues with their significant others—it is not unusual for them to be silently suffering from male sexual anxiety from their early years without even personally coming to terms with the issue (Pleck, 1995; Thompson & Pleck, 1995). After all, the manifestations of male sexual anxiety tend to be so covert that most men are not even aware of them. Perhaps this is due to the considerable mystification of sex, the stigma surrounding the gendering of masculinity, and the fact that the degree of impairment in male sexual anxiety is usually not severe.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Four topics will be discussed in this chapter: (a) the historical, social, and cultural macro determinants of masculinity and male sexuality, (b) symbolic interactionist, developmental, and critical theories as they relate to masculinity and male sexuality, (c) the essentialist and postmodernist paradigms as they relate to the construction and deconstruction of male sexuality, gender, and economic exchange, (Cantor, 1988) and (d) the literature pertaining to male sexual anxiety and issues of codependency.

Historical, Social, and Cultural Determinants of Masculinity and Male Sexuality

Adopting a social constructionist viewpoint requires considering masculinity from a historical, social, and cultural perspective and defining it as an entity whose principles come to be socially constructed by the cultural milieu, communicated by the media, and instilled in the members of society—through a variety of socialization practices. These social actors, then, come to reformulate and custom-tailor its perspectives and experience them in a variety of unique interpersonal and intrapersonal ways (Collier, 1995; Di Leonardo, 1991). Indeed, such historico-socio-cultural masculine perspectives act as powerful overarching determinants or macro-level blueprints that determine a person's sexual scripting and ultimately help shape the mental, emotional, and interpersonal aspects, or micro-level constituencies, of his or her sexuality (see Figure 1) (Gagnon & Parker, 1995; Rosen & Leiblum, 1988). Sexual scripting refers to the macro-societal, meso-cultural, and micro-interpersonal processes involved in instilling the individual with the socioculturally approved and widely accepted sexual norms, values, attitudes, and beliefs popular at a specific historical time. In addition, it refers to the modeling of appropriate sexual behaviors that could be easily and readily emulated by the person.

Theoretical Framework: Symbolic Interactionist, Developmental, and Critical Theories

Male sexual anxiety is a direct manifestation of dysfunctional meanings associated with inadequate socialization into a masculine role. As a result of my earlier sociological training in the principles of symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969; Denzin, 1992; Hewitt, 2000; Joas, 1987; Plummer, 1991; Weigert, Teitge, & Teitge, 1986) I came to conclude that its basic premises—emphasizing the social construction of meanings and their subsequent internalization

and experiencing by the person—constitute appropriate and valid theoretical avenues to rely upon for constructing the theoretical basis of the present study.

Symbolic Interactionism: Masculine Meanings

Throughout the history of human civilization, cultural values, norms, rules attitudes, beliefs, ideologies, and behaviors have developed, passed-on, and altered giving rise to various dominant meaning contexts within which most sexual practices occur. Human sexual behavior acquires meaning and essence only within the social, cultural, and economic contexts and their transformations through time. For example, the evolution of heterosexual sexual ideology is tightly interwoven with the concept of masculinity which, in turn, results from the social and cultural evolution of norms, roles, rules, and practices advocating a strict adherence to a differentiated set of gender roles with the masculine ones being elevated to a far greater status than the feminine ones (Collier, 1995; Lipman-Blumen, 1984; White, 1993). Similarly, complex relations between meaning and power in the constitution of male sexual experience have become solidified within predominant masculine contexts. Such masculine meanings have emerged from power differentials among competing groups, which use their power to maintain institutionalized hierarchical relations thus imposing their value meanings and ideologies in all areas of human behavior including sexuality (Sprey, 1999).

Men act toward their physical, emotional, and psychological needs not blindly but on the basis of the personal subjective meanings of such needs; personalized masculine meanings are socially constructed and privately defined during the lifelong process of socialization, especially childhood socialization (Bruner, 1990; Handel, 1988). These subjective masculine meanings arise in the process of interpersonal interaction with a man's significant others and are subsequently handled in and modified through an interpretive process used by the man in dealing with his physical, emotional, and psychological needs. What is it, we may ask, about the construction of masculine meanings cross-culturally that contributes to the experiencing of male sexual anxiety and increases the likelihood of sexual addiction and relational abuse? What is it about the construction of gender role identities in general—and the structure of economic and social power relations in societies—that perpetuates male sexual anxiety?

Hise (1995) would respond that it is male conditioning not the condition of being male that appears to be the problem. Achieving the status of manhood is not an easy task, because it is

such an unattainable standard of ambiguities, misunderstandings, contradictions, and disappointments. The ideology of manhood induces men with a perpetual feeling of relative deprivation, inadequacy, depression, sexual anxiety, generalized aggression, and sexual addiction. Since the gendering of maleness is socially constructed, it must be actualized through action and sensation—by doing things that repeatedly affirm that one is really male while avoiding things that leave room for doubt. As social theorist John Stoltenberg (1989) observes:

Most people born with a penis between their legs grow up aspiring [and socialized] to feel and act unambiguously male, longing to belong to the sex that is male and daring not to belong to the sex that is not, and feeling this urgency for a visceral and constant verification of their male sexual identity--for a fleshy connection to manhood--as the driving force [and idealized purpose] of their life. The drive does not originate in the anatomy. The sensations derive from the idea [the subjective and idealized masculine meanings]. The ideas give the feelings social meaning; the idea determines which sensations shall be sought. (p. 31)

Essentialist masculine ideology rests on the idea that a man behaves in a certain way because he has to prove his masculinity. This ideological belief has enormous emotional and sociocultural ramifications. But why do men seem to constantly feel the need to prove their masculinity? Men need to prove their manhood for two reasons. First, they have been socialized to believe that their masculinity is something achieved, and not ascribed, and therefore has to be continually maintained and enhanced through the externalization of masculine behaviors (Collier, 1995). Second, their masculine nature, by definition, can never be fully established as women's femininity due to the enormous importance accorded to it (Levant & Pollack, 1995).

Male sexual identities refer to the self-meanings that are embedded in the masculine role. Within the role of manhood, it is imperative for the young boy, teenager, or adult male to construct his identity as a particular, distinct, fully masculinized male. The masculine identity assumes considerable salience in the socioemotional development of any male. Variations do occur on an individual basis, such that the greater the identification with an idealized masculine identity, the more motivated the individual will be to perform and excel in masculine role-related behaviors. This may facilitate his falling prey to feelings of masculine inadequacy leading to

male sexual anxiety, sexual addiction, and relational abuse (see Figure 1) (LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993).

Research indicates that the salience of an identity is influenced by a person's commitments, defined as the cost of giving up a social relationship, line of action, or an identity (Burke & Reitzes, 1991; Serpe, 1987). In examining the salience of a masculine identity and commitment to the ethic of masculinity, a symbolic interactionist would ask the following question: How do men's commitments to the overarching sociocultural masculine ethos affect the salience of their masculine identities and the nature, extent, and quality of their male gender performances? A symbolic interactionist would then suggest that any deviation from the sociocultural masculine prescriptions and proscriptions would be illusory because most men, from an early age, come to subscribe to masculine standards which then become routine parts of their identity and an integral part of their self-esteem; their entire value system becomes defined in terms of masculine behaviors.

As to why men still subscribe to traditional masculine standards in the face of rapid sociocultural changes advocating for androgynous behaviors, a symbolic interactionist would answer that by pointing us to the enormous influence of the larger prevailing sociocultural context of masculinity and the considerable privilege attached to it. The plethora of benefits and outcomes associated with assuming the masculine identity are mediated by self-standards that are individually tailored by all men in the process of fine tuning the salience level of their masculine identity, as well as by self-limitations, and various faults in masculine socialization (LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993).

Ultimately, a symbolic interactionist would want to know why men have more to lose if they abandon the traditional masculine ethos or diminish its importance in the way it influences their everyday lives. First, many men are uncomfortable with the idea of allowing feelings to assume greater importance in their lives out of fear that they will have to abandon the traditional masculine ideals of strength, perseverance, power, control, getting things done, etc. What they fail to realize, however, is that androgyny (Francoeur & Hendrixson, 1999; Singer, 1972) is a combination of the best that masculinity and femininity have to offer. Both men and women can be strong and powerful while simultaneously maintaining their capacity to feel vulnerable and to accept comfort and help. Second, many men refrain from introducing any significant changes in

their lives out of fear that other men—their employers, closest friends, and relatives—who are still abiding by the traditional masculine standards, will no longer respect, associate, or even view them the same way anymore (Hite, 1981).

The Development of Masculinity

When boys enter adolescence, they are faced with the arduous task of assuming and effectively adopting the sociocultural masculine meanings that are embedded in their surrounding micro and macro environments. This constitutes a crucial turning point in the boys' lives since the success of their adopting the prevailing masculine ethos will determine many of their life chances and successes, both in the personal arena of intimate relationships and the public arena of business competition and market relations.

The developmental event of turning adolescent boys to young men is a process inherent in which is: “the implication that there will be qualitative different normative expectations in the role content of [personal and] family relationships as a result of the event” (Rodgers & White, 1993, p.238). For example, when a male adolescent turns 18 in the Greek-Cypriot society (his birthday signifying the event), there are government and military institutional laws that require the adolescent to enter the military for the duration of 26 months. This is a mandatory draft and no one is exempted except boys with a physical or mental disability or those whose fathers died during the 1974 war. The military culture is an extremely masculine oriented culture and for the young rookie, the real battle is to be fought in the battlefield of masculinity, especially during basic training. Upon entering boot camp, there exist strict military training institutional laws and norms that significantly alter the personal and interpersonal lifestyle of the rookie, from matters of personal demeanor to the role content of his interpersonal relationships—between him and his family, friends, relatives, and all his significant others. He is no longer allowed to live in any private dwelling but is forced, instead, to reside in military barracks, wake-up and go to bed at specified hours, wear uniform, and perform all duties assigned to him by his superiors. In addition, his family and friends have limited visitation hours and he is only allowed to visit them once or twice a month.

The adolescent boy's 18th birthday constitutes a timing norm for the Greek-Cypriot society. When the boy turns 18, particular events (such as entering the military and undergoing basic training) and accomplishments (such as successfully completing his military duty) are

expected to occur, behaviorally processed, and successfully completed by the young male adult. Both the personal time event of an adolescent's 18th birthday and the institutional military mandatory draft event of having to enter the military and undergo boot camp training soon thereafter, constitute events of developmental significance since they mark a transition between two stages containing qualitatively different norms in the adolescent's life. These developmental events are transition life markers in the adolescent's life because they signify the exiting from his previous childlike and adolescent-like personal and interpersonal relationships—characterized by protectiveness, closeness, and interconnectedness—and his entering into a different set of institutional/military highly masculinized relationships—characterized by impersonality, emotional distancing, competition, obedience, and toughness.

Rodgers and White (1993) introduce the concept of developmental stage dependency to show the normative sequencing of transitional events in a person's life: "First, there is the normative component of what a given stage implies about the event that follows and about the stage that will follow the event; that is, the *sequence* of stages and events" (p. 240). The mandatory drafting of all adolescent boys that turn 18 in Greek-Cypriot society involves both normative sequences and transitional events. Therefore, such drafting is developmental in nature because there is a specified normative order to the sequence of stages and events. First comes the adolescent boy's 18th birthday, then comes his mandatory drafting, then comes basic boot camp training, and finally comes the completion of the duration of the draft stage (26 months) and the issuing of a certification signifying the release of the young man from all his military obligations to the state.

The Rite of Passage into the Masculine Culture

From a micro family systems perspective (Kerr & Bowen, 1988; Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993), young boys get inducted into the world of masculinity and maintain their masculinized status through a continuous group activity subject to the constant supervision and scrutiny in the young man's immediate social environment (Pittman, 1993). The masculinity process begins with a series of rites of passage headed by the father (or any other predominant father figure in the son's life) who is responsible for indoctrinating and socializing his son in the intricacies of the machismo culture. For this reason, manhood is considered to be the most important developmental transition in many cultures and many societies around the world have

developed elaborate rituals and rites of passage to signify the entrance of young boys into the esteemed stage of manhood. Even though the particulars of every culture's ritualization process of manhood vary, common underlying determinants include the testing of the boy's courage, physical and mental endurance, aptitude and skill. They all share the underlying premise that real men are made, not born. This premise regarding the achieved nature of masculinity tends to generate considerable insecurity for most men since they are continually pressured to yield to it in their school, work, recreational, and relational lives. Such pressures are exerted both directly, by their circle of significant others, and indirectly, by the surrounding historico-socio-cultural environment advocating masculinity as the ultimate ideal to be attained at all costs, pains, and sacrifices.

Attaining such a highly unrealistic and idealized masculine standard can never be completely or adequately actualized without exerting extraordinary efforts and sacrificing one's emotional and psychological tranquillity. Soon after young boys successfully complete the various rites of passage imposed on them—and become transformed into masculinized males—they start to face a variety of problems due to the emotionally constricted masculine standard. They soon come to realize that the popularity, glamour, and power of the masculine world has a price attached to it. As most adult men very well know, becoming emasculated marks the beginning of a great deal of emotional pain, frustration, and humiliation and possibly the development at varying degrees of sexual anxiety and addictions of all kinds (Heise, 1995; Lancaster, 1995).

Critical Theory: Economic and Power Perspectives

The affordance of privileges to a selected male elite has been predicated upon the domination and subordination of working men and women using sexuality as the major vehicle (Burr, 1995; Sprey, 1979). For this reason, restricted, or missionary style heterosexuality constituted the norm, advocated as the one and only sexual style. Such style was elevated to the status of an absolute, divine, and transcendental law of nature at the expense of other sexual practices and orientations (Lancaster, 1995). Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the origin and perpetuation of core societal institutions rests upon the exercise of power and dominance for the sake of elitism. Such elitism, has as its main focus the unequal distribution of goods and services and, subsequently, the benefiting of the few and under benefiting of the many (Kellner,

1989; Poster, 1989). Under these circumstances, restricted male heterosexual behavior provides a viable avenue for the exercise of domination, subordination, and oppression, and, ultimately, for the exploitation of other marginalized groups (Zalduondo & Bernard, 1995).

Upon deconstructing traditional notions of male sexuality, which have viewed it as an inherently universal, heterosexual, natural, and automatic desire, a number of questions usually arise. Gagnon and Parker (1995) pose the following questions: “How is [male] sexuality in general, and sexual desire in particular, affected by greater social and economic inequality? How is this desire dissipated and crystallized through the channels of inequality?” (p. 127). Gender inequality has a lot to do with power dynamics and is closely associated with economic inequality, revolving around unequal access to the means of economic production (Hare-Mustin, 1991; Lipman-Blumen, 1984). The inextricable linkages between these two kinds of inequalities constitute the main social factors responsible for the shaping and construction of a biased male sexual identity and limiting and anxiety-producing male sexual behaviors (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994).

Patriarchy and Male Sexuality

The history of Western civilization has been one characterized by a continual struggle for access to goods and services, as well as struggle for ethnic, racial, and gender equality and superiority. The driving forces behind such competition have constructed complex, large-scale social, political, familial, religious, and economic patriarchal institutions of exploitation and super-ordination (O’Donovan, 1993; Yllo & Straus, 1990). Throughout the centuries-old history of human civilization, various organized institutional structures have evolved to differentially serve the needs of individuals, with the result that some received material and power privileges at the expense of others. For example, religion has served the needs of religious leaders, polity has served the needs of political leaders, and economy has served the needs of male financiers. Such patriarchal institutional arrangements afford considerable power, advantages, and privileges to men, who, in turn, tend to unite and organize themselves as a group to perpetuate these benefits (O’Donovan, 1993; Yllo & Straus, 1990). While in the public sphere most men enjoy economic and occupational advantages, in the domestic sphere, they tend to be excused from the most mundane, time-consuming, and generally least pleasant housework and childcare tasks. Therefore, in a mutually reinforcing and self-sustaining cycle, male power and privilege is

constantly being re-created and sustained as occupational advantages give men the economic and social power to avoid domestic work, while at the same time, avoidance of such work gives them advantages in a competitive marketplace (Gerson, 1993).

The patriarchal affordance of male privilege in all areas of public and private life have led to the rise of stakeholders who: “seek to influence what we do when we are alone with our sexual partners, as well as to influence which partners we choose” (Gagnon & Parker, 1995, p. 15). Such stakeholders tend to: (a) embed male sexuality in the various intra- and inter-structural dynamic interplays that take place within large-scale patriarchal institutional systems, (b) place it in the context of everyday sociocultural relations, and (c) sift the whole spectrum of male sexual experiences, beliefs, and practices, legitimizing only those that perpetuate male advantage (irrespective of the potentially negative consequences in men’s physical and mental health) while downplaying or denigrating others that promote egalitarianism and take away the power component of human sexual relations. Therefore, male sexuality is not an *a priori* type of sexuality, that is, it is not created by a vacuum nor is it operating in a vacuum. Instead, it is recursively interacting with societal institutions in a systemic manner (Keeney, 1983; Watzlawick, 1984). As Baber and Murray (2001) suggest:

Rather than seeing sexuality as a purely natural phenomenon characterized by fixed, inherent drives that are essentially different for men and women, sexuality is seen to be constructed in relation to, and in interaction with, historically and culturally variable social practices [that is, institutional structures] like religion, education, and medicine (J. Harding, 1998). Conceptualizations of sexuality are believed to reflect social relations regarding gender, ethnicity, and class and to be culturally managed through the ways we talk, think, and practice. (p. 24)

Alienation, Market Economy, and Sexuality

According to Mustackas (1961) one of the most fundamental characteristics of Western-style socialization is its emphasis on independence and autonomy for the pursuit of status and power. A capitalized market economy necessitates the raising of individuals who are capable of (a) conforming to the rules of the capitalistic game, (b) conforming to alternative rules when breaking the standardized rules, and (c) following predetermined business-like directives when

conducting social and individual transactions (Kagitcibasi, 1994; Kim, 1994). In general, capitalism requires men who are almost identical replicas of one another (in both private i.e., sexual, and business matters) and who are alienated from their interpersonal and intrapersonal realms. As an example, consider the similarity of lifestyles found among the typical White middle class suburban families of the 1950s (Coontz, 1992).

Marx and Engels (Parsons, 1977) had noted, long ago, that the rise of the modern capitalist state would eventually result in self-alienation and rejection, which would dominate all areas of human affairs, including sexuality:

Owing to the ever more extended use of machinery and the division of labor, the work [in both private and business affairs] of these proletarians [the ordinary people from the working and middle classes] has completely lost its individual character and therewith has forfeited all its charm for the workers [hence, *alienation*]. The worker has become a mere appendage to a machine; a person from whom nothing but the simplest, the most monotonous, and the most easily learned manipulations are expected [such are the causes of *alienation*]. (Cosser & Rosenberg, 1982, p.556)

Alienation and the Interpersonal Perspective: Self-Fragmentation

This alienation from the means of economic production is not restricted to the business world of the market economy but has spilled over into men's private world of individual affairs. It is the kind of self-alienation that is responsible for loneliness anxiety (Schnarch, 1991). Self-fragmentation is a common theme in the course of contemporary everyday life. A typical male has to be able to swiftly 'take off the hat' of a worker, mentor, or responsible citizen, and 'put on the hat' of a husband, brother, parent, or lover. As Goffman (1959) states:

It is probably no mere historical accident that the word person, in its first meaning, is a *mask*. It is rather a recognition of the fact that everyone is always and everywhere [in all kinds of individual affairs], more or less consciously, playing a *role* . . . it is these *roles* that [cause ourselves to become *fragmented* and *alienated*.] (Goffman, 1959, p. 19) [italics added]

As a result of self-fragmentation, men tend to become increasingly pretentious, thereby alienating themselves from their surrounding social and physical environment, and, most of all, alienating themselves from their core-selves (from who they really are). Amidst an alienated capitalized market economy, ordinary men tend to become increasingly obsessed with safety, order, prediction, control, and, above all, the acquisition of power and status all of which are considered to be the hallmarks of Western capitalism (Mustachas, 1961). Eventually a point is reached where the detection of even the slightest form of loneliness anxiety is immediately categorized and labeled as dysfunctional and even pathological. First, by one's closest kin, then, by the health care professionals, and finally, by the person who internalizes the label regarding his/her anxiety as something inherently wrong (Schnarch, 1991).

Under these conditions of intense alienation, it is no wonder that men feel incapable of getting in touch with their basic inner feelings, desires, and fears (Gergen, 1991). As a result, the point is eventually reached whereby they find themselves unable to deal with the intensity and intimacy of full-scale eroticism (Smith, 1996). Since most men expend their time and energy—during the course of their everyday lives—in work, business, and professional affairs, they tend to face considerable difficulties in achieving and maintaining intense, anxiety-free sexual intimacy with their partners. After all, this is the kind of intimacy that is predicated upon the self-disclosing of the true core aspects of a man's self, requiring that he has a solid self instead of a pseudo-alienated and fragmented self (Gergen, 1991). Achieving this kind of intense substantive interpersonal intimacy is necessary if he is to be able to validate his core sense of self in the face of adversity, such as generalized overt or covert negative feedback from his significant others, or relative deprivation by comparison with others (Schnarch, 1991).

As a result of Western men's lifelong socialization in an alienating capitalistic market economy they—as individual actors performing in the stage of everyday life—tend to: (a) develop a certain degree of intolerance for any kind of unpredictability and ambivalence surrounding their personal and business affairs, (b) experience a general inability or unwillingness to enact and adopt an intensely intimate and self-disclosing erotic script with their female partners, and (c) fail to maintain a genuine sense of self in the face of receiving discordant messages from such partners (Schnarch, 1991). This general inability of men to full-

scale intimacy and eroticism paves the road to the inducement and experiencing of considerable sexual anxiety.

Alienation and the Ecosystemic Perspective

According to Bronfenbrenner's theory of human development, an individual's environment acts like: "a set of nested structures, each inside the next, like a set of Russian dolls" (Buboltz & Sontag, 1993, p. 423). The family constitutes the most elemental group of human interactional exchange, known as the micro-system. The family microsystem interacts directly with the meso-system, such as schools or day-care settings, and indirectly with external environments constituting the exo-system, such as work settings and kin networks. Finally, all three systems are embedded in the overarching social structural system known as the macro-system, comprised of the community, legal, and economic systems, whose broad ideological values, norms, and institutional patterns make up the blueprints for the culture's ecology of human development (see Figure 1) (Buboltz & Sontag, 1993).

Because the economic macro-system is based on an alienating, capitalistic, market economy, and all systems that make up the greater environment in which human development occurs are ecosystemically and highly interrelated, such an economy will negatively influence the man's familial microsystem. As a result, the various interactional patterns operating within such a system, especially those having to do with issues of communication and intimacy between him and his partners, will be rendered highly ineffectual, distant, and, at times, pathological. At the individual level, such negative influences translate into feelings of misery vs. happiness, general dissatisfaction vs. satisfaction, and, above all, anxiety vs. peace of mind thereby lowering his quality of life (Buboltz & Sontag, 1993). Clearly, male sexuality is an area that is relegated to the intra- and interpersonal microsystem and constitutes an important determinant of a man's quality of life. The intra-personal and interpersonal aspects of male sexuality are considerably affected by the enclosing ecosystems—meso-, exo-, and macro-systems—particularly, the ever present and changing historical, social, and cultural macro-systems.

Human Sexuality: Essentialist and Postmodernist Paradigms

Contemporary men seem to be quite ambivalent, utterly confused, and even nervous when it comes to thinking about, discussing, or practicing their sexuality in the context of a loving intimate relationship. They seem to be walking a thin line between essentialism and

postmodernism (Harvey, 1989; Zilbergeld, 1992). While essentialism presupposes a clear-cut division of gender roles and identities and advocates the assuming of a masculine identity in males at an early age as an absolute must—elevating it to a superior status in the social hierarchy (Lipman-Blumen, 1984)—postmodernism stresses the importance of egalitarianism in human relationships (Flax, 1990b; Harvey, 1989; Seidman & Wagner, 1992). Postmodernist ideology moves away from differentially calibrating gender and extricates itself from essentialist notions of differentiated and preferred male vs. female ways of being and acting, advocating, instead, a human way of being and acting (Hare-Mustin & Marecek, 1988; White, 1996a).

At the core of male essentialist ideology lays the notion that what is socially created is inextricably linked to the natural order of things and consequently immutable (Klein & Jurich, 1993; Thomas & Wilcox, 1987; White, 1996b). From an essentialist perspective, male heterosexual sexual relations are accorded considerable importance and considered as inherently natural, biologically determined, and heavenly ordained; male biology is sexual destiny (Filsinger, 1988; Troost & Filsinger, 1993). Elevating male sexuality to the highest echelons of the social hierarchy, lays the foundations for male relative sexual deprivation, performance anxiety, and generalized male sexual anxiety. On the contrary, postmodern social constructionist notions (Harvey, 1989) tend to move away from modernist assumptions of male essentialist sexual ideology and advocate for placing male sexuality within the historical, social, and cultural complexity and contextual totality of the human sexual experience as it is exemplified in the personal sexual narrative (Di Leonardo, 1991; McLaren, 1993a; Weeks, 1995). Evaluating, understanding, and respecting every man's personal storying (Heron, 1992) of his sexual life is the first step in unraveling the mystery, complexity, and contextual totality of his sexual experiences (Ellis & Flaherty, 1992).

The social constructionist perspective, as applied to human sexuality, breaks down the gendered construction of sexual behaviors, orientations, and identities into the basic constituent elements found in the ever-present historical, social, and cultural, contexts (Di Leonardo, 1991; Hare-Mustin & Marecek, 1990; Osmond & Thorne, 1993). As a theoretical paradigm, it constitutes a more humanistic way of approaching issues related to sexuality and gender in the sense that it considers the sexual actions of specific bodies within the greater historical, social, and cultural contexts in which they occur (Gagnon & Parker, 1995). These forces create

particular kinds of environments, which, in turn, socially condition and direct individuals to certain kinds of sexual, ethical, moral, political, and economic actions.

The Essentialist Construction of Gender

According to essentialist, traditional ideologies, the construction of male gender requires one's molding into a masculine role which presupposes autonomy, competition, and aggressiveness, and the suppression of the innate human needs for connectedness, intimacy, and self-disclosure (traditionally devalued as feminine traits) (Gagne & Tewksbury, 1998; Osmond & Thorne, 1993; White, 1993; White, 1996b). Alternatively, postmodern ideologies (Huysen, 1990; Rosenau, 1992) call for the deconstruction of traditional notions of male sexuality and the reconstruction of a balanced androgynous ideology emphasizing the historical, social, and cultural determinants of sexuality and cherishing both masculine and feminine traits (Cantor, 1988; Connor, 1989; Hare-Mustin & Marecek, 1988, 1990; Harvey, 1989; Reinisch, Rosenblum, & Sanders, 1987). The historical, social, and cultural perspective may be viewed as an overarching umbrella encompassing economic and power issues, such as inequality and alienation, as well as issues relating to gender, sexual orientation, age, physical ability, race, and social stratification (Gagnon & Parker, 1995; Weeks, 1995). The reconstruction process is primarily achieved by re-narrating one's lifelong sexual narrative; a dysfunctional and oppressive narrative (Kleinman, 1988) that helped keep the person sexually, emotionally, and psychologically suppressed, a chained prisoner of dysfunctional and limiting age-old prescriptions and proscriptions.

In general, functionalist notions—on which essentialist ideology is based which allows false dichotomies—advocate the distribution of different functions, with different status, to different people, such as male vs. female, heterosexual vs. homosexual, adult vs. child, rich vs. poor, black vs. white, national vs. foreign, (Kingsbury & Scanzoni, 1993; Smith, 1996). Under the rubric of functionalist and traditionalist notions of sexuality, sexual relations, just like economic relations, become socially constructed, patterned, and entrenched in the structural pillars of social institutions, in such a way that they fuse with society and become indistinguishable from it. This structuring of sexual relations causes the predominant and accepted forms of sexuality (heterosexuality) to assume the status of absolute truths (White, 1993). According to Hare-Mustin and Marecek (1988, 1990) and Smith (1996) under these

circumstances, gender sexual differences are exacerbated, referred to as alpha bias, and alternative forms of sexuality, such as homosexuality and bisexuality are relegated as secondary, inconsequential, and most of all, unwanted. For this reason, modern sexologists, advocating the functionalist perspective (Kingsbury & Scanzoni, 1993) consider the existence of biological and anatomical differences between males and females as being of paramount importance and ultimately responsible for their different sexual behaviors and experiences (Robinson, 1976). As a result, they have utilized these conceptions to conduct sexual research and theorizing based on the white male heterosexual experience, the standard against which all other sexual experiences are to be judged (Gagnon & Parker, 1995; White, 1993).

Alpha bias characterizes women as having inherently different natures and predispositions based on their so-called essentially different social, psychological, and biological constitution (Hare-Mustin, 1991; Hare-Mustin & Marecek, 1988; Smith, 1996). Alpha bias falls in accord with the limiting traditionalist and essentialist arguments of gender role ideology. On the contrary, beta bias refers to the tendency or inclination to downplay or overlook male and female differences. Of the two, alpha bias is particularly problematic since it tends to relegate women to the status of secondary human beings, based on their alleged inferior physical and psychological make-up (Baber & Allen, 1992). At the same time, men, by virtue of their gender, are viewed as possessing naturally superior qualities, especially the ones that lead to success in the workplace, such as independence, autonomy, competition, and aggressiveness (Lipman-Blumen, 1984; Smith, 1996). Alpha bias tends to also predispose men to developing all kinds of socioemotional and psychosexual problems. The polarization of gender differences that is celebrated by such a bias tends to leave men incapable of adequately developing vital personality and character traits, namely connectedness, bondedness, intimacy, and self-disclosure (Sattel, 1992). Such traits could be employed, and may prove invaluable tools, for those men attempting to counteract feelings of existential loneliness, anxiety, depression, and antisocial behavior; feelings that usually ravage the psychological and emotional tranquillity of most men (McLean, 1996; Real, 1997).

Although beta bias minimizes gender differences and apparently treats women and men as gender neutral human beings, it, too, is problematic in the sense that some differences between women and men do exist and they do make a difference in everyday life. Eliminating such

differences tends to ignore the special needs of women as a powerless and oppressed group—in terms of covert and overt access to equal opportunities and equal reward for equal or comparative work—living under the premises of an exploitative, capitalistic, patriarchal system. Similarly, abiding by the premises set forth by such a biased perspective tends to obscure the special needs of men for bondedness, connectedness, self-disclosure and, above all, intimacy (Baber & Allen, 1992).

Private and Public Domains of Gender

The accordance of preferential status to the male gender has come about as a result of sweeping economic changes of the industrial revolution (Lipman-Blumen, 1984). These changes have relegated women to the undervalued domestic, private domain and men to the considerably more valued paid occupational, public domain (Coontz, 1992). As the economic organization of production shifted from barter exchange (pre-industrial era) to earning wages (industrial era), the privileged bread-winning male role—as actual behavior and a cherished ideal for young men to aspire to—was constructed through considerable political struggle. In their initial attempts to improve their bargaining power with employers and their leverage over women, male wageworkers colluded with their employers to help create occupational sex segregation. At the same time, women who could afford to stay home preferred to do so in light of the poor working conditions that characterized the public workplace, as well as the considerable difficulty they faced trying to balance home- and child-care needs with those of paid work (Gerson, 1993).

The public man, private woman dichotomy has further exacerbated the emotional isolation of men from others as many men found themselves working long hours outside the home. This has increasingly led to their experiencing emotional cut-off from their significant others thus rendering their skills of intimacy and interconnectedness weak and ineffective. The average worker, in an industrial and post-industrial large-scale capitalistic system, has little control over the everyday work processes that he is subjected. As a result, he oftentimes finds himself in closely supervised and highly routinized jobs with a great deal of meaninglessness and very little substantive complexity and self-direction (Kohn, 1983).

These alienating occupational experiential conditions may prove hazardous to men's emotional and psychological lives as they tend to easily carryover to men's non-occupational realms of private social life. As a result, the lower the opportunities for men's occupational self-

direction, the greater the likelihood of their experiencing feelings of powerlessness, self-estrangement, and even normlessness (Kohn, 1983). Even though most men usually develop strong friendships in and out of the workplace with other men, they tend to find themselves at a disadvantaged position when it comes to initiating and maintaining strong and genuine intimate bonds with others. This is because in the northern European and American cultures, male-male friendships are still subjected to considerable scrutiny by the social propagators of masculine control—such as parents, teachers, peers, media personalities, and other male role models. The historico-socio-cultural environment of masculinity has a very strong taboo against affectionate male physical contact, even in typical, natural, everyday moves and greetings (Hite, 1981). Under these conditions of limited male-male physical contact—and a host of other prescriptions and proscriptions regarding appropriate emotional demeanor—it would be difficult, if not impossible, for male-male friendships to develop into consistent and emotionally close bonds. Instead, they become emotionally shallow and casual in nature and fail to constitute viable training grounds for developing men's skills for intimacy and connectedness (Giddens, 1992).

Gender Deconstruction: Postmodern Feminist Ideology

An alternative approach to alpha and beta bias is to eliminate the categorization of male and female altogether (Kipnis, 1988; Lather, 1991). This could be achieved by first deconstructing gender (Derrida, 1976; Scott, 1991). The latter refers to the dismantling of the prevailing gender category with its attendant male and female differences. The purpose of doing this is to unmask the hidden meanings that give rise to the power dynamics of interest embedded in the specific historical, social, and cultural contexts that came to socially construct it in the first place (Baber & Allen, 1992; Bruner, 1990; Lorber & Farrell, 1991).

Deconstructing gender (Cantor, 1988; Spretnak, 1992) to its bare constituents is consistent with postmodernist gender-role ideology (Hare-Mustin & Marecek, 1988; Harvey, 1989; Scott, 1990). According to such an ideology, within-gender differences are considered to be equally valid, if not more so, than between-gender differences, which come to constitute the essentialist binary oppositions between males and females. Even though essentialist gender-role ideology, at its extreme, relegates men to the status of cold, calculative, unemotional, inexpressive, competitors and workaholics, a great deal of men are considerably sensitive and quite vulnerable to the emotional trappings of their surrounding social environment (Real, 1997).

Most men spend a great deal of their emotional and psychological energy putting up fronts and fervently maintaining acts of strength, bravery, and competitiveness necessitated by their socially constructed and constricted male gender role (Thompson & Pleck, 1995). They are, however, internally dying a silent and slow death in the chaos brought about by their own isolation and longing for emotional bonding (McLean, 1996). The evolution of postmodernist feminist ideology (Huysen, 1990; Rosenau, 1992) has indirectly empowered men to reclaim their long lost emotional selves and reconstruct their gender roles to custom-fit their circumstances in previously unimagined ways.

Sexuality: Gender, Masculinity, and Economic Exchange

Human sexuality plays an important role in an individual's micro-systemic functioning that it oftentimes comes to dominate important constituencies, such as gender, age, economic exchange, and race. Sexuality becomes the overarching umbrella within which such constituencies are defined and organized. The following section attempts to delineate the processes through which human sexuality comes to affect such constituencies.

A widely spread set of gender "shoulds" exist as boys enter adolescence. These involve independence, competitiveness, self-sufficiency, and resistance to the influence of other boys (Maccoby, 1990). Pressures to abide by these masculine shoulds come from schools, family, music, magazines, advertisements, and media. At the same time, contemporary society provides men with an abundance of "shoulds" and "should nots" about their sexuality (Francoeur, Koch, & Weis, 1998). For example, common shoulds (Francoeur, 1996) include the implicit assumptions that: (a) all men should want sex, (b) all men should desire to have sex with as many physically attractive women as possible, (c) they should regard sex as the ultimate form of physical pleasure as well as one of the most important avenues for attaining psychological and emotional fulfillment, (d) sex should take place within the context of intercourse, and (e) sex should involve hard erections and orgasmic ejaculations. At the same time, society provides men with minimum, if any, guidance for seeking constructive education and positive experiences to facilitate the attainment of such commonly accepted shoulds in a healthy way. Few men have a history and the kind of interpersonal experiences that would lead them to seek sexual, psychological, and emotional well being out of positive motivations. That is, out of the motivation to attain intimacy for its own sake—thereby compensating for feelings of personal

inadequacy and resulting in better interpersonal relationships—and not through sex (Schnarch, 1991).

Men's emotional starvation significantly increases the appeal of the physical aspect of sex as an alternative for attempting to attain true intimacy. This preoccupation with the physical aspect of sexual relations signifies the beginning of the objectification and glorification of the sexual act as the only available arena for men to exercise and prove their intimacy skills to their female partners and to other human beings in general (Walsh, 1991). With such considerable importance placed on male sexuality—as the only means of achieving the ultimate end of proving a man's intimate capabilities thereby completing him as a human being—there also comes a host of issues and challenges for the average working man. Unfortunately, with no socially approved rules to guide men through the maze of the emotional realm, most of them, underestimating the complexities inherent in the workings of intimacy, try to replicate the sociocultural prescriptions and proscriptions of their rigorous working class ethic in their sexual realm. The transposition of the machismo working-class ethic into the interpersonal realm signifies the evolution of a violent, demanding, competitive, risky, and emotionally void male sexual ethic. This transposition tends to have dire consequences for most men, such as sexual violence against women, children, and other men, the frustrations and humiliations of sexual addictions, deviant behaviors, and affairs, and the continual tribulations of male sexual anxiety (Weinrich, 1987).

Sexuality and Gender

Sexuality and gender are strongly linked (Rutter & Schwartz, 1998). Traditional gender-role socialization requires that boys be nurtured to become dominant, goal-oriented, independent, and aggressive traits, which ultimately come to define the masculine role (Gilmore, 1990; Gross, 1992; Pittman, 1993; Real, 1997). At the same time, girls are socialized to embrace the feminine role requiring submissiveness, interdependence, interconnectedness, and emotional expressiveness. In general, they are told to put their goals and needs secondary to those of their husbands, boyfriends, fathers, brothers, and other male friends and relatives (Pipher, 1994; Thompson, 1995). As a result of such differential and preferential gender-role socialization an essentialist ideological framework of sexuality has developed based on an unrealistic high standard of male sexual performance and satisfaction (Gagnon & Parker, 1995).

This framework signifies the beginning of the heterosexual act between males and females with male erection, and its end, with ejaculation (Masters, Johnson, & Kolodny, 1988). Sexual satisfaction is defined solely in terms of the frequency of male ejaculations with very little importance paid to female orgasms. Even though an increasing number of young children are raised androgynously, in an environment whereby both male and female gender-role attitudinal characteristics are equally cherished, most of them continue to be conditioned by traditional societal gender roles, attitudes, and beliefs.

The essentialist male gender-role status quo tends to impact on the interrelationship between sexuality and gender in such a way as to alienate males from their interpersonal surroundings by equating maleness with competition, autonomy, and occupational success (Gilmore, 1990; Gross, 1992; Pittman, 1993; Real, 1997). Under the premises of such status quo, the successful and competent male comes to be measured with the yardstick of power and material acquisition with such evaluative criteria carrying over into the area of heterosexual sexuality (Gross, 1992). When it comes to sexuality issues, the essentialist perspective places males in a double bind and in diametrically opposed positions to females. For females, the sexual encounter becomes emotionally laden and tends to have interpersonal overtures. For males, sex becomes an act of power, dominance, a cathartic process for the release of deeply seated aggressive feelings, or a placebo for the attainment of real emotional intimacy and connectedness (Gross, 1992; Zilbergeld, 1992). Because the arena of male sexuality becomes a competitive arena for sexual virility, prowess, and dominance, male sexual anxiety abounds.

The imprinting of an aggressive power laden sexual orientation leaves a considerable number of males—who are unable or unwilling to live up to the unattainable perfectionist masculine standards of optimal sexual performance—with a perpetual, uncomfortable and empty feeling of generalized male sexual anxiety. At the heart of such anxiety, are feelings of sexual inadequacy, dissatisfaction, and possibly even impotence (from anticipatory anxiety of sexual performance) (McLean, 1996; Pittman, 1993; Real, 1997). As an example, consider the male partner of a middle-aged marital couple who have been caring, loving, and emotionally intimate for an extended period of time. It is not unusual for such a partner to seek extramarital sexual contact—by having a mistress, frequenting bars and looking for one-night stands, or paying for sex—with a younger more sexually attractive and uninhibited woman in an effort to re-boost his

masculine performance and prove to himself and others that he is still *the man* (McAdams, 1988).

What these men so desperately desire is a re-affirmation of their masculinity. The richness and depth of their emotional intimacy and interconnectedness with their long-time marital partners has gradually weakened the capacity of their sexual contacts as viable sources for exercising and proving their masculinity. In other words, their bedroom is no longer an arena for the exercise of male power, dominance, and competition; it is no longer a tool for their masculine reaffirmations. Sexual contact with their partners has become so devoid of masculine, sexually-aggressive overtures that it has been transformed to something feminine characterized by weakness, unassertiveness, and inferiority (Pittman, 1989,1990). In an effort to regain what they once had but no longer do, they embark in this journey of sexual escapades hoping to regain some of their long-lost masculine status through the temporary thrills and spills of episodic sexual encounters (Atwater, 1982). Why else do so many husbands cheat on their beloved long-time marital partners, abandon, or divorce them? Why else do so many well-educated, well-to-do politicians, judges, doctors, lawyers, and businessmen risk their stable, loving homes for the thrill and kill of the sexual game? As evidence, consider the sexual scandals of the most powerful of men, such as presidents, politicians, prominent businessmen, and judges who end up in the front page of national and international newspapers, and in all sorts of legal, personal, and ethical troubles, trying to quench their insatiable sexual thirst in their erroneous quest of reducing or eliminating their sexual anxiety.

Essentialist sexual scripting (Gagnon, 1990; Rosen & Leiblum, 1988) is responsible for imparting considerable sexual anxiety to all those great many men who endlessly pursue the idealized, unrealistic, and erroneous masculine standard of ultimate sexual performance and satisfaction—only to find themselves relegated to a state of perpetual sexual anxiety and deprivation.

Sexual orientation as a continuum. Laud Humphreys's "Tearoom Trade," a study of homosexual encounters in men's rooms (called "tearooms") at public parks that was conducted in the 1960's, demonstrates the dynamic nature of sexual orientation. To his astonishment, he found that the majority of the men who engaged in homosexual encounters in public restrooms were middle-aged, professional, married men leading "normal lives" with their wives and

children. They did not consider themselves to be gay or deviant. As the author notes: “It was hard for me to grasp that men respected in their professions and devoted to their families could also be involved in furtive, “queer” behavior. That happened in flashy novels, not to the people next door” (p. 104).

Various explanations have been proposed for the etiology of the “Tearoom Trade.” Firstly, the impersonality of the sexual encounters ensures a minimum of financial and emotional investment on behalf of the actors as well as a minimum of threat to their reputations and outside interference into their private “happy married” lives (Humphreys, 1975). Secondly, the potential risk experienced by the participant actors, from the immediate agents of social control, during the unfolding of their homosexual behaviors tends to heighten their sexual arousal (Humphreys, 1975). Thirdly, the sexual encounters offer a source of personal excitement and an outlet to the actors boring middle-class lives as well as a relatively harmless way to resolve some of their early childhood physical or sexual trauma or inability to attach properly with their fathers.

Men’s homosexual impersonal encounters reflect the dynamic nature of sexual orientation as most men are not exclusively heterosexual or homosexual but, instead, are situated at different points along the yardstick of the sexual orientation continuum (Masters, Johnson, & Kolodny, 1988). Male sexual anxiety may also be the underlying reason for men’s insecurity and dissatisfaction with their heterosexual sexual lives with their marital or dating partners. In their efforts to relieve themselves of some of the considerable masculine burden placed upon their shoulders during the course of their personal and familial lives, family men in high-stress professional careers may opt for the short-lived “thrills and spills” of impersonal homosexual encounters. They may do so not only for the momentary sexual excitement but as an attempt to emotionally connect with other men and regain some of the joy and happiness of emotional intimacy that has been taken away from them by the masculine ethos. In their attempts to abide by the sociocultural prescriptions and proscriptions of masculinity and lead perfect familial and professional lives, such men may become considerably detached from their emotional selves and inner feelings and find themselves experiencing the emotional emptiness and angst of sexual anxiety.

The sociobiological perspective. In their exhaustive review of the literature, Baumeister, Catanese, and Vohs (2001) argue that there exist gender differences in sex drive with males

exhibiting higher drive compared to females. Specifically, the authors found that men are more likely to:

- Be mentally preoccupied with the general subject matter of sex, become more easily sexually aroused, fantasize more about sex, and hold more permissive attitudes toward most sexual activities.
- Desire and enjoy sex frequently, with more partners, and want to actualize a broader repertoire of sexual practices.
- Report greater incidences of masturbatory behavior, desire sex soon after a relationship starts, and generally seek to initiate sex sooner during periods of interpersonal intimacy.
- Be the initiators of sexual behavior and tend to turn down less sex offers from their partners.
- Make resource sacrifices (in terms of time, money, and energy) for the sake of obtaining sexual favors from their partners or securing a steady supply of such favors.
- Complain less about low sex drive in themselves but tend to complain more about low sex drive in their partners and feel helpless or unwilling concerning their constant search for sexual gratification.

The researchers point to the role of androgens (the sex hormones, such as testosterone, found predominantly in males) as the determining factor in leading to higher male sex drive. In particular, human and animal biological evidence suggests that androgens are more likely to influence the active pursue of sexual behavior, whereas estrogens (the sex hormones found predominantly in females) tend to be responsible for passive acceptance of sexual activity (Sherwin, 1988). The authors suggest that although both biological and social factors influence sex drive and general sexual functioning in males and females they do so in varying degrees with the former playing a greater role in the shaping of male sexual functioning and the latter being of greater significance in the shaping of female sexual behavior.

In his chapter on the various myths surrounding male and female sex differences, Snowdon (1997) suggests that both sexes are capable of aggression as well as maintaining peace and intimacy. The author uses sociobiological theory and research evidence to show that contrary to popular essentialist stereotypical attitudes regarding gender differences, males are not always sexual competitors, sexual aggressors, or sexual initiators. In addition, he suggests that males are not by nature endowed with the Don Juan syndrome—prone to love them and leave

them—but are instead capable of forming solid long-term monogamous intimate relationships with female mates investing a great deal of money, time, and energy for their relationship welfare. The author points out that in some species, females assume the role of sexual intimidators, are more physically aggressive than their male counterparts, and are found to be more sexually promiscuous. He also presents evidence suggesting that males of many species appear to be highly interested in and motivated in investing in childcare. For example, the author observed that even in highly promiscuous species, whereby males are rarely seen as being actively engaged in parental care, they are still capable of playing parental roles quite successfully. What determines future male involvement in childcare is appropriate early childhood socialization and maternal permissiveness (Handel, 1988). Hence, although biology is not destiny, the social construction of biological sex differences is perpetuated through the centuries-old historico-socio-cultural brewing of such differences giving rise to a plethora of socially constructed syndromes, such as male sexual anxiety, sexual addiction, and male relational aggression. The gender of such social constructions could easily be reversed if only the historico-socio-cultural determinants reverse.

The male gendering of emotion. Gender differences in emotional functioning—such as men’s proclivity to emotional in-expressiveness compared to women’s tendency to express intimate emotions—are rooted in peer and family socialization patterns, in which a wider variety of emotions are displayed to and discussed more with infant and preschool girls than with boys. At the same time, intimate peer relationships are normative for girls whereas hierarchical, status-oriented peer relationships are normative for boys (Brody & Hall, 1993; Tronick, 1989).

After reviewing results from a number of studies, Brody and Hall (1993) found that in the Northern American and Western European cultures, men tend to be less: (a) emotionally expressive when it comes to externalizing both positive and negative emotions, (b) prone and willing to allow themselves to experience the whole spectrum of the emotional realm, and (c) capable of ascertaining personality traits, moods, and feeling states from the affective expressions of others—such as from nonverbal face, body, and voice cues. As the authors so poignantly suggest, such gender differences in emotion have been generated and passed on through centuries-old socialization practices as essential preludes to the dominant roles that males assume in the social world. The suppression of the intimate emotions of happiness,

connectedness, shame, guilt, fear, and nervousness—and the corresponding externalization of anger, pride, contempt, and persistence—are synonymous to the male role of standing out, competing, and winning. The male role presupposes the minimization of vulnerability and the maximization of success and so there is little, if any, room for emotions that would lead to introspection, bondedness, and vulnerability. Since emotions are culturally considered to be the mirrors of a person's character—and by extension indicators of personal strength, perseverance, integrity, and trustworthiness—it is not surprising that men so vehemently steer themselves away from externalizing their intimate or weak emotions. In doing so, they tend to suppress an important part of their humanness thereby falling prey to the endless tribulations and sufferings of sexual anxiety, addiction, and relational abuse.

Gender and masculinity. Gender constitutes one of the organizing principles of social life a mechanism by which power and resources are distributed (hooks, 1990; Kimmel & Messner, 1992; Lorber, 1994; Walker, 1999). Typical masculine values accorded to the male gender include: (a) increased importance on independence, rationality, and aggression; (b) the exercise of emotional control at the expense of emotional attachment (c) the overt externalization of inner feelings and desires; and (c) the celebration of physical strength as well as the glorification of violence (Gerson, 1993). Such cultural values help create the generic guidelines for male behavior, which are being written and re-written according to the specific time, place, and socioeconomic circumstances. The historical, social, and cultural contexts advocating masculinity, accord considerable importance to the male gender prescribing power over women, other men, and children (Collier, 1995). Men are socialized to think of themselves as all mighty and powerful, and, consequently, to feel entitled to such illusionary feelings. Illusionary because in reality, most men tend to enjoy only limited amounts of power, and, instead, use dominance, authority, and emotional distancing to socially construct and maintain images of themselves as powerful. Such sociocultural constructions of male power tend to negatively affect men by: (a) limiting their access to vital social support networks, (b) weakening their nurturing capabilities, mainly, their providing support to others, and (c) discouraging, inhibiting, or altogether preventing viable alternative forms of sexual expression, such as kissing, holding, and caressing. Instead, such constructions elevate the male sexual response cycle—with its exclusive emphasis on penile erection and ejaculation—at the highest echelons of male sexual expression. This

almost incessant preoccupation with the mechanistic aspects of the male sexual response cycle tends to have deleterious consequences in men's lives; especially for younger men who are just beginning their journey to find their sexual selves. Such consequences include the inducement of sexual anxiety as well as the perpetration of sexual abuse and violence against women, children, and other men (Gilbert, 1993).

Sexuality and Masculinity: Essentializing Masculinity

In general, masculinity refers to all those culturally defined male gender dictates (the dos and don'ts) that come to constitute a male human being within the contexts of the prevailing historico-socio-cultural environment within which he is born and socialized (Brooks & Silverstein, 1995). It is an active state of doing male gender and it is both intrapsychic and socially dependent in nature. Masculinity is socially constructed as an outside entity, privately experienced as an inside intrapsychic state, and shared through social actions in the everyday field of human social interactional exchanges. Furthermore, masculinity is a considerably valued achieved state of being that comes to distinguish the fit, strong, and dominant few from the frail, weak, and submissive many, including the masses of women, children, the elderly, the physically and mentally disabled, ethnic and racial minority men, and, above all, gay and bisexual men. The few/many dichotomy arises because masculinity constitutes a continuum of power, superiority, and dominance with only the few ever achieving it at its maximum and actualizing its endless potential. According to traditional beliefs and socialization practices, males need to be molded into the masculine role hence masculinity is not ascribed but achieved:

The idea that a man behaves in a certain way because he "needs to prove his masculinity" has a powerful emotional resonance for many people. That this notion [of viewing masculinity as an achieved state] is so widely accepted is one of the core truths about masculinity in American culture. By contrast, the analogous idea that women act to "prove their femininity" would sound odd and alien. ...men need to prove their manhood [masculinity] (a) because men are socialized to believe that their masculinity is something they have to prove, or (b) because it is men's essential nature that their masculinity can never be fully established, as women's femininity is (Pleck, 1995, p. 27).

The achieved nature of masculinity, along with its value laden essentialist characterization as being a state of polarized and preferential gender-role expectations, comes to render it as a natural and integral part of any social group's system of power relations elevating to the highest echelons of social evolution and natural selection (social Darwinism) (Filsinger, 1988; Gilbert, 1993; Gilmore 1990; Thompson & Pleck, 1995; Troost & Filsinger, 1993; White, 1996a). Furthermore, the essentialist constitution of both masculinity and femininity as culturally-based ideologies necessary for the scripting of gender relations, attitudes, and beliefs, comes to construct them as considerably powerful social forces entrenched in the pillars of social institutions (Collier, 1995; Fracher & Kimmel, 1992; Klein & Jurich, 1993; Thomas & Wilcox, 1987). These gender forces of masculinity and femininity systematically and methodically dichotomize male and female gender differences and attributes and impart such qualities to them as good or bad, positive or negative, and strong or weak respectively (Smith, 1996). Unfortunately, this process of essentializing gender comes to attribute trait characteristics to masculinity and femininity thereby viewing them as psychologically and biologically based master characteristics and statuses (Kimmel, 1996; White, 1996a). Essentializing gender leads to the social construction of male sexuality as an insatiable and immutable force operating in the field of aggressiveness and competition, an outside overpowering monster leading to a never-ending inside uncontrollable desire and burning anxiety (Eisler, 1995).

Abiding by the premises of traditional masculinity may rob men of their emotional, psychological, and sexual tranquillity thereby negatively affecting their physical and psychological health (Bly, 1991; Goldberg, 1976; Harrison, Chin, & Ficarrotto, 1992; McLean, 1996; Pittman, 1993). Male sexual anxiety can become manifested as co-dependency in emotionally and psychologically abusive relationships involving sexual and substance addictions (Fracher & Kimmel, 1992; Real, 1997). Family members, friends, and the entire network of a man's social support group often collude with the cultural expectations of masculinity (Carey, 1996; Collier, 1995; Gilmore, 1990) to silence the cries of men (Tierney & McLaughlin, 1993) in emotionally abusive relationships either by downplaying men's pleas for help or ignoring them altogether. After all, real masculinized men do not cry.

The propagators of masculine ideology. Functionalist and social learning theorists (Bandura, 1971; Kingsbury & Scanzoni, 1993) suggest that the major propagator of the

masculine ethos is the stereotypical distant father with his reserved, unemotional, rarely passionate, and never overly affectionate demeanor. Because he avoids any intimate conversation with his son, he conveys to his son that it is un-masculine to communicate openly or spontaneously about feelings. Here is what two men have to say about their fathers:

My father, in the few times that he had any meaningful human interaction with me, told me that men should not hurt, cry, openly display affection, or react to emotion in another. I feel embarrassed when someone shows strong or tender emotions. I feel embarrassed for him. (Hite, 1981, p. 59)

My father taught me to be reserved and not show emotions. Then, he committed suicide, which taught me I'd better not be like that. (Hite, 1981, p. 61)

Masculine ideology relegates women to the secondary but much arduous role of having to supervise and maintain their son's masculinity (Thompson & Pleck, 1995). Traditional mothers, who had spent all their lives abiding by the rules of a patriarchal system, tend to endlessly agonize over their son's masculinity (Carey, 1996; Lancaster, 1995). In order to elicit the cooperation of these women, the male power elite advertise the merits of masculinity as supposedly for the general good and protection of the family (for mothers and children's sake). In reality, however, it comes to accomplish exactly the opposite, namely the domination and subordination of women and the snatching away of legitimate power from them and their children (Pittman, 1993; Pleck, 1992).

In addition to their mothers' constant admonitions, young boys are also being scrutinized by their significant others, as well as the various macro-agents of social control, such as teachers, counselors, police officers, and judges, for possible deviations from the prescribed recipe of manhood. Behaviors that are deemed as "girl or woman-like", such as showing excessive feelings and emotions, crying, being passive, and acting dependent, tend not to be tolerated and loom over the young boy's life:

Boys are constantly disciplined by their elders—by parents and siblings alike—with the humiliating phrase, "*No sea cochon!*" ("Do not be a queer!") when their demeanor falls short of the assertive, aggressive, masculine ideal. A show of sensitivity, weakness, reticence—or whatever else is judged to be a feminine

characteristic—is swiftly identified and ridiculed (Lancaster, 1995, p. 140).

Using a social learning model, Levant and Pollack (1995) suggest that the developmental influences of mothers, fathers, and significant others result in the suppression and channeling of male emotionality. Mothers go to great lengths to contain their emotionally excitable male infants but, in contrast, they tend to expose their infant daughters to a wider range of emotions (Malatesta, Culver, Tesman, & Shephard, 1989). Moreover, fathers tend to socialize their toddler sons along gender-stereotyped lines and engage in more verbal and physical rough play with their older sons while they speak more about emotional issues with their daughters (Schell & Gleason, 1989). In addition, both parents participate in the gender-differentiated development of language for emotions by discouraging their son's learning to express vulnerable emotions (such as sadness and fear) while encouraging their daughters to readily do so (Brody & Hall, 1993). Finally, peer groups enforce gender scripts by sex-segregated play. Girls involve themselves in telling secrets and in emotional self-awareness and expression while young boys typically play in larger groups and in structured games where skills such as learning rules, teamwork, toughness, and competition are learned (Maccoby, 1990).

Parental and peer traditional masculine socialization, emotionally absent fathers, and the overall stifling of men's emotional lives all come to directly and indirectly contribute to the generation of non-clinical male sexual anxiety, relational abuse, and addiction (Mac An Ghail, 1994). As Levant and Pollack (1995) suggest, the suppression and channeling of male emotionality by mothers, fathers, and peer groups tend to enable the development of action empathy in men. This type of empathy enhances the ability of a man to see things from the other person's point of view thereby helping him to anticipate the other's behavior thus better preparing himself for the appropriate reaction; a more selfish type. On the other hand, the development of emotional empathy in women has to do with taking another person's perspective and being able to know how they feel; a more pro-social type.

As a result, men's emotional skills become underdeveloped and kind of rusted, a state that eventually lead men to become strangers to their own emotional lives while their vulnerable emotions become channeled through anger (the primary male emotional funnel system) (Long, 1987) and their caring emotions become dissipated through the channel of sexuality. These processes contribute significantly to men's preoccupation with sex with deleterious personal and

social consequences, such as an increased likelihood of experiencing male sexual anxiety and entering into abusive relationships, and a greater chance of becoming sexually addicted.

Sexuality and Economic Exchange

Sexuality plays an important role in the processes of economic exchanging (Carlin, 1999). The power motto of heterosexual masculinity involves the exchanging (Burr, 1995) of money, goods, services, and rewards (including preferential treatment and promotions) for sexual favors. This male-female mode of sexual trading is not only restricted to the direct calculative forms of exchange between the two parties, such as between a man and a prostitute or between a boss and his secretary. It takes place on an everyday basis between husbands and wives, boyfriends and girlfriends, and powerful men and their mistresses.

Functionalist instrumental ideology comes to define sex as the expectation men tend to have from women in return for their providing material and monetary rewards (Kingsbury & Scanzoni, 1993; Parsons & Bales, 1955). Even within the context of intimate heterosexual relationships (such as cohabitating or marital couples), one is able to identify the presence of well-camouflaged sexual trading (Zalduondo & Bernard, 1995). When asked whether or not they feel bad exchanging sex for money, prostitutes often reply, “Why should we, wives do that all the time with their husbands?”

The economic and sexual trading found in male and female relationships tends to impact negatively on men’s emotional and psychological health because of the constant urge to become adequate financial providers resulting in their having to work harder in order to be able to initiate and maintain a heterosexual relationship. Men have to invest a considerable amount of time as well as emotional and psychological energy in their job or career, which results in an almost exclusive occupational dependence for both their financial and relationship survival. This intense (and at times addictive) male occupational dependence results in feelings of insecurity and stress from not being able to invest and enjoy other things in life. As a result of this perpetual competitive feeling for occupational security and success, men become more and more emotionally unavailable and isolated from others and end up becoming even less capable of initiating intimate relationships with their partners. They start looking for sex as the answer to all of their problems and insecurities; the considerable power of sexual healing. This constant search for sexual healing induces men with sexual anxiety and contributes to the development of

sexual addiction; since they come to put such an enormous value tag on sex for their personal happiness.

Non-Clinical Male Sexual Anxiety

Masculine identity development is not a process of developing traits, tendencies, and roles. Rather, it constitutes a process of eliminating human traits and tendencies for bondedness, connectedness, expressiveness, and intimacy (McAdams, 1993; Rubin, 1992; Sattel, 1992). This elimination lays the foundation for the development of male sexual anxiety later on in adult men's lives (Real, 1997). Unequal gender socialization, necessitated by the doctrine of masculinity (Carey, 1996; Gilmore, 1990), advocates male dissociation from their feeling states (McLean, 1996) necessary for enhancing their relational world, in addition to downplaying and discouraging female aspirations to competitiveness, toughness, and success in the market economy (Bly, 1991; Brod, 1987; Gilmore, 1990; Thompson & Pleck, 1995).

This differential and preferential gender socialization (West & Zimmerman, 1987) pressures men considerably giving rise to the emergence of two kinds of abuse: (a) disempowering abuse—which usually leads men to entering into emotionally and psychologically abusive relationships—and (b) the falsely empowering variety. From a young age, boys tend to be falsely empowered with feelings of grandiosity, which in the long run necessitate the internalization of the masculine ideal of offensiveness and shamelessness (Pollack, 1998; Real, 1997). Shamelessness because in order to be able to attain and maintain their superior status over others, especially women, strong masculinized men have to dominate weak feminized women instead of cooperating with them. This internalized and idealized masculine standard lays the foundations for the creation of male sexual anxiety in young boys because of the uncomfortable feelings that are usually associated with the imposition of dominant actions over others, but also because of their overall inability to attain and maintain the idealized superior masculine state of offensiveness and shamelessness (Pollack, 1998). In addition, men are subject to alterations between disempowering abuse and the falsely empowering variety. This switching back and forth from a one down to a one up position tends to induce them with a perpetual state of male sexual anxiety as there is considerable shaking of the foundations for the creation of a solid, healthy sense of psychological, emotional, and sexual self (Real, 1997).

Anxiety Intolerance

Schnarch (1991) suggests that sexual anxiety, and anxiety tolerance, originates in a person's psychosexual development and constitutes an indispensable part of such development. A certain amount of sexual anxiety is needed to pave the way into the exploration of areas previously unknown to the personal psyche and precluded from personal experience. Inhibited emotional development results from intolerance of any kind and degree of anxiety, that is inevitable during the resolving of maturational tasks, and results in sexual immaturity and the perpetration of self-limiting or destructive acts:

It isn't only sexually immature people, however, who experience sexual anxiety; people with a high degree of emotional development have anxiety during extremely intense erotic experiences. The difference is that the latter group also have (a) high anxiety tolerance, which permits them to experience the situation as arousing and growth enhancing, (b) prior success in mastering similar situations, and (c) the opportunity to use the process to deliberately enhance personal growth. (Schnarch, 1991, p. 385)

The issue here is not the presence of male sexual anxiety but the degree of men's anxiety, its tolerance, and whether it drives them to constructive action—fueling their need for intimacy and togetherness—or, destructive practices—such as extra-relational sex, addictions, and relational abuse.

From a psychoanalytic standpoint (Slavin & Kriegman, 1992; Stolorow, 1997; Stolorow, Brandchaft, & Atwood, 1987), young boys suffer a great deal from the unpredictable, emotionally void, and transient nature of the attachment style characterizing their relationship with their primary caretaker. This is because during childhood—a time when young boys are most dependent and vulnerable—the primary caregiver constitutes the most important figure in their lives. As young boys grow into manhood, their personalities are considerably influenced by the residual inadequacies of caretaker deprivation and rejection (Levant & Pollack, 1995; Schnarch, 1991). Most men grow up to seek intimate relationships out of a need to fulfill the psycho-emotional void of their early years, commonly seeking new object of affection and intimacy in a symbolic attempt to reconnect to their caretaker (Firestone & Catlett, 1999). This

constitutes the turning point for the transformation of early boyhood caretaker anxiety to generalized adult male sexual anxiety.

In addition, male and female infants alike tend to experience their primary caregiver as a multitude of “good” and “bad” images and consciously identify with the “good” parts while suppressing the “bad” parts of the caregiver (Breunlin, Schwartz, & Kune-Karrer, 1992). Later on, as the infants grow to adolescence and adulthood and enter into romantic relationships, the conscious “good” parts become projected as idealized expectations for the selected partner while the repressed “bad” parts emerge in the form of projections, attributions, anticipations, and distortions as to how a normal partner ought to be and behave. In long term relationships such projections tend to hinder the development of intimacy among the partners as they fervently seek to mold one another into acquiring those “good” parts (originally exhibited by their primary caregiver) so that they can comfortably attach to them like they did when they were infants (Breunlin et al. 1992). At the same time, partners tend to stimulate each other into playing out those “bad parts” (originally exhibited by their primary caregiver) so that they can deal with them through repression. This projective identification process of conscious and unconscious communication shapes each partner into the embodiment of each others’ unresolved object infant attachments and the denied aspects of self. In turn, such unresolved object relations issues tend to hinder the development and sustenance of a healthy level of intimacy between the partners—pushing them instead to engage in sexually addictive practices and/or enter into abusive relationships—by diminishing the male partners’ ability to (a) self-soothe their anxiety and validate themselves during personal and interpersonal troubled times, (b) tolerate high levels of self-disclosure and emotional intimacy from their female partners, and (c) withstand the kind of intense intimate eroticism found in companionate sex (Scharff, 1988; Schnarch, 1991).

Prevailing negative attitudes in contemporary society—such as those limiting men’s emotional expression discussed above—tend to negatively affect men by creating many misunderstandings concerning the true nature of manhood, interpersonal intimacy, and relatedness (Levant & Pollack, 1995). This is because most men collude with such negative and limiting sociocultural stereotypes of manhood with the result that they come to internalize their personal inadequacies and failures, thus causing them to turn against themselves and other men (Firestone & Catlett, 1999). Such feelings of turning against oneself, have, depending on their

intensity, detrimental consequences for most men's psychological and physical health. The effects range from the most extreme (suicide or suicidal ideation) to depressive affect (clinical or non-clinical), all sorts of addictive behaviors (substance or sexual addictions), and finally to the least extreme in the form of a perpetual feeling of sexual anxiety.

Differentiation

Another important factor in the etiology of non-clinical male sexual anxiety is men's poor differentiation from themselves as well as from their intimate and sexual partners (Schnarch, 1991). Kerr and Bowen (1988) suggest that well differentiated people are able to tolerate aloneness as well as enjoy the comfort and happiness of physical and emotional intimacy. In other words, their emotional thermostat is set at a constant value and does not fluctuate to extreme highs, when they experience intimacy, or to extreme lows, when alone. Poorly differentiated people, when intimate, tend toward enmeshment or emotional fusion only to experience considerable terror, at the prospect of emotional bondedness with their partners, and a subsequent loss of self (Schnarch, 1991). In turn, this compels them to flight but when they eventually find themselves alone, they begin to suffer an unbearable sense of abandonment and aloneness only to find themselves embarking in the process of emotional fusion with their partners once again. Their emotional pendulum oscillates between emotional extremes never to attain a steady state.

Men in long-term relationships who are suffering from sexual anxiety tend to be intolerant of anxiety in their partners and experience pressure to feel and act only in ways that reduce each other's discomfort (Schnarch, 1991). For instance, such men tend to become preoccupied with issues regarding the adequacy or excellence of their sexual performance either directly, as they think it is perceived by their partners, or indirectly as they envision it is perceived by their significant others. It is as if these men are inviting their close circle of significant others in their bedroom to judge and rate how well they measure up to the historico-socio-cultural sexual standards of masculinity. Instead of focusing on enjoying their sexuality and that of their partner—and on how to tie the mutual expression of sexuality to greater relational intimacy—they become preoccupied with the competitive aspect of the sexual act. This may increase their sexual anxiety and may even lead to the development of sexual dysfunctions.

Codependency and Male Sexual Anxiety

Codependents tend to be addicted to relationships in the same way like alcohol, drug, and sexual addicts (Katz & Liu, 1991; Morgan, 1991). For codependent men though, their codependency is almost synonymous with developing a sexually addictive relationship with their female partner. This is because unlike the essentialist feminine gender role—which tends to be synonymous with the codependent premises of subjugation, oppression, and martyrdom—the essentialist masculine gender role tends to be antithetical to such premises. For this reason, male codependency tends to be enacted in the context of a sexually addictive relationship with a female partner since the sexual addiction serves as a disguised justification for tolerating the traditionally un-masculine traits of subjugation, oppression, and martyrdom inherent in the codependent role. In other words, since the codependent role is characterized by the un-masculine and anti-patriarchal traits of subjugation, oppression, and martyrdom, males that assume such role tend to justify it (to themselves and their significant others) by assuming the sexually addictive role, which is far more in line with the essentialist masculine prescriptions of power, control, and dominance. Such men will do almost anything and go to great lengths to secure and maintain an intimate relationship that physically reduces their male sexual anxiety, through sexual addiction, and emotionally satisfies them through the ongoing codependent nature of their relationship. These codependent men derive a great deal of their self-worth externally from the relationship without which they feel like literally nothing matters; concerning their physical and mental health, achievements, or their significant others. Both the codependent male and his partner feel like they cannot survive without the other but this kind of relationship cohesion is limiting since it prevents the partners from pursuing their own personal agenda and self-development activities (Anderson, 1994). Moreover, since codependency is characterized by lack of boundaries, codependent men tend to lack any kind of logical realization concerning where they end and their partners begin. For example, in their attempts to ease the pain of their male sexual anxiety it is not unusual for such men to constantly push their partners for sex even at times and places where it would seem completely inappropriate (Irvine, 1995; Schaefer, 1992).

Although codependents appear as selfless, they exhibit a form of self-centeredness that is no different than that of their addicted partners. The codependent's faulty thinking leads him to believe that all his partner's emotional and psychological problems result from either something

he did or failed to do. Codependents believe that they should be able to fix anything and take responsibility for their partner's feelings, thoughts, and even their lives (Katz & Liu, 1991). Even though this is a gentle, loving, and good intended kind of self-centeredness, it nonetheless creates dependence and a host of resentments from both the codependent—as a result of not being able to “save” his partner all the time—and the partner—who increasingly comes to expect more from the codependent and feels disappointed and angry when his partner fails to deliver. Another important aspect of codependent relationships is the issue of control. Codependents are notorious controllers and the more their relationships become chaotic and out of control, the more they overexert themselves to bring their relationships under control resulting in their experiencing considerable negativity, depression, and conceptualizing themselves as failures (Anderson, 1994; Schaefer, 1992).

The codependents' preoccupation with controlling their partners feelings and lives in general results in their progressive distancing from their own feelings. The process of getting to understand their partners' feelings, and altering such to match their personal expectations of how their partners should feel, tends to deny them of getting in touch with their own feelings. Sometimes they may even go so far as distort their own genuine feelings to match those they think they ought to feel in light of their partners' addictive behaviors. Since codependents do not do justice to their own perceptions and feelings, they can be considered dishonest. Their incessant preoccupation with managing their impressions is overtly geared towards fulfilling their partners' expectations, and, covertly, at eliminating their partners' addictions. Both codependents' overt and covert agenda is geared at promoting their partners' welfare at the expense of their own and could therefore be considered as self-betrayal and dishonesty to themselves (Irvine, 1995; Schaefer, 1992).

The Pain and Joy of Codependency

Men who engage in self-destructive, negating, and deprecating compulsive sexual and relational patterns are paradoxically reluctant to give up their emotionally destructive sexual patterns with their partners, especially if their codependent relationships constitute ample opportunities for temporary gratification and the relief of their sexual anxiety (see “Role of Codependency, p. 81) (Anderson, 1994; Moore, 1985). On one hand, they might want to liberate themselves from the limitations and overt and covert emotional pain of their sexual addiction and

codependency with their partners, but, on the other hand, they do not want to go through the pain of giving them up. In her book on codependency, Beattie (1992) defines this condition as an emotional, psychological, and behavioral limiting state arising out of an oppressive socializing ethic discouraging the open expression of feelings and the experiencing of full-scale intimacy. Over the years, the individual comes to develop a general inability to initiate or to participate in healthy loving relationships and opt for the temporary illusionary comfort but long-term destructiveness of codependent relationships. Codependent men find it hard to exit abusive relationships because the source of their abuse (the other person) is also the source of their temporary relief from their anxieties and sexual gratification. This tendency of codependent men to remain stuck in abusive relationships comes to support their overall emotional immaturity, selfishness, and, above all, intolerance for short-term pain and frustration (Prest & Protinsky, 1993). These men are opting for the comfort and relative painlessness of their immediate codependent relationships with their addictive partners instead of tolerating a certain amount of immediate pain and frustration for the sake of their long-term happiness, fulfillment, and tranquillity. In doing so, not only are they failing to engage in constructive actions to reduce their long-term male sexual anxiety, sexual addiction and compulsion but they soon find themselves just a step away from experiencing the full-scale wrath of relational abuse, thus jeopardizing their futures (Irvine, 1995).

Relational addiction. Codependent men tend to become considerably attached to their relationship with their female to the point where they ignore their work responsibilities, friendships, and any personal activities that used to bring them joy and satisfaction before the enactment of their codependent relationship. Such relationship becomes the primary focus of their lives and only source of personal satisfaction (Morgan, 1991; Schaefer, 1992).

Men's overall inability to tolerate close intimacy with their partners throws them in the vicious cycle of pursuing intimacy and distancing from it when they finally attain it (Gerson, Hoffman, & Sauls, 1993; White, 1996b). It is as if there is an automatic shut-off mechanism that shuts the intimacy circuitry down when it is finally activated. This comes as no surprise since masculine socialization precludes the teaching of intimacy skills to young boys (Mac An Ghail, 1994). How could men adequately respond to the challenges of intimacy if they do not have solid training in it? After all, the basic premise of the masculine mystique lies on the dichotomy,

the separation of the logical from the emotional. Men are often taught to “bite the bullet” and refrain from following their emotional voices but let their logical compass guide them through their journeys of competition and achievement.

Codependent men are to some degree aware of their codependency and for this reason, their perceptions and feelings tend to fluctuate accordingly depending on whether their logical self or emotional self takes over. It’s as if there is no unity between the logical and emotional aspects of their mental states, but instead, a battle for dominance is continually waged between the two. In a healthy relationship, both the logical and emotional parts of the self exist and function in relation to one another. The process by which these parts function is characterized by a seamless, cooperative, and mutually reinforcing alternation of dominance by each of the parts instead of an abrupt, competitive, and antagonistic battle for dominance and control as is commonly the case in codependent relationships (Breunlin et al. 1992; Whitfield, 1991). Some codependent men are also unable to prevent their emotional and psychological states from fluctuating out of control and since they have no conception and clear-cut definition of their personal boundaries, they often internalize their partners’ sadness, happiness, fear, or whatever emotional and psychological state their partners happen to be (Cermak, 1986; Schaeff, 1992).

Since codependent men lack a strong sense of self, they often engage in elaborate impression management techniques aimed primarily at manipulating others perceptions so that they always appear to be the good and virtuous and their partner as the bad and evil. This constitutes a viable way for codependent men to prove and boost their self-worth; once again from the outside but not from their inside (Gemin, 1991). Codependent men—lacking a strong sense of self and not trusting themselves—oftentimes turn to others for advice and guidance even for obvious matters where they have a very clear intuitive impression of what’s going on. Their personal perceptions are never good enough until they are validated with the stamp of approval of others in their immediate environment (Harkness & Cotrell, 1997; Schaeff, 1992). Individuals in healthy relationships do not have to discuss their relationship affairs with their significant others. There is enough trust between themselves and their partners to openly discuss any relationship problems that may arise among themselves and mutually agree on appropriate remedies that would be beneficial and costly to both. Reciprocity in personal investment is an indispensable part of healthy relationships; healthy relationships are a two-way street. One-way

relationships hardly ever survive the test of time and the plethora of hardships of staying together amidst the considerable selfishness and self-centeredness that characterizes the modern-day sociocultural environment (Katz & Liu, 1991; Whitfield, 1991).

Gullibility becomes a way of life for the codependent who tends to believe anything and everything from his partner—no matter how deleterious and far-fetched its consequences may seem—as long as it keeps the relationship going. Codependents ignore their perceptions and “gut-feelings” and believe whatever their partners tell them provided it maintains their illusionary dream that “one day we will perfectly fuse together and live happily ever after” (Schaef, 1992).

Caretaking is one of the most important aspects of codependency. The low self-esteem and external orientation of codependent men—along with their incessant preoccupation to secure and maintain their sexual relationship with their partner in order to reduce their male sexual anxiety—create the feeling that no one in their right mind would want to have them around for their intrinsic worth. Also, they feel that they cannot be without their partner because they will be forever doomed to the torturous tribulations of their male sexual anxiety (Harkness & Cotrell, 1997; Schaef, 1992). Martyrdom becomes the underlying philosophy for codependent men because it makes them feel good about themselves by elevating their self-worth as good, upstanding, and moral persons.

Even though martyrdom may bring considerable suffering to them, they feel that it is justified since it makes them appear good and also secures their addictive sexual relationship with their partner (Abt, 1990; Celani, 1994). Such suffering only helps prolong their unhealthy and destructive relationship and extends the amount of time that transpires before they can come face to face with the underlying causes of their male sexual anxiety and before their partner gets help with their substance addiction. It is also not unusual for codependent men to develop a number of psychosomatic problems as a result of the prolonged internalization of all the agony, suffering, and chaos of the uncontrollable situations—mainly those of their partner’s addiction and their constant reliance on their partner for alleviating their male sexual anxiety—they so desperately try to control. From headaches, respiratory, heart, and gastrointestinal problems to hypertension, cancer, eating disorders, overspending, workaholism, and even addiction to drugs and alcohol (Cermak, 1986; Schaef, 1992).

Joy, content, and satisfaction. As paradoxical as it may seem though, there exists a recurring feeling of warmth, closeness, and bondedness experienced in the company of the addict in a co-dependent relationship when she refrains from drugs and alcohol (Celani, 1994; Gemin, 1991, &). A plethora of euphoric feelings temporarily emerge in the co-dependent that paint everything around him with the colors of happiness, content, and satisfaction. It's as if everything suddenly changes and reverts to the desired and sought after state of being.

Codependents are only too eager to convince themselves and others that their partner is the one and only that makes them feel so special and taps into their suppressed emotionality. Behind the veil of self-deception and exaggerated, idealistic make-belief, such as "You know, she is the only one that makes me feel so happy, or, I have never been able to talk to anyone the way I talk to her," lies the codependent's fundamental erroneous goal of wanting to attain the perfect union, which, in their minds, is nothing more than interpersonal fusion (Celani, 1994; Schaef, 1992).

Summary

In this chapter, the historical, social, and cultural determinants of masculinity and male sexuality have been discussed from a developmental, symbolic interactionist, critical, and essentialist/postmodern theoretical perspectives. In addition, a review of literature pertaining to the study's major conceptual theme of male sexual anxiety has been conducted. Men have been found to be seriously influenced by essentialist masculine gender-role ideology, which continues to permeate the present sociocultural environment. Qualitative studies begin to address the importance of understanding the various processes involved in the psycho-emotional and psycho-sexual traumatization of men in the area of intimacy and sexuality. Such studies begin to crystallize into a repetitive story of the victimization of men in the arms of patriarchy.

The present study will significantly contribute to the research record by drawing specifically from my early childhood and adolescent experiences to demonstrate the considerable trauma and inner workings of masculine socialization and male sexual anxiety. I consider such experiences as a source of valuable knowledge, a reference point to stimulate more qualitative research into the much-neglected area of male sexual anxiety. My explicit use of self constitutes an orienting frame of reference to grasp the complexity of the experiences of other men. I

conceptualize the goal of my research endeavor to be the illumination and amplification of marginalized perspectives, not the truth (Baber & Allen, 1992; Thompson, 1992).

CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

The Autobiographical Mode

Most social scientists use symbolic interactionism synonymously with qualitative research. Its basic premise rests on the assumption that the human experience does not constitute an *apriori* source of knowledge but is constructed through various interpretative modes of meaning. Objects, people, situations, and events do not possess their own meaning but meaning is ascribed to them through interpretative means. Interpretation is of utmost importance for the symbolic interactionist. The individually tailored symbolic interpretation of events and happenings—rather than the more customary theoretical constructs, such as internal drives, personality traits, unconscious motives, needs, socioeconomic status, role obligations, cultural prescriptions and proscriptions, social-control mechanisms, or the surrounding sociocultural environment—is the conceptual paradigm. The interactionist only utilizes such constructs to the degree that they are relevant to understanding human behavior and the degree to which they enter in and come to affect the defining process of meaning construction through interpretation (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Plummer, 1991).

The autobiographical mode of inquiry constitutes an important interpretative mode of meaning and is heavily influenced by principles of symbolic interaction. Autobiography is one of the fastest growing, yet most controversial methods, of life writing (Smith, 1994). In particular, autobiographies are normative, narrative delineations (McLaren, 1993a) of important everyday life experiences as observed, understood, and communicated (LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993) by the signifier of the self: the “I.” Upon deconstructing the word “autobiography,” Olney (1980) moves away from positivistic notions of creating knowledge about the human conditions through discovery. Instead he considers the self as the major agent of knowledge generation through the process of living, and transmission of such knowledge through the process of writing,

Auto	Bios	Graphy
Self	Life	Writing

The three concepts of self, life, and writing are three interdependent processes that feed on one another and exist only in relation to each other. Under this premise, absolutist positivistic

assertions of discovering *apriori* realities about the human condition may not be possible since the human condition—and the derivation of social knowledge from such—resembles a personal life system, which is dynamically linked to the other two systems of self and writing (Roman & Apple, 1990). The argument could therefore be made that an interpersonal social and intrapersonal psychic life is created through the billions of interpersonal behaviors and intrapersonal cognitions, which acquire different meanings at different points throughout one's development in life. The various meanings and understandings of the human condition are generated by using language and communicated through the process of writing, the very act of which forces a self-examination that changes both the self and the person's life (Smith, 1994). Autobiography is an indispensable research tool in the endless quest of generating knowledge about the human condition.

The autobiographical method has to do with the identification, accumulation, study, and interpretation of personal documents, letters, as well as recollections of important events in the person's life (Denzin, 1989a). An autobiography can be viewed as the self-authorship of the life experiences of the person, which he/she deems as worthy of investigation and which they are investigated accordingly depending on one's current maturity level and general state of mind. Such life experiences are fluid and dynamic interpretations of aspects of the author's personality and not solid and static explanations of the totality of one's character. Personality development is where the autobiographical method of self-analysis of life experiences seems to make its greater contribution, as such is dependent upon the continual and progressive self-realization and self-analysis of turning-point life experiences and not on their mere accumulation and storage in the memory reservoirs of the person (Helle, 1991).

The autobiographical mode is based on the assumption that there exist distant others and significant others with whom the subject interacts with for the duration of the narrated story. These are real persons with real lives creating life experiences—based on their everyday joys and sorrows—which come to somehow influence the subject's life (Smith, 1994). In addition, such a mode relies heavily on the developmental perspective—advocating for the existence of objective life markers and turning-point experiences which help push the individual from one developmental stage to the next (Olney, 1980)—as well as the starting and ending point of other significant life events, which come to constitute the narrated story (Lejeune, 1989). Gender,

class, ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, and disability are also important parameters of the autobiographical mode (Olney, 1980). The various dynamics defining the nature of the family structures and processes (Smith, 1994) in the person's life are an indispensable part of the autobiographical mode as most individuals spend the biggest part of their lives in their families of orientation and procreation. The accurate recording of truthful statements and their distinguishing from fictional statements—although an obvious requirement of the autobiographical mode and apparently an easy task—may nonetheless pose considerable difficulty due to succumbing to personal exaggerations and mixing make-belief and even complete fictional statements with truthful ones (Lejeune, 1989). These core assumptions serve to define the autobiographical method as a distinct approach to the study of human experience. They are the methods by which the real appearances of real people are created and relived during the act of communicating them to an audience (Denzin, 1989c; Gubrium & Holstein, 1993).

The idea that the individual has to be understood in conjunction with the particular historical, social, and cultural context in which he is situated is important, especially when it comes to investigating sensitive issues having to do with psychosexual and emotional states of being. The revelation of life histories and the unearthing of personal meanings almost certainly requires the method of autobiography considered by some to be: “the highest and most instructive form in which the understanding of life comes before us” (Hodges, 1994, p. 29). The autobiographer becomes an auto-phenomenologist attempting to interpret his own life, with its attendant events and situations of interest, as he lived them out or as he mentally constructed them by his concerns and by the various meanings (Bruner, 1990) available to him by virtue of being a member and active participant in families, communities, nation, and epochs (Sussman et al. 1999).

The primary methodological mode of the present qualitative personological inquiry (Heron, 1992; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) is an auto-ethno-biographic narrative (McLaren, 1993a) of my life story growing-up in the machismo Greek-Cypriot culture of the 1970s and 1980s. I also attempt to delineate the etiology of male sexual anxiety, sexual addiction, and abuse based on my conceptualizations and observations of some of my significant others while growing up in the Greek-Cypriot culture. This study is based on an auto-ethno-biographical use, portrayal, or reflection of my personal narrative (McLaren, 1993a) in this time period. The evidence for the

study is articulated through the analysis of my personal recollections of important events that happened while growing up, events that are inextricably relate to my past, present, and future life story (Richardson, 1990; Ronai, 1992).

Account-Making

In general, accounts can be developed for different time periods throughout a person's lifetime regarding a number of events, interpersonal relationships, as well as developmental and maturational stages (Scott & Lyman, 1968). The account-making process has been thoroughly investigated by John Harvey and his associates (Harvey, Orbuch, & Fink, 1990; Harvey, Weber & Orbuch, 1990). Account-making, like languaging, uses symbols and imparts meaning to personal experiences: "[account-making refers to] people's story-like construction of events that include explanations, descriptions, predictions about relevant future [and past] events and affective reaction" (Harvey, Orbuch, Chwalisz, & Garwood, 1991, p. 516). Personal experiences are thus delineated, explicated, and communicated to the greater audience of researchers and lay people in order to help them better understand people's actions, reactions, motives, and psycho-emotional states of being. In this way, they not only serve as sources of social scientific knowledge but also serve as aids in how others make sense of their own lives. In addition, the process of account-making is liberating to the person writing the account because the mere fact of writing it, helps the author better understand the event and, by extension, himself/herself in general. Writing also constitutes an emotional release mechanism and a method of coping with traumatic events (Harvey et al. 1990; Scott & Lyman, 1968).

In any research endeavor limited by financial, temporal, and space considerations, it is difficult to describe the totality of the person's character, culture, as well as emotional and psychological states of being. It is possible, however to formulate theoretical and methodological underpinnings, regarding the issues at hand, by using the autobiographical self-reflective method to tap into the most relevant personal experiences. By using this research method, the most important, colorful, and contextually rich facets of the person's life can be unearthed, brought to the surface, and reformulated into viable sources of social science knowledge.

Personal Documents

The term “personal documents” is used to refer to any first-person narratives that describe an individual’s behavioral actions, most intimate experiences, and inner beliefs (Plummer, 1983). Personal documents, such as diary entries, personal letters, interviews with significant others, and personal recollections all include self-statements, self-revelations, self-perceptions, and reflected perceptions (from significant others) of an individual’s view of experiences. The utility of personal documents should not be underestimated since they offer detailed evidence on personal events and incidences, and in general, reflect on how social situations appear to the individual and what meaning scenarios are running through the person’s head. A selection process then takes place and a number of these meaning scenarios ultimately prevail and become actualized (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

The spontaneous intimate diary is one of the best sources of personal documents. Through diary entries an individual keeps a regular running description and reflective commentary of the various life events taking place in his life (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). Since diary entries are constructed under the immediate influence of an experience or soon thereafter, they can be particularly effective in delving into a person’s moods, intrapsychic states of being, and most intimate thoughts and actions. Hence the considerable importance of diaries in the autobiographical mode of inquiry. Diary entries may also be conceptualized as letters to one’s self, thus serving a therapeutic purpose by bringing coherence and meaning to personal experiences. Diaries help situate the author’s subjugated experiential reality within the larger historical, social, and cultural milieu.

Personal letters between the individual and his friends and family members provide another rich source of the author’s experiences, particularly when they represent an attempt by the author to share his problems and dilemmas (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). Close scrutiny of personal correspondence usually reveals the nature and depth of interpersonal relationships as well as the mental, feeling, and emotional states of the persons who correspond. Through letter writing, the autobiographer finds a safe way to express his beliefs and opinions about the state of his relationship with his significant other. In addition, letter writing provides the opportunity to externalize inner feelings, desires, contents, and discontents without fear of immediate retaliation in terms of being ridiculed or even emotionally or psychologically harmed.

Personal interviews with friends and family members can also be used to unearth some deep-seated family secrets that could have not been retrieved through conventional interviewing. The author, being a trusted member in his circle of close friends and an indispensable part of his family system, can use his influence to delve into the nature of his family system and its dynamics. He can tap into such issues as family alliances, the patriarchal or egalitarian structuring of family relations, or the possible presence of physical, psychological, emotional, or sexual abuse or neglect. Interviewing one's own family members can provide access in dealing with such sensitive issues as sexuality and abuse.

Personal recollections can also be employed to fill any voids left from written documents, such as diaries and letters, or personal interviews with family members. Particular attention has to be placed so as not to mold one's recollections to fit with the emerging themes from the written documents and interviews. The autobiographer's eagerness to fill the various voids left after analyzing written documents and interviews, may lead him to knowingly, or even unknowingly, alter his personal recollections to better fit with the nature of the emerging themes. For this reason, it is best to write down personal recollections regarding events or incidences of significance and interest in the author's life before evaluating the materials from written documents and interviews. Even if recollection of such events and incidences is done first, the problem still remains concerning the accuracy of recollective accounts—due to problems of memory attrition—as well as their credibility as accurate sources of personal data. This is because every time an account of an event is constructed, re-constructed, and externalized, the very process of doing so changes the nature of the event due mainly to the differing maturational, psychological, emotional, and sociocultural conditions surrounding the author at the time of reconstruction and externalization.

Applicability and Generalizability

Applicability refers to the potential utility of the research findings derived from the conducted research and the usefulness of the conclusions reached (Babbie, 1992). Generalizability has to do with the extent of inference of a researcher's findings to the general population depending on whether the subject(s) utilized for the research are typical of such population. Issues of validity and reliability are especially important in qualitative autobiographical research as it relies so much on the accuracy of the author's recollections

(specifically, the accuracy of his memory) and the deconstruction and reconstruction of events that could potentially be sensitive to him. Special attention should also be paid so that the initial crude conceptualizations—around the major themes of male sexual anxiety and the damage of the masculine ethos—are as accurately representative as possible of the author’s state of being over the period of time they are conceptualized to apply for. Applicability and generalizability (Donmoyer, 1990; Kirk & Miller, 1986) in the autobiographical mode of inquiry is a critical issue for any researcher who finds himself getting stuck in his own predispositions and personal biases (Scheper-Hughes, 1983). During such a time, it is imperative to be able to get oneself unstuck by de-centering from any personal predispositions and biases thus becoming open to the teachings of others (Acker, Barry, & Esseveld, 1991; Allen & Farnsworth, 1993). Becoming more receptive to the experiences of other men who may have a different perspective on male sexuality and intimacy issues requires sympathetic understanding. Since the autobiographical researcher deals with sensitive and controversial issues, it is important to train himself in becoming a good listener, withhold judgment, and impart legitimacy and respect to the experiences of all men irrespective of their personal beliefs and biases. After all, postmodernists (Harvey, 1989; Hutcheon, 1989; Nicholson, 1990) advocate the blending of multiple perspectives with the ultimate goal of providing broader explanations to experiential phenomena.

My formal academic training has taught me that my own experiences, in this case with masculine socialization, male sexuality, and intimacy issues, may not necessarily be universally applicable. They may not be shared by all men who find themselves in similar predicaments. I do not expect men to openly agree with what I have to say. Traditional masculine socialization has affected every man in a unique way. Overall, though, I believe that masculine socialization practices have been overtly and covertly muting men for centuries, especially when it comes to intimacy and sexuality issues and the externalization of men’s emotionality (Mac An Ghail, 1994). Men’s sociocultural muting, brought about by their traditional gendered scripting, helps create commonality among their experiences, thus giving legitimacy and credence to the generalizability of my personal experiences (Schofield, 1990).

Social Science and the Autobiographical Mode

Is the autobiographical mode of analysis scientific enough by the traditional standards of the “hard” sciences? This is commonly asked question even though it misunderstands the word

“scientific” altogether. The term “science,” and its derivative “scientific,” is rooted in the Latin “to know” and refers to the gathering, analyzing, and inferring of information as accurately and unbiased as possible, utilizing a systematized mode of inquiry based on general laws and procedures (Hite, 1981). Therefore, any problem or issue which is investigated diligently, methodically, and in a scholarly manner, that leads to the finding of relationships among the variables or issues of interest, and which also leads to the drawing of logical conclusions from such relationships can rightfully fall under the premises of the “scientific” mode of inquiry although the term has been traditionally reserved for analyzing numeric data using mathematical, statistical, and computational techniques (Roman & Apple, 1990). The term “social science” came into effect in the late 19th century when the humanities felt threatened by the increasing prestige accorded to physics, mathematics, and biology as a result of the enormous support they enjoyed from the sudden burst of the industrial revolution. Then and only then, did the humanity fields begin to apply the same computational standards of gathering and analyzing information to their own work (Athens, 1984; Hite, 1981).

But how is it possible to apply the mathematical precision of the physical sciences to the study of people, especially when it comes to the study of such sensitive human issues as male sexuality and male intimacy? In the social sciences, for the study of macro societal and micro individual issues to merit scientific investigation, the researcher(s) have to conceptualize, measure, and report the issues as clearly and objectively as possible (Reichardt & Rallis, 1994). Even if altering the scientific criteria of the “hard sciences” to mere issues of validity, reliability, and objectivity for the social sciences is no easy task because the researcher never stops being a living, breathing, and feeling human being loaded with all sorts of predispositions and biases and with a solid sense of a personal value system (Guba, 1990). The issue of objectivity is especially problematic with the autobiographical mode of inquiry, which by definition relies on the subjectivity of personological accounts (Becker, 1970b; Gusdorf, 1980).

In addition to the problem of subjectivity of the researcher, there is also the considerable difficulty encountered in the social sciences of trying to fit the enormous complexity of human beings into the neat little boxes prescribed by the classical scientific methodology which traditionally utilized its hard line mathematical and statistical methods to accurately and successfully gather, analyze, and present its findings in the “hard sciences” (Reichardt & Rallis,

1994). Human beings and the studying of sensitive issues such as sexuality and relational abuse are much more complex than non-living things. To try to reduce them into quantifiable measurable categories is to lose sight of the complexity and totality that comes to define the wholeness of the human being. The act of mathematically quantifying human behavior into a series of discrete categories erroneously oversimplifies the etiology of such behavior. To do so is both undesirable and inaccurate (Hite, 1981; Howe, 1988).

The Autobiographical Mode: Threats and Controversies

Although explicating and disseminating the personal through autobiographical self-reflective research avenues can be an invaluable source for generating social science knowledge, it nonetheless constitutes sensitive research full of threats and controversies. The threatening and controversial nature of the present study is amplified by the very nature of the research topic dealing with such sensitive issues as masculine socialization, male sexual anxiety, non-clinical sexual addiction, and abuse as they apply to men. Similar to Arditti's (2001) reflection regarding sensitivity in social science research, I, too connect with Lee and Renzetti's (1993) observation that: "A sensitive topic is one that potentially poses for those involved a substantial threat, the emergence of which renders problematic for the researcher and/or the researched, the collection, holding, and/or dissemination of research data" (p. 5).

Delving into my private experiences, the back-roads of my personal life, is potentially threatening to me since such process of externalizing the private inevitably challenges some of the core aspects of my self-concept. Even though an individual's hard-won psychological and emotional equilibrium is capable of withstanding the everyday challenges brought about directly by significant others and indirectly by other aspects of the micro and macro sociocultural environment, it can potentially be seriously strained and even disrupted by autobiographic attempts. This is because such attempts aim at writing about the self and in doing so come to unmask its limitations and weaknesses. In my attempts to systematically articulate the psychological, emotional, and sexual variants of my personal life, I cannot help but wonder about the very nature and solidarity of my self-concept in relation to other men around me. My normalcy and greater state of mental health is being challenged by the very act of describing it. "How am I fairing to my male friends and relatives or to the greater population of men out there?" I wonder. This is a question that I feel will haunt me at least for the duration of this

research endeavor and possibly even beyond. It is a question, though, that can never be answered to my complete satisfaction since normalcy and deviance are dynamic concepts defined by a great deal of fluidity due to temporal and sociocultural determinants beyond anyone's control (Foucault, 1984, 1988).

Another important threat has to do with the plethora of overwhelming feelings evoked in me as a result of describing the painful and traumatic events that occurred during my early childhood socialization and adolescence. Being generally sensitive and introverted, I cannot help but embark on a journey of self-pity and sorrow every time I read my personal accounts of what went on during my childhood and adolescence. Some of these accounts are also humiliating thus further exacerbating my considerable sadness and even depression surrounding their unfolding during my current personological storying. Even though I consider myself a successful survivor of the many storms and tribulations of my earlier life—and like my best friend used to say, “You are actually tougher than you think you are”—I cannot help but get mildly depressed every time I read through the unfolding of my personal drama. Such drama may also prove threatening to my immediate family members who could potentially feel insulted, humiliated, or even betrayed after reading my personal accounts of my early childhood and adolescent socialization. Nonetheless, I believe that my current research endeavor requires me to be as honest and open about my experiences as possible and toning down their intensity would only take away from the validity of my arguments.

Commenting more on the threats and controversies surrounding the subject matter of social science research projects, Lee and Renzetti (1993) indicate that the studying of deviant matters and sensitive issues is replete with disagreements and misunderstandings particularly among those that may feel offended or threatened from the generation of new findings. Dealing with such controversial themes like masculine socialization, male sexual anxiety, non-clinical sexual addiction, and abuse may also insult lay and professional people's sensitivities regarding appropriate moral boundaries and utility of social science research. Sieber (1993) argues that there are a number of paradoxes surrounding sex research in the social sciences:

Social scientists are in a no-win situation. If they discover that people behave just as one might suppose, they are accused of studying the obvious. But, if they discover the un-obvious, they are accused of even worse. For example, Laud

Humphreys (1970) discovered that many of the men who engage in fellatio in public rest rooms are upstanding citizens who are heterosexual. He was regarded as voyeur and troublemaker. The broader implications of the knowledge are often ignored, and a tawdry view of the particular treatments and operational definitions are emphasized. (p. 21)

Considering the privileged status of males in the sociocultural hierarchy, presenting results exposing men's weaknesses in the areas of addiction, codependency, and lack of intimacy—through explicating the detrimental effects of the masculine ethos—would challenge men's superiority.

Human Research

Various human research guidelines are outlined in the Belmont Report and a number of regulations are also described in detail in 45CFR46 (Seiber, 1992). The report addresses a number of issues regarding the proper conducting of social science research to ensure minimizing risks to the participants. In outlining the basic principles of the Belmont Report, Seiber (1992) notes that there ought to be:

- Respect for Persons—Individuals should be treated as autonomous agents who are capable of deliberation of personal goals and self-determination of participation in research. For the most part, providing complete informed consent and recognizing individuals' rights to privacy demonstrates respect for persons.
- Beneficence—Researchers have first a responsibility to do no or little harm and second to design the research that will maximize benefits relative to the risks of the research. The report recognizes the complexity of determining who benefits from research.
- Justice—Individuals and groups that benefit from research should also bear the burdens of the research. (p. 3)

Self-Censorship

In many cases, qualitative researchers censor their reports to protect themselves or family members. Researchers investigating politically sensitive or deviant issues may fear reprisals from the very people they are studying if they reveal too much varying from mild disapprovals to intense arguments or to even ostracism and personal threats. Self-censorship may also occur to not only hide the behavior of others but also one's involvement in inappropriate, immoral, or unethical behavior that may bring about considerable personal embarrassment and stigma in the life of the researcher. Such self-censorship, such intentional veiling or hiding of either the researcher's or the respondents' activities is usually done to appease the anticipated reactions from respondents, the media, the professional audience, the government or the police, employers, the community, or friends and family members. Concealment, however, occurs at the cost of losing valuable scientific knowledge. As Adler and Adler (1993) suggest:

First, the community of scholars loses when we are duped, deceived, or misled by the transformation or omission of relevant data. We suffer a loss whenever scientific knowledge is compromised. How can we know the nature of behaviors, the extent of behaviors, and the connection between social factors when they are not reported? Second, potential social problems may go unreported by researchers who [censor their findings], [indirectly] leading to harm against others. (p. 262)

The dilemma of self-censorship can be resolved by attributing real people's thoughts or behaviors to pseudonymical characters and also by discussing the ethical issues involved with the subjects and allowing them to aid in making various decisions as to the extent of censorship. Toning-down the explicitness of personal or subjects' descriptions—through re-wording and rephrasing—and seeking alternative, less potentially threatening ways to retrieve sensitive information constitute viable alternatives to implementing large-scale censorship; and risking the compromising of findings. Before the researcher initiates any kind of censorship he/she ought to carefully weigh the pros and cons of doing so and opt for the avenue of least personal and subject harm and least knowledge compromise (Adler & Adler, 1993).

Some personal and professional issues. In the present study, I have come face to face with the issue of self-censorship and walked a tightrope in delving into such controversial subject matter as early childhood/adolescent machismo socialization, familial and relational abuse, male sexual anxiety, and non-clinical sexual addiction. Throughout my personifications of such sociopsychological phenomena, I, as a doctoral candidate and researcher of human sexuality and family studies, felt the innate need to “go native” and “tell it as it is” holding nothing back. I felt it was my duty—to the greater scholarly community of academicians and therapy practitioners—to shed some light into the neglected topics of female-male abuse and non-clinical male sexual addiction. To this end, I was willing to utilize my personifications of my early childhood/adolescent masculine trauma, familial abuse, and male sexual anxiety to provide valuable insight into these controversial issues. This however, would have put me at great risk for ridicule and even covert sanctions from the academic community—in terms of my academic credibility, employment opportunities, and future tenure promotions.

With such personal and academic considerations in mind, I therefore resorted to performing some heavy editing and revisions. Even though some of the revisions required the deleting of valuable raw data that came to support my personifications of relational abuse and sexual addiction, I do not think that the overall goal of my study was compromised. The major theme of this study has to do with the negative impact of century-old prevailing masculine socialization practices, a theme that continues to resonate quite strongly through my personifications of my early childhood socialization in the patriarchal Greek-Cypriot society.

Some ethical and professional issues. As Dulchin and Segal (1982) suggest, confidentiality involves a relationship of trust whereby one person communicates private or secret information to another person usually within the context of a trusting personal relationship (such as relationships among significant others) or a professional one (such as between a doctor and a patient, a mental health professional and a patient, or between a legal professional and a client). The authors further note that: “The assumption is that the second party, having grown powerful as a result of such knowledge, discloses the information to others only at the behest or with the consent of the first” (p. 13). I feel that over the years, I have, directly, grown wise and powerful by the private information imparted to me by my significant others, and indirectly, by sharing my life’s joys and sorrows with them.

Armed with the wisdom and knowledge I have acquired through my personal and interpersonal tribulations—and having the best of intentions to assist other men in similar predicaments—I then embarked in the arduous task of employing such wisdom and transforming my hard won knowledge into a cutting-edge research project. In my fervent enthusiasm, however, I have omitted—not deliberately of course—to secure informed consent from the person(s) who, at one point, came to share a life with and who were seriously implicated in my research agenda. As Dulchin and Segal (1982) point out: “Confidentiality becomes problematic when its maintenance conflicts with some other normative standard—...when the second party, out of some supervening commitment, feels convinced that a third ought to know” (p.13). At one point, I too was convinced that the publicization of the unedited version of my dissertation (my supervening commitment) was more important—for the greater benefit of all those men (the third party) who found themselves in similar predicaments—superseding anything else, even issues of confidentiality and informed consent.

My past interpersonal relationships involved person(s) who accidentally and indirectly contributed to my developing considerable understanding over the sensitive issues of sexual anxiety, addiction, and abuse and whose lives were also gravely affected by such issues. Had I chosen to go forward with my publicizing my personifications of sexual anxiety, sexual addiction, and relational abuse, I would have owed them—not only legally and ethically but humanistically as well—to try to obtain their informed consent and hide their true identity with pseudonyms. In the end, I opted for not utilizing such personifications and limited my scope of analysis to the effects of patriarchal socialization to men’s lives as exemplified by my early childhood and adolescent socialization. I still used pseudonyms, though, to hide and protect my immediate and extended family’s identity.

Doing no harm. The compilation of formal systematic social science knowledge regarding such controversial issues as relational abuse and non-clinical sexual addiction constitutes an attempt, on my behalf, to increase general awareness pertaining to these issues, and in so doing, help all those men that may find themselves in similar predicaments. Noble purpose and good intentions, however, do not necessarily produce desired results. The process of unearthing valuable social scientific information regarding neglected, sensitive, and controversial issues requires going into great personal details concerning the behavior of

individuals and families and in so doing, risking harming them considerably and maybe even irreversibly (Becvar, Becvar, & Bender, 1982). For this reason, it may be deemed necessary to heavily edit our work, even if it compromises our findings, in an effort to ensure our “doing no harm.”

The publicizing of sensitive personal information that may possibly harm children is an issue of considerable concern. When they are directly or indirectly implicated in research findings, the researcher may be taking a great risk of hurting them both psychologically and emotionally and maybe even irreversibly. As Garbarino (1995) suggests, children have a right to be shielded from toxic information that may hinder their development of a positive identity both as individuals and as part of a group. Even if the researcher uses pseudonyms to cover both the children’s and their families’ identities, and even if he/she has the best of intentions, when he/she frivolously publicizes personal information concerning the detailed lives of specific children—and makes any kind of social scientific inferences and/or value judgments—he/she may be upsetting the children’s fragile socioemotional environment. This is because children, being very impressionable, may find themselves becoming considerably shocked by the unveiling of truths concerning their personal and familial lives. Such shock, in turn, may become internalized by the children and result in the short- and/or long-term scarring of their ego development and personal identity.

In order for children to assume positive identities, and become smoothly indoctrinated in the workings of society, they need to be enabled to develop functional social maps (Garbarino, 1995). The development of such maps necessitates the maximizing of positive environmental forces and the minimizing of any such negative forces. The term environmental press refers to the combination of all positive and negative forces within children’s’ environments. When children become accidentally exposed to shocking information about their personal and familial lives, the environmental press generates a negative psychosocial momentum that may guide them away from the construction of positive cognitions, actions, and social maps and towards the creation of negative ones. For this reason, extra care needs to be taken by all researchers to avoid exposing children to information that may hinder the development of their social maps.

Due to the subjective nature of social sciences, it may also be necessary to consider the ramifications of providing supposedly accurate information concerning the etiology of the

controversial issues at hand—such as male sexual anxiety, non-clinical sexual addiction, and relational abuse. The authority and privilege that we, as researchers, teachers, and clinicians, carry should not be frivolously utilized as means to our personal ends (such as self-therapeutic and gratuitous purposes) and agendas. For, the trusting lay person—who may not be aware of the limitations of our sciences—may inadvertently label himself/herself with a problem where previously none existed (Becvar, Becvar, & Bender, 1982).

Personal Identity and General Awareness

Kleinman and Copp (1993) suggest that personal issues, at a minimum, help create or amplify general awareness and may even create the spark for political agendas. The personal identity of the researcher ultimately becomes, covertly or overtly, the foundation upon which the general awareness or the entire political agenda of the research project is supported. This is especially applicable in the autobiographical mode of inquiry where the researcher's personal identity is overtly the driving force for the project's research, awareness, and political agendas. It is easier for the researcher—in terms of being less threatening and embarrassing—to hide behind the positivist mask of objectivity and neutrality and subtly promote his/her political agenda than openly expose it through his/her personological accounts (Allen, 2000; Roman & Apple, 1990).

Telling my life story as it is—in other words, explicating my personal accounts as authentically as possible—is the ethical and right thing to do even though exposing my personal identity puts me at risk within the close circles of the academic community and the wider circles of lay people. My identity as an ethnic male traumatized and victimized by the prevailing patriarchal masculine ethos of my historico-socio-cultural environment is undoubtedly the driving force of my research agenda impacting: “my lens, my interpretation of the data, my filtering of the interviewers experience, the vision I bring to the project and the goals I have regarding its findings” (Arditti, 2001, p. 14). By exposing my hurtful and at times embarrassing personal identity, I am able to transform it into a daring and controversial research endeavor that, hopefully, helps create a general awareness concerning the damage of the masculine ethos. I too resonate with Arditti's (2001) desire to “come clean.” As she states:

Accept Fine's [1992] invitation to “come clean” and passionately involve myself in my research—to bring my politics into my scholarship and let others know who

I am. It is dangerous, but also shakes things up a bit and injects interest and vitality into academia. And in a sense, if my colleagues are to seriously consider my research findings, I have a responsibility to tell them who I am first. But, how close is too close? (Arditti, 2001, p. 18)

What I ultimately desire from this research endeavor is to be able to transform my personal identity into a rigorous research agenda that goes over and beyond the mere reporting of findings for the completion of a dissertation and publication. What is of greater essence to me is activating a general awareness addressing issues that are very important and pertinent, not only to me but to other men who have been stunned, traumatized, and victimized by the limiting, harsh, and brutal ideological prescriptions and proscriptions of their masculine ethos.

A Personological Story of the Negative Impact of Masculinity

My narrated personological story of early masculine socialization and male sexual anxiety is by no means taking place in a vacuum. It is my intention to show throughout my account making that it is taking place within the overarching umbrella of my historico-socio-cultural upbringing in the traditional Greek-Cypriot culture of the 1970s and 80s. Viewing any narrated sexual story from one's historical, social, and cultural perspectives requires adopting a social constructionist view, which postulates that one's sexual reality is socially constructed by these perspectives and privately experienced (Drew & Wooton, 1988). Indeed, such perspectives act as powerful overarching determinants, or macro-level blueprints, of a person's sexual scripting, which ultimately help shape the mental, emotional, and interpersonal aspects, or micro-level constituencies, of his or her sexuality (Gagnon & Parker, 1995; Ronai, 1992; Rosen & Leiblum, 1988).

An Overview of the Methodological Mode of the Present Study

In the present study, narrative accounts derived from my personal documents—such as my diary entries and my own personal recollections—are closely scrutinized and evaluated. This evaluative process is conducted by writing the key emerging themes and by-themes, in abbreviated form, in the margins of each narrative account, be it part of a diary entry or a written personal recollection (Fielding & Fielding, 1986; LeCompte, Preissle, & Tesch, 1993; Miles & Huberman, 1994). This enables the organizing and linking of the emergent overlapped by-themes and in doing so helps construct major conceptual theme categories based on a thorough

and systematic examination of the data. Chapter four provides a more detailed examination of the process of analyzing such retrospective personal accounts.

Examples of Major Themes

Two major themes derive from an initial cursory scrutiny of my personal documents, that of machismo in the Greek-Cypriot culture and the overarching theme of male sexual anxiety. The presence of these themes is so powerful that one could not help but notice their tendency to mushroom everywhere across all types of my personal documents, both my dairy entries and written personal recollections. These two conceptual paradigms act as powerful generators of feelings and behavioral actions interlocked in a reciprocal circuitous feedback loop (see Figure 2 below)

Insert Figure 2 about here

Machismo in the Greek-Cypriot culture. Most men grow up feeling alienated from other men and find it difficult to relate to them beyond a superficial level (Kohn, 1983; Schnarch, 1991). They tend not to believe that other men—their own relatives, peers, and friends—experience the same feelings of inadequacy, desperation, and fear. As a result, they feel isolated and very much alone in their suffering, which they oftentimes try to conceal with the veil of a defensive, “macho” exterior (Firestone & Catlett, 1999). Machismo refers to the hierarchical arrangement and distribution of privilege and power between and among men. The endless competitive arenas entered into by most men, primarily those of work and sexuality, become fighting grounds for the acquisition of money and the conquest of female sexuality. The conquest of women, and its associated victories, becomes validated with the seal of approval of the esteemed club of the prevailing machismo culture if and only if it takes place for the sake and under the auspices of other men to whom one must constantly prove one’s masculinity and virility; and also to one’s self to whom one must prove one’s obedience to all the proscriptions and prescriptions of masculinity.

Men of all ages and socioeconomic strata tend to experience a considerable amount of anguish and ambivalence over how to define their own masculinity and what it means to be a man in today's fast-changing society (Collier, 1995). According to Hite (1981), younger men, as well as older men, are just as likely to be caught up in the traditional everyday pressures advocated by the masculine status quo, proscribing sissy-like or unmanly behaviors and prescribing staying in control and bearing all burdens and burying all feelings at all costs. In reality, the majority of men continue to feel an enormous amount of pressure, anger, and frustration at their overall inability to effectively deal with their unresolved emotional needs and healthy dissipation of their emotional energy. They feel that they cannot talk to other men about their disappointments and frustrations with masculinity out of fear of getting ridiculed and appearing as weaker, lesser men. They often resort to blaming women for their emotional perils rather than the repressing machismo values and unrealistic machismo expectations of the society they live in.

The way the predominant machismo culture induces men, like myself, with male sexual anxiety is exemplified in familial narratives (McLaren, 1993a) articulating stories of growing up at a certain time period, in a particular society, and surrounded by a particular culture of people. The profound deleterious effects of the Greek-Cypriot machismo culture of the 1970s and 1980s contributed to my inadequate socialization into the masculine ethos—that was glorified, idealized, and normalized by the sociocultural dimensions of patriarchy (Yllo & Straus, 1990). Such inadequacies are evident in most of my personal documents.

My odyssey with male sexual anxiety. There are many contradictions and a lot of overt and covert emotional pain in the account making of my early childhood socialization. In particular, I feel that I have been permanently scarred as a result of my early masculine childhood socialization. I feel that I have always been somewhat robbed of my fair share of joy and happiness and overall zest for life. The memories of the painful incidences I had while growing up continue to haunt me. I still feel the full-effect of the powerful wrought of these faceless ghosts unlike any other bad experience I ever had in my life (Coleman, 1994). What can I do though? I have to go on with my personal and professional life and learn all the valuable lessons that these experiences have taught me. As Farnsworth (1994) explained, I also have to somehow turn these experiences around into sources of knowledge that will be useful to others

that find themselves in similar predicaments by providing them with meaningful explanations and empowering them to regain their lost peace and happiness.

According to Real (1997), covertly depressed men who have not managed to adequately attain the idealized cultural masculine ethos, usually turn to any substance, person, or action to regulate their self-esteem. In this addictive process, they hope to replenish their basic sense of self as valuable and important. As long as their connection to the object of their addiction, be it any tangible substance or intangible ideal, is undisturbed, they tend to feel good about themselves. When such connection is disrupted, their basic sense of self-worth and self-esteem decreases considerably, with the result that their covert depression comes to the surface and manifests in the form of sexual anxiety. In my case, I propose that my failure to live up to the idealized masculine ethos I had been socialized in constitutes the major source of my sexual anxiety.

Personal Contribution

My contribution as a family studies scholar and human sexuality researcher, using myself as a case study, is threefold (Chodorow, 1993). First, I intend to use myself as a personification of male sexual anxiety, shedding some light into the etiology of generalized, ongoing, non-clinical sexual anxiety states. Second, I intend to describe the considerable burden a man can experience within the context of an emotionally, psychologically, and physically abusive parental relationship. In particular, I intend to explicate the relationship between early childhood abuse, traumatic bonding, and male sexual anxiety (De Young & Lowry, 1992; Dutton & Painter, 1993; Saunders & Edelson, 1999; Young & Gerson, 1991). Third, and most important, I intend to show how the unscrupulous socialization into the traditional masculine ethos has damaged men, like myself, who have not lived up to the cultural expectations of becoming masculine and sustaining an adequate dose of masculinity; an impossibility given that no man can realistically ever become adequately masculine (Collier, 1995).

From a historical, social, and cultural perspective, associating masculinity (Collier, 1995) with sexual power, dominance, and violence has unequivocally led to the development of a powerful, predatory, and aggressive male sexuality (Kaufman, 1992), one that lies at the core of becoming a supposedly full-fledged male. This association has also “thrown” both over- and under-masculinized men (like myself) in a perpetual state of male sexual anxiety. In their

desperate attempt to attain the idealized masculine status of power, independence, and dominance, both over- and under-masculinized men embark on various personal odysseys to conquest the much-prized female sexuality hoping that such sexual conquests would ultimately help them maintain their masculine status or attain it respectively. Over- and under-masculinized men alike tend to view their sexuality as the ultimate masculine tool. They tend to utilize their sexual virility and prowess to initiate sexually intimate relationships with female partners in an effort to attain, maintain, heal, and strengthen their fragile masculinity not only in the eyes of their significant others, but above all, in their own eyes. It is as if the intensity of their sexual experiences with women acts as a booster of their damaged masculine male self-esteem.

Stigma and personal identity. Goffman (1974) suggests that biographies can be utilized as effective research means for delving into the private lives of individuals, bringing order to apparently discordant information, and extracting valuable social scientific knowledge. As he suggests, “No matter how big a scoundrel a man is, no matter how false, secretive, or disjointed his existence, or how governed by fits, starts, and reversals, the true facts of his activity cannot be contradictory or unconnected with each other” (p. 63). The real contribution of biographical writing lies in its ability to provide information into the etiology of deviant phenomena by utilizing stigmatized identities. Such information could not have otherwise been collected through standard methods of social research (such as survey research and experiments) due to the perceived stigmatization of the individual participants. Even if confidentiality and anonymity is assured, individuals are usually reluctant to disclose personal information fearing ridicule, humiliation, or future retaliations from powerful others:

Discovery [of sensitive personal information] prejudices not only the current social situation, but established relationships as well; not only the current image others present have of him, but also the one they will have in the future; not only appearances, but also reputation. The stigma and the effort to conceal it or remedy it become “fixed” as part of personal identity. (p. 65)

Stigmatization of personal identity still occurs after the publicization of an auto-biography but it tends to be better tolerated because the social scientist tends to perceive it as a necessary means

to aspired personal/professional ends and/or as a means to the benefit of the social scientific community and humanity in general.

Summary

In summary, qualitative methodology fortified by feminist theorizing provided an important avenue for the contextual study of male sexual anxiety, relational abuse, and addiction. In particular, the autobiographical mode of inquiry constitutes a viable means for investigating such sensitive conceptual paradigms as traditional gender-role socialization, sexual oppression and liberation, male sexual anxiety, non-clinical sexual addiction, and relational and familial abuse. This is because most individuals, especially men, continue to feel shame, guilt, as well as a general inability to talk about these issues. This results from their having been socialized in the critical environment of masculinity, which provides men with only token guidance in the area of interpersonal intimacy, love, and affection. Using myself as subject—and through the enactment of an auto-introspective process of self-analysis—I am in the fortuitous position to investigate the etiology of men's silencing concerning issues of intimacy and sexuality. With my personal issues acknowledged, explicated, and attended to (Krieger, 1991), I am now in the position to proceed further with my personalizations of my childhood, adolescent, and young adulthood masculine socialization and male sexual anxiety, as well as my conceptualizations of sexual addiction and abuse and with my overall research agenda.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The Process of Conducting the Present Study

In conducting the present study, it was deemed necessary to utilize data from a number of sources due to the relative incompleteness of the various sources if considered solely. For this reason, I first wrote down all my personal recollections of events and incidences that took place while coming of age in the Greek-Cypriot culture of the 1970's and 1980's. Then, I collected and filed all my hard copy materials from my personal recollections and diary entries. Next, I proceeded with reading and re-reading the material presented in these hard copies for several times (Schwalbe, 1995). Having done that, I marked all relevant parts in the hard copies that could be possibly linked to any theme and by-theme of social and psychological significance. The categorization of my personal accounts into general theme and by-theme categories provides an easy, clear, and concise way of grouping the qualitative personological data into intelligible categories and making sense of it (Fox, Sayers, & Bruce, 2001).

As I read through my personal documents, certain words, phrases, patterns of behavior, ways of thinking, and events repeated themselves and stood out. The major premise behind the development of my particular coding system involved the consistent and persistent searching of the data for regularities and patterns as well as for generalized topics the data covered. Having done that, I then wrote down words and phrases that were as representative as possible of these topics and patterns. These words and phrases constitute my coding categories referred to as themes and by-themes. Such themes and by-themes are the means of sorting the descriptive data from my personal documents so that material can be separated, collected, and grouped together for any given topic, that is, for any conceptual theme and by-theme (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

Once the initial crude categorization and coding process was completed, I proceeded with reading and re-reading all the relevant parts for several times and marking them with randomly assigned letters of the alphabet for a total of 19 major crude categorical parts (marked A-S, see appendix A). Parts that were similar across various crude themes and by-themes were marked with the same letter. Conceivably, there could be one, two, or more parts marked with the same letter simply because the concepts behind each of these parts are crudely similar to one other; the number of parts is equivalent to the number of by-themes. This was done for ease of grouping

the various parts of the data together based on their degree of overlap across the initially crude theme, by-theme categories. Next, I grouped all the similarly marked parts together by re-typing them, thereby separating them under their own block and the process was repeated for a total of 19 blocks. I proceeded with reading and re-reading the blocks one at a time. Having done that for each of the blocks, I noticed the evolving of various by-themes, which I included as third headings at the top of each block for a total of 19 by-themes (see Appendix A). The source of each part within each by-theme was bracketed at the bottom of the part be it from a personal recollection or diary entry.

All of the by-themes were subsequently read and re-read several times and grouped under eight major conceptual themes and frameworks (see appendix A)—marked as heading 2—according to their degree of overlap. These themes came to be defined as, (1) Traditional Sexual Beliefs, (2) Structured Patriarchal Sociocultural Relationships, (3) The Problematic Male Sexual Adolescent, (4) Sexual Revolution, (5) The Machismo Role, (6) Women’s Oppression, (7) The Etiology and Manifestations of Male Sexual Anxiety, and (8) Familial Abuse. During the last part of the data analysis, I carefully thought out—with as much sincerity and clarity as possible—any relevant recollective accounts from my childhood that could be possibly applicable as supplementary personal data to the various by-themes. I paid particular attention to recollections having to do with my early childhood socialization in the Greek-Cypriot machismo culture.

Various steps have been taken throughout the process outlined above to ensure as much objectivity in analyzing the data as possible (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The major concern revolved around the *apriori* imposition of the eight conceptual themes during the process of grouping and coding the data from my personal recollections and diary entries (Helling, 1988; Hammersley, 1992; Schwalbe, 1995). How could that be possible amidst the plethora of personal biases that characterize the autobiographical mode of inquiry? This is a tough issue but not an insurmountable one. One way to avoid the *apriori* imposition of conceptual themes on the data is for a researcher to read all the parts of the data several times letting the various by-themes guide him as they emerge from the data. It is imperative to let the data direct the researcher and not force the data into themes and by-themes (Athens, 1984; LeCompte, 1987).

The problem of *apriori* imposition, though, is still quite applicable to personal recollective accounts (Lincoln, 1995). This is because such accounts are noted, recorded, grouped, and coded after completing the bulk of the analysis procedure using personal data from other sources, such as diary entries. In this case, the author becomes predisposed to pay attention only to those parts of his recollective accounts that are related to his personal data from the other sources and even exaggerate certain events to better fit with such data. Caution is necessary about the clarity of one's recollective accounts and their relevance and applicability to the rest of the data (Clifford, 1986). For this reason, I resorted to writing a personal outline of all the major events and happenings that took place during my earlier childhood and adolescent years. This brainstorming of my personal recollective experiences proved useful as it gave rise to a summarized novel including a detailed outline of the events and happenings but without the *apriori* imposition of the conceptual themes and by-themes (Ellis, 1991; Yin, 1994). One advantage of the present study is that due to the clarity and emotionally charged nature of the issues under investigation (the current issues of masculine socialization, male sexuality, and sexual anxiety) the various by-themes tend to evolve with relative ease having completed the thorough readings, groupings, and codings of the data (Bertaux, 1981). In fact, with qualitative autobiographical studies dealing with more ambiguous issues the problem of *apriori* imposition of conceptual themes could not be as easily overcome.

Personal Background: Pre-Adolescence and Adolescence

My personal sexual narrative, as I describe it, is characterized as one of pain, humiliation, dissatisfaction, repression, and oppression. Such a narrative, is the result of an individual, like myself, born and raised in a patriarchal society, one that is strictly governed by ideologies, such as structural functionalist, exchange, and developmental; ideologies that are the driving forces behind the social construction of sociocultural notions of love, economics, and sexuality.

Traditional Sexual Beliefs

A number of sexual myths exist regarding appropriate human sexual behavior. The heterosexual sexual act involving penile erection, vaginal penetration, and subsequent ejaculation, is considered as the "normal" and ultimate form of human sexual expression. As Schnarch (1991) suggests:

Social prescriptions for "sexual normality" are embedded in sexual humor and the

literary and performing arts. “Sexual myths” are examples of prevailing cultural norms that are antithetical to effective long-term sexual functioning. Zilbergeld (1978) has pointed out several popular “myths”:

- All physical contact must lead to sex, and all sex must involve intercourse.
- Sex requires an erection and a real man always wants sex.
- Sex is a linear progression culminating in orgasm.
- Sex should come naturally.
- In sex, as elsewhere, it is performance that counts.
- The man must take charge of and orchestrate sex.
- The preceding myths should no longer have an impact on those who previously believed the myths. (1991, cited by Schnarch, 1991, pp. 52-53)

Traditional gender role socialization accords more power to men, not only in the economic, political, religious, and educational realm, but also, in the sexual realm. This power, assumes its ultimate expression during the course of the heterosexual sexual act, whereby men tend to display a great deal of control on how it is unfolded; from determining when it starts, to when it stops, to what is actually going on in between. This act represents the cultural standard by which men dominate women and tends to create a lot of shame and taboos concerning human sexual expression (Pleck, 1976; Pleck, Sonenstein, & Ku, 1993a).

Sexual Oppression: Shame and Taboos

Sexual shame plays an important but silent role in men’s lives. Most men are aware of their shame concerning their own sexuality, and their constant quest for sexual satisfaction from their female counterparts, but go to great lengths to avoid externalizing it and sharing their concerns with their significant others. Indeed, the sexualized male masculine culture is not only shame prone but shame phobic as well (Wright, 1987). Sexual shame begins in childhood when boys start becoming curious about their own sexuality and the cultural construction of male and female sexuality in general. On one hand, boys live in a modern-day sociocultural environment replete with sexual messages and innuendoes but on the other hand, parents and significant others consider them asexual and go to great lengths to protect them from sexual information. Boys receive discordant messages concerning human sexuality and start to experience

considerable shame, guilt, and anxiety for wanting to know about sex but admonished not to. In addition, boys tend to receive a great deal of sexual misinformation from their peers—the only available source of sexual information to them—who also perpetrate prevailing sexual taboos and stereotypes.

I was born in Kyrenia, a small coastal town in the Mediterranean island of Cyprus. The country of Cyprus has undergone tremendous sociocultural changes in the past 20 something years. As I was growing up, I sometimes overheard some of the adult conversations of my parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents, family friends, etc., conversations that revealed the extent of their sexual suppression. Thinking back at these conversations, I now realize the immense structural barriers that actually existed over male and female sexual expression. Such barriers, were systematically set up by the predominant Greek Orthodox Church, which prescribed and proscribed the mainstream values and beliefs concerning sexuality. I will never forget the times when my mother had to be absolutely certain that my sister was not menstruating, before she would let her attend church services. She frequently exclaimed that its a sin to go to the house of God, impure like that. Women were not even allowed to stand next to men in church, even to this day, women are usually found in the church's second floor.

A couple of years after the war of 1974 me (I was 9 then) and my family moved to a one bedroom apartment in a run down apartment building. As the top floors of the building were unfinished, they offered a “sexual heaven” for couples engaging in premarital and extramarital relationships. I remember my mother, secretly gossiping with the neighbors about the young lovers that frequented that place. They talked about everything, from their physical appearance, to the barely audible sexual sounds they made during their lovemaking, to the used condoms found on the cement floor; you name it, (it meaning anything sexual) they talked about it - but always in secret, lest anybody would hear them and tarnish their “saintly” image. I did not understand, however, most of what was said, especially my mother's famous phrase that they did the deed. Only later, in my late teens, did I come to find out that the “deed” meant sex.

Similarly, around that time, it was not uncommon for my mother to take my sister and I downtown for shopping. On our way to the stores, we always had to pass through the bars, cabarets, and prostitution houses, and I distinctly remember my mother, always hurrying us through there. I would sometimes stop and stare at the exotically dressed and painted women,

hanging around those dimly lit, smoky places, and inquire as to what was going on; my mother would never answer my question. The same thing happened with pornographic magazines. My mother always tried to divert our attention away from those conspicuously displayed “dirty magazine” racks found outside the little kiosks (round shaped convenient stores situated along heavy pedestrian traffic areas).

The absence of explanation on behalf of my mother and her friends—and from all my adult significant others like my relatives and teachers—not only helped create an aura of mystery surrounding human sexuality but also marked the beginning of the emergence of personal feelings of sexual anxiety and shame. I was beginning to feel overly anxious about sex in general but at the same time shame for wanting to know all that there was about the undesirable and dirty topic of sex. That is when I turned to peers for answers but most of the answers I got were contradictory, inflammatory, perverted, and plain stupid.

Homosexual Stigma

Even though the sexual behaviors involved in gay and bisexual orientations closely resemble those enacted during heterosexual sex, the power dynamics are different (Epstein, 1994; Lancaster, 1995; Lehne, 1992). That is, male-male and female-female sexual acts closely resemble heterosexual sexual acts, short of the dominant male, submissive female power interplays that usually characterize the latter as a result of the exercise of male patriarchal domination (Pleck, 1992). Traditional gender attitudes and power dynamics cannot be expressed during the enactment of homosexual acts, although a minority of gay and lesbian partners abide by the premises of traditional gender roles and attitudes (Bullough & Bullough, 1993; Gagne & Tewksbury, 1998; Lancaster, 1995; Lorber, 1994).

There exists considerable bisexual and homosexual stigma in today’s sociopsychological environment of heterosexual dictatorship. In fact, gay and bisexual sexual orientations tend to be ridiculed and considerably denigrated by being relegated to inferior pathological statuses, since they fail to provide opportunities for male dominance and female submission during the enactment of their associated sexual acts (Lancaster, 1995; Lehne, 1992). Although bisexual people are sexually attracted to both males and females, many of them tend to have a somewhat stronger attraction to one gender than the other (Weinberg, Williams, & Pryor, 1994). Some gay people (and some heterosexual people) believe that claims to bisexuality are a cop-out that

people use to deny being gay. Others view bisexuality as a form of sexual experimentation with people of one's own gender by people who are predominantly heterosexual. The majority of bisexual people however, report that they can maintain erotic interests in, and romantic relationships with, members of both genders. Garber (1995) and Weinberg et al. (1994) insist that bisexuality is an authentic sexual orientation and not simply a cover for a gay male or lesbian sexual orientation.

Homosexuality in the Greek-Cypriot culture was not only a sexual orientation. It was a state of being everybody tried to disassociate from; something everybody feared, just like a contagious disease. Unconventional sexual occurrences, like the ones I personally experienced, were (and still are) considered to erode the very essence of one's masculinity (the very core of one's manhood, agency, and self-worth); homosexuality implied no agency, no self-worth, only nothingness.

When I was in elementary school, there were a couple of incidences whereby I was touched and caressed in my private parts by a couple of other boys of my age; throughout the duration of this so-called "deviant" sexual act, I was instructed (but not coerced) to also touch the private parts of the other boy, and, I have to admit, it felt good at the time. When I finally broke down and told my parents about one of these occurrences, they became really devastated. Their strict working class mentality, and their extensive indoctrination into the prevailing sociocultural and religious conceptions of what is "right" and what is "wrong," had only made them fear the worst; that I was going to become a homosexual.

Every gesture, every posture, every stance, every way of acting in the world, is immediately seen as "masculine" or "feminine," depending on whether it connotes activity or passivity. Every action is governed by a relational system, a code which produces its meanings out of the subject matter of the body, its form, its engagement with other bodies [wrong engagement with other bodies (like in my sexual incidences) is automatically considered to be wrong action and should be avoided at all costs]. Every act is, effectively, part of an ongoing exchange-system between men...To maintain one's masculinity, one must successfully come out on top of these exchanges [which I obviously failed to do during those incidences]. To lose in this ongoing exchange system entails a loss of face, which

is to say a loss of status, and a loss of masculinity. The threat, and the fear, [which my parents surely experienced] is a total loss of status, whereby one descends to the zero point of the game, and either literally or effectively becomes a *cochon* [a gay]. (Lancaster, 1995, p. 149)

I remember my father being very furious after I told him and my mother that some boy and I had engaged in a couple of episodes of mutual masturbation. Fearing that he will unleash his wrath on me, I locked myself in the bathroom right after I told them about it. Both of my parents were banging on the door asking me to come out because they wanted to talk to me about what happened. I was so terrified not only at the possibility of receiving a beating but mostly because I feared that I really did something wrong and irreversible to myself. At the time, I thought, “Oh my God, since that boy touched my penis and I touched his, that means we are gay.” To my surprise, both my father and mother supported me on this and went to great details to explain to me the negative aspects of homosexuality and instructed me not to play with that boy or other boys like that again. I was considerably relieved and we all went by our lives after that as if nothing happened.

In retrospect, I do not believe that any of these childhood incidences affected my sexual orientation at the time, I did not even know the anatomical differences between boys and girls; let alone know what a homosexual, bisexual, or heterosexual sexual orientation was. I do believe though that they had planted the seeds for my future sexual anxiety as an adolescent and young adult by continually challenging my conception of manhood; my perception of how well I was living up to the prevailing sociocultural standards of masculinity during the tumultuous formative years of adolescence.

Even nowadays, the immediate agents of social control (such as parents, teachers, friends, and relatives) unnecessarily socially construct a derogatory reality and conception about homosexuality. The result, is that this sexual orientation is never seen or judged from the perspective of the individual, but instead, it is viewed through the lens of the prevailing patriarchal social, political, and religious institutions which come to define appropriate male gender-role behavior and machismo ideology. The sociocultural patriarchal institutions hold many stakes—having to do with money, control, and power—in upholding gender-role

stereotypes of masculinity and femininity as well as heterosexuality. As Lancaster (1995) suggests:

Homosexual intercourse and homosexual stigma play a clear and major role in the construction of appropriate gender for men. Their force on the male body is both differentiating and disciplinary. And machismo's ultimate reinforcement is the sanction: that one might be seen as, or become stigmatized as, or become , a *cochon* [a gay], if one fails to maintain one's proper masculinity as defined by machismo. (p. 154)

Structured Patriarchal Sociocultural Relationships

The major constituents of the traditional male role in patriarchal cultures cut across race, ethnicity, age, and social class. David and Brannon (1976) identify four primary elements of the essentialist generic male role: (a) the avoidance of anything feminine, (b) emphasis on physical toughness and emotional distancing, (c) emphasis on being aggressive and forceful, and (d) preoccupation with competition, achievement, and success in both the economic and sexual arenas. Within such patriarchal societies, traditional male gender socialization infuses some men with a perpetual feeling of male sexual anxiety whereby an integral part of masculine validation—and hence an important part of men's gender identity—has to do with the construction of male sexual behavior as a kind of game. This game constitutes an almost continuous contest whereby the conquering of women's sexuality is regarded as the ultimate prize.

How can men be expected to rid themselves of the curse of male sexual anxiety if the endless pursuit of female sexuality is the primary requisite for the formation of their gender identity in the historico-socio-cultural system in which they live? This system further contributes to the inducement of male sexual anxiety by being based on contradictory cultural messages of males as sexual pursuers and females as sexual resisters. Under the premises of this polarized sexual ethos of predatory male heterosexual dictatorship, the greatest masculine prowess becomes accorded to those males who have the highest number of sexual encounters, with the most partners, and who bear minimum regard for intimacy, tenderness, or compassion regarding their partners (Levant & Pollack, 1995). Knowingly or unknowingly, such men

engage in a game of power or control and in the process sacrifice what's left of their intimacy. Power becomes a priority need over intimacy.

Oppressive Religious Environment

In their study, Turner and Harvey (1987) offer an exploration of how traditionally, religious myth and mysticism were combined to create masculine power systems that relegated women to secondary and insignificant roles and refrained from giving them proper credit for their intelligence and creative powers. The authors posit that a review of studies in sociology, historiography, folklore, and anthropology illustrate the transformation of Mother Earth (a feminine representation) into Father God (a masculine representation). Also, they further note that the Greek-Judeo-Christian masculine ethos extols God as Father and maleness as sacred, while characterizing the Goddess as the seductress who tempts humanity with her evil apples.

Such transformations and characterizations impart a patriarchal masculine orientation in most religions, as reflected in the oppressive sociocultural environments created by the Church to insure its own position—and by extension that of the male clerics—as one of the key pacesetters in the social order. Jogan (1989) argues that Catholic religious and social doctrine—a doctrine that is very similar to that advocated by the Greek-Orthodox Church—advocates misogynist, homophobic, and machismo attitudes, as evidenced by: (a) the exclusion and subjugation of women, (b) the denigration and designation of homosexuality as the greatest of sins, and (c) the affordance of male privilege and the encouragement of male dominance in both the public and private spheres.

Masculinity in national cultures is strongly associated with greater religiosity and such masculine and religious cultures tend to stress a belief in God the Father (Hofstede, 1998). The masculine Greek-Cypriot culture is a homogeneously religious culture whose members retain strong beliefs in the Greek-Orthodox Church and pay considerable reverence and financial contributions to the male priests, clergy, and above all, the head of the church who is referred to as the patriarch. Growing up under the influence of the patriarchal Greek Orthodox Church was, to say the least, anxiety producing. Even though I attended services infrequently, when I did so, I always found myself wondering if I was leading a good Christian life.

I remember the penetrating eyes of the saints in the icons staring at me, every time I entered the church building; they looked so Godly and over-powerful, and I felt so weak and

sinful. Since the physical environment of the church was so frightening and chilling, I often tried, to no avail, to ease my tension and anxiety by concentrating on the service conducted by the priest and his (not her, as no females were, and still are, allowed in the ranks of priesthood; the head of the church is appropriately called “the patriarch”) assistants. The priests used (and still do) archaic forms of the ancient Greek language, which most ordinary people did not and still do not understand. As a corollary to that, I would like to point out that the priests’ uniform - with its black and navy blue “robe-like dress,” its tall black hat, and the long and heavy black cane - contributed considerably to my fear of the Greek Orthodox church.

In addition, as if the trip to the church was not enough of a “scary ride” for me, I also found myself frequently threatened by clergy and Sunday school teachers alike, as to the perils of masturbation, “Those of you that engage in masturbation will burn in hell,” “You are all committing a terrible sin,” my Sunday school teacher used to say. As Laumann and Gagnon (1995) suggest:

The resistance to masturbation by adult audiences [Sunday school teachers] rests on the belief that it is in some ways anti-social. To many audiences it appears to be caused by or is a sign of loneliness, social detachment, personal encapsulation, or low network densities [or a sinful indulgence]. (p. 202)

As the years went by - and as I became more and more aware and critical of the social and cultural world around me - I finally came to solve the “church’s fear puzzle.” The Greek Orthodox Church had turned itself into a financial empire by capitalizing on ordinary people’s (just like myself) fear of eternal damnation. This was meticulously done by exchanging absolution of sins and entrance in heaven, in return for one’s strict adherence to the church’s ethic and, of course, for one’s personal financial contributions (kind of like the televangelical hotlines here in the U.S., with the only difference that while the evangelists are clearly speaking a common language that everyone can understand, our “active duty” priests are incomprehensible - only when it comes to asking donations at the end of services, do they miraculously make themselves comprehensible).

Militarized Masculinity

In their study on the influence of military training on gender-role attitudes and authoritarianism, Kurpius and Lucart (2000) found that military students had the most traditional authoritarian beliefs and gender-role attitudes. When men only were analyzed, military males were the most traditional in their attitudes toward women, and scored consistently higher in anti-femininity attitudes, authoritarianism, status beliefs, and overall toughness attitudes compared to civilian men. In addition, in his chapter on military masculinity, Karner (1998) found that a number of social constructions surround the constraints, responsibilities, and rewards of maleness for young and adult males in the military. He suggests that the military environment is a haven for the construction, nurturing, portrayal, and internalization of extreme masculine socialization patterns, such as those associated with violence and aggressive domination. The military, being a school for masculinity, provides the yardstick for young and adult males to measure their manhood against their traditional and often violent fathers, who represent the archetypes for manhood. The author further noted that a toxic hyper-masculinity was the result of prolonged military training and the majority of males did not come out of the military setting the same way they went in.

In her review essay, Williams (1994) extrapolates on the cultural phenomenon of militarized masculinity—i.e., the popularized glorification of a man's stamina, physical strength, and willpower in a military setting. The author offers a feminist examination of the role of this phenomenon in post-cold war international politics, in which gender norms and beliefs about masculine and feminine are embedded in concepts of militant nationality, rights, and statehood. The author also explores the internalization of the warrior mythology component of popularized masculine psychology perpetrated by the media and present as a vital component of all military training. As the author suggests, the major running theme in the warrior mythology component is the glorification and justification of the savagery of the warrior's actions against his ever-present enemy; a warrior who fights autonomously of official sanction and—according to feminist psychoanalysis—motivated by narcissism and ego boundary defense mechanisms. In their article, Arkin and Dobrofsky (1978) suggest that the military indoctrination process constitutes a powerful socialization process crucial to the development of an adequate understanding of adult masculine role definitions. This is especially pertinent in the Greek-

Cypriot society given that almost all of the adult male population has undergone the basic-training military experience. The author further explores the elaborate micro and macro processes through which the values and norms of masculinity are structured by and for the military and the ways in which such processes act as socializing agents that develop and reinforce military-defined models of idealized masculine statuses.

From a macro patriarchal perspective, the Greek-Cypriot military setting, just like any other military regiment, could be conceptualized as the ultimate school of masculinity. When I joined the military in the summer of 1985, I had no idea what I was up against. The idea of becoming part of the “macho” military culture was anxiety provoking and scared me a great deal, to say the least. During basic training, I remember the incredible joy I felt every time my parents visited me in the barracks. I was literally running towards the gates and couldn’t wait to see their faces. I wanted to break down crying and tell them how much I missed them but I had to hold everything in out of fear of being ridiculed by the other soldiers. The military culture was very critical of any kind of emotional display and came down hard on soldiers that defied this basic unspoken rule. Sanctions varied from overt ridicule to covert isolation during break times. The enlisted officers and all soldiers, for that matter, simply disliked and were not willing to tolerate any “mamas’ boys” or any displays of “sissy-like” behaviors.

I was not raised me to be a “macho” man and never talked to me about the “birds and the bees” so I had to learn everything from my close friends. Needless to say, when I entered the military I was “sexually shocked.” Everyone around me seemed to know a great deal about sex and had a sexual adventure to share, that is, everyone except me. So I started feeling very anxious because of my sexual inadequacies and inexperience, so much that I was beginning to feel that I would never become adequately indoctrinated into the masculine ethic; that I would never become “one of the boys.” As a way to deal with my mounting sexual anxiety, I decided to rebel against the military establishment and tried to build-up my sexual persona by frequenting bars, night clubs, strip clubs, and by surrounding myself with different kinds of people from the civilian “deviant sexual underworld.” As naively as it may sound now, at that time, I thought that my sexual rebellion and defiance of the military will make-up for my lost adolescence and help construct my sexual reputation—and hopefully overhaul my masculine persona—among my military companions and friends.

The Problematic Male Sexual Adolescent

Male adolescent sexuality is dependent upon the sociocultural, biological, behavioral, and developmental aspects of the adolescent's life. The marked hormonal changes that occur in puberty considerably influence the sexual motivation of the male adolescent. Such influence operates within the sociocultural context of masculinity, which, in turn, determines in crucial ways how the adolescent behaves sexually (Katchadourian, 1980). The sociocultural context within which the social construction of masculinity takes place is especially problematic for male adolescents. In the hard-line sociocultural context of machismo dictatorship, adolescent males need to be given permission to experience and express their normal human need for intimacy and emotional expressiveness without fear of being ridiculed as resorting to girlish behaviors. McGrane and Patience (1995), point that in traditional machismo cultures—such as the Greek-Cypriot culture—young males are socialized into constraining their emotional and intimacy needs, particularly as these impinge on their emergent sexuality in the sociocultural context of their “hard machismo culture”. McGrane (1993) also argues that in order to promote healthy sexual development in children and adolescents, sex education programs are needed at both the elementary, junior high school, and high-school level. The author recommends that such programs focus on providing a forum for discussion of ideas about sexuality, promote respect for differences and the views and values of others, as well as promote a positive view of one's own body and sexuality. The right of the child and adolescent to sexuality education is asserted.

Sexual Pressure and the Fast-Track Male Adolescent

Young people remain inhibited in their exploration of sexuality, not only by heterosexual morality and gendered power relations, but also by their transitional status. In her article, West (1999) examined a number of social constraints on young people's opportunities for discussion about sex, with reference to their experiences of sex education and services in sexual health. Based on a combination of interviews and survey methods, she concluded that teenage sexuality is surrounded by a lot of misconceptions, taboos, and shame and that, overall, there exists very limited social acceptance of teenage sexuality. This gives rise to the generation of considerable sexual repression, sexual pressure, and sexual anxiety.

As I was coming of age in the sexually repressive environment of the early 1980s, I, as an adolescent, had to obtain most of my information about male and female sexuality from

pornographic literature, X-rated movies, or from street-gossip from older, allegedly experienced, adolescents and young adults. Back then, there was no such thing as formal sexual education programs in the school system. Although all my male and female teenage friends used to attend parties together, and were allowed to date (with parental consent, of course), they were, nevertheless, unable to freely communicate and share their inner beliefs, doubts, fears, desires, and fantasies as to what it is (or what it takes) to be a sexual male and a sexual female. They were either too embarrassed and guilty to discuss sex, or too neurotically rebellious to take a definite stand on it; I happened to belong to the former group. There was, nonetheless, a sizable minority of adolescent girls that seemed to successfully combine love and romance with work, responsibility, and autonomous living. In describing fast track girls, Thompson (1995) states:

They refused masculine dominance, and they were never passive or subordinate. They displayed initiative and took responsibility in every sphere- including sex, romance, and the equally valued realm of friendship. They treated femininity as a style, not a destiny, and romance as a comic avocation for which they had a special flair. (p. 249)

Just like the “fast track girls” in Thompson’s (1995) accounts, I, too, used to experience that overpowering sense of agency that usually comes with academic achievement. As I entered junior high, and I was beginning to flirt with adolescence, I was also starting to experience strong sexual desires for the opposite sex. But, as I (and most of the other teenagers that I knew) was deprived from any kind of casual contact with a female, I inevitably resorted in self-experimentation through masturbation. Years went by without being able to actualize my increasing desire for sex. Later on, when I was finally drafted into the military at the age of 18, my heterosexuality was once again questioned as a result of my virginity. My father, even went so far as to seek advice concerning my situation from a very close friend of his, who, upon asked to comment on the matter, suggested that the best way for me to affirm my heterosexuality would be by arranging a sexual appointment with a prostitute. I will never forget my mother staying up all-night and waiting for me to return home, from the arranged sexual encounter, with the “happy news.” When I finally came home and told her that I did not have sex, you can imagine her reaction. Her disappointment and anger was written all over her face. She lowered

her eyes, sighed deeply and said, “Why, what’s wrong with you? Don’t you wanna be with a woman just like normal men do? You are not a boy anymore Andy, you are a young man now, and soon, you will get married and have your own family.” She said nothing else and went to bed. Overall, she was both scared and disappointed. According to Lancaster (1995), this agony over their son’s masculinity is typical of traditional mothers (who had spent all their lives abiding by the rules of a patriarchal system):

Although women frequently mitigate the discipline of harsh fathers, [and by extension the fathers’ preoccupation with their son’s male masculinity] it is nonetheless to some extent women - mothers [like my mother] - who solicit independent, aggressive, even violent behavior in their sons, [it is mothers who are looking for proof of their young boy’s masculine behavior] (Lancaster, 1995, p. 141)

As far as I was concerned, the entire incident with the prostitute only helped exacerbate my already fragile construction of male and female sexuality. Obviously, my feelings were hurt and I was feeling worthless. Somehow, though, I had to find strength to go on living, and as always, I did.

Sexual Rebellion and the Fast Track Male Adolescent

As the high school years went by, I was becoming more and more distanced from my peers and from any extracurricular high school activities. Therefore, when I finally graduated in 1985, and still a virgin, I found myself completely ignorant as to the intricacies of dating and sexual relations; ignorant about simple things like friendships, socializing, partying, and the like. When the “constant stream” of parental, peer, and teacher approval finally came to an end, upon my graduation, I became depressed:

Psychologist Alice Miller has movingly depicted children [like myself] who become so dependent upon adult approval [my father’s] that they use almost all their energy and intelligence to make themselves into representations of what adults seem to want them to be. In the process, Miller argues, they lose spontaneity and autonomy, a sense of connection with peers, and satisfaction in an accomplishment rather than in the praise it may garner. When the supply of

approval diminishes [when I finished high school], as sooner or later it must, these children are desolate, she says, because it's all they've lived for. Perhaps this begins to explain the depression several of these narrators reported. (Thompson, 1995, p. 104)

This is when it really “hit me.” All those years of “all work and no play” really made me a “dull and angry boy.” While Thompson’s narrators were at least given the chance, or actively sought the chance, of experimenting with the opposite sex, I, on the other hand, never even did that. Dealing with my virginity was not an easy thing; especially when all of my male teenage friends were allegedly sexually experienced. In essence, my intrapsychic sexual anxiety was more socially than physiologically determined, and I went to great lengths to suppress it by avoiding any intimate relations with the opposite sex. Upon entering the military, for a two year mandatory draft, my sexual anxiety could no longer be suppressed, since I suddenly found myself subjected in an overly sexualized environment; the topic of the day, among my male friends, day in and day out revolved exclusively around females and sex. Apparently, everybody had sex; everybody had girlfriends, that is, everybody except me. Under these circumstances, I resorted in camouflaging my sexual anxiety by assuming a rebellious character (kind of like anxiety displacement), defying all military rules and regulations.

There I was, a bonafied “hell raiser.” But being a “hell raiser” in the army is not the same as being a “hell raiser” in high school. For one thing, your every move, your every behavior, is continually scrutinized. Needless to say, I got into a lot of trouble (more than I would ever imagine). I did anything and everything that was against military rules and regulations. My antiestablishment endeavors ranged from leaving the base without permission, to failing to report back from an official leave for days or even weeks at a time, to disobeying orders, to using foul language towards superiors, and failing to perform my assigned military duties. Just like Thompson’s characters, I, too, had resorted to engaging in escapist activities (mainly alcohol), primarily out of loneliness and isolation. My “hell raising” rebellion was geared towards partying, and included no elements of political activism; even though it reflected years of personal sexual suppression and overbearing parental control:

To the extent that these narrators [including myself] had to rebel to wrest their

lives and their bodies away from their parents' control, overcome the damage of childhood, and join their generation, it was probably better, as they themselves said, to rebel than to remain quiescent, traumatized, and subjugated. (Thompson, 1995, p. 173)

All in all, I consider myself to have been a temperate "hell-raiser" (no drugs or violence) during those tumultuous years. I was a kind of "hell raiser" born out of: (1) years of adolescent sexual oppression; (2) a desperate need to achieve equality with, as well as gain recognition and respect from, other boys of my age (by making myself go through what they allegedly went through); (3) overbearing parental and military control; and (4) a desperate need to rid myself of the stressful and "un-cool" "fast track" and studious label, and relive some of my lost adolescence.

Generation Gap and Female Adolescent Rebellion

During my preadolescent and early adolescent years, I remember vividly my parents' incessant criticizing of my sister's clothing style, music preference, and "bad" habits, attitudes, and demeanor - which, by the way, included nothing really outrageous, unless hanging around shopping areas, visiting friends, and occasionally attending house or club parties constitutes troublesome activities.

Most of the admonitions revolved around my sister's teen life. My teenage "career," on the other hand, did not pose an issue, not only because I was the studious, "house buddy, non-threatening" type of teenager, but also because I was a male; the "double standard" was (and still is) alive and well. My parents would often tell me and my sister how bad they had it when they were growing up and how they always knew what they had to do and what their destination was.

We (my sister and I), on the other hand, were never good enough for my parents. It seemed like the harder we tried to live-up to their unrealistically high standards of masculinity and femininity, the more we failed. My father always wanted me and my sister to do the right thing, but his passion for righteousness ended up driving us to rebellion (for me this happened later on when I joined the military). My sister just couldn't take it any more. While I was getting most of the praise for my hard work in school, my sister was being constantly criticized. Just because she was an average student, and not a straight A student like I was she was being crucified all the time. So, in the end, she decided to give up on everything. That's when she

started doing really bad in school and almost reached the point of getting kicked out. Her rebellion against mom and dad was her way of getting back at them, especially dad. Not that she did anything horrible. At least, she did not hang out with the bad crowd or get into drugs or any other illegal activities. Meanwhile, she also started having a lot of arguments with mom. Mom wanted my sister to become a good traditional housewife for the rest of her life, just like she was; as if my sister's dreams did not matter. Even though my sister was offered a scholarship to study drama in Athens, my parents wouldn't hear any of it. The sad thing is that my sister was born in a patriarchal society, and moreover to parents, with a narrow-minded working class mentality.

The inherent contradictions between my sister's teen lifestyle and that of my parents—and the ongoing bickering and friction between them—were the precursors of the massive “sexual revolution and liberation” that was about to come in the late 1980's and throughout the 1990's.

Balancing Academic Life with Sexual and Social Life

It was not until the beginning years of my young adulthood that I finally had the chance to engage in sexual intercourse. Upon entering the undergraduate university life, in a modern day society such as the U.S., I began to slowly, but steadily, widen my perspective concerning male and female sexuality; this is because for the first time of my life, I felt comfortable surrounded by sexually uninhibited boys and girls of every race, religion, sexual orientation, and sociocultural background. These were individuals who were relatively uninhibited and free (compared to my friends back home) to engage in conversations over sexual issues, or even, in actual sexual intercourse with their boyfriends and girlfriends; attitudes and behaviors that were completely antithetical to those that I was socialized in.

According to the traditional rules of contact, and the norms for appropriate sexual behavior that I was socialized in, these young people were defined as “deviant.” My sociocultural background defined as deviant, any action, behavior, attitude, or belief that contradicted socially entrenched notions and ideologies of normalcy. As I later came to find out from my extensive sociological training, normalcy and deviance is in the “eyes of the beholder,” especially when it comes to issues of sexuality:

deviance is in the eyes of the beholder. For deviance [sexual deviance] to become a social fact, somebody [the Greek Orthodox religious leaders, the Greek-Cypriot

political leaders] must perceive an act, [masturbation, premarital, and extramarital sex] person, [homosexuals and bisexuals] situation, or event as a departure from social norms, must categorize the perception, [codify it in common law and unspoken rules] must report the perception to others, [through socialization practices] must get them to accept this definition of the situation, [through punitive and social sanctions] and must obtain a response that conforms to this definition [through social tolerance and integration]. Unless all these requirements are met, [which are indeed met in the Greek-Cypriot community] deviance as a social fact does not come into being. (Traub & Little, 1985, p. 381)

I will never forget my first sexual encounter. After approximately one month in the U.S., and after going through the initial turmoil of freshman undergraduate adjustment, I came across four undergraduates living together in a rented house. Two of the girls were lesbians and their male roommate was gay. Even though I came from a relatively conservative religious and sociocultural environment, I did not feel intimidated by the three roommates' sexual orientation. The fourth person was the girl I dated. She and I had a good time together, and even though I was not as sexually experienced as she was, she seemed very patient and understanding with my situation; that I really appreciated and felt good about. She did not compare me to her other more sexually experienced boyfriends and, overall, she displayed a great deal of patience and sensitivity during our lovemaking.

My relationship with her constituted the turning point whereby I began to develop a happier outlook on life. When our relationship had ended, I started to lead a balanced undergraduate college life. Under no circumstances was I going to let myself take the extremes again; like in high school, when I found myself sacrificing everything for my studies. In fact, I made it a promise to myself to balance school and work life with social and intimate life; and so I did. From then on, I began leading a more balanced life.

Sexual Revolution

The sexual revolution of the late 20th century involved the abandonment of traditional, sexually restricting, religious oriented values and beliefs, and their replacement with modern-day, Western-oriented conceptions, such as sex-for-pleasure, sexual experimentation, and premarital and extra-marital sex. As Weeks (1995) comments: “the characteristic note of

modern sexual activists [myself and others] is self-activity, self-making, the questioning of received truths, [those advocated by the Greek Orthodox church] the contestation of laws which elevate some and exclude others” (p. 35).

Sexual Revolution and Today’s Adolescents

Even though individuals from previous generations had abided by the strict Christian ethics and morality of the conservative and patriarchal Greek Orthodox church, they, nonetheless, often internalized and suppressed their most urgent and natural sexual desires, or conversely, acted them out in unhealthy ways, while simultaneously “putting up” a good Christian image. The sexual suppression experienced by older males of previous generations has driven them to develop various addictions ranging from gambling, to alcoholism, as well as to bad habits like staying up all night and spending their money on show girls in bars and strip clubs.

Sexual liberation, Western style, has been mainly initiated by adolescents after decades of being subjected to the hypocritical attitudes and suppressive practices of their elders; attitudes that tended to “sweep” straight and honest talk about male and female sexuality “under the rack” (Prosen, 1981; Shulman & Collins, 1993; Thompson, 1995). Reflecting on my observations with my niece, I must admit that things are very different for adolescents in Cyprus these days. She is only fourteen years of age but she is allowed to go to parties and consume alcoholic beverages with her friends. She can stay out until midnight and hang around with her male friends if she wants to. Nowadays, both male and female adolescents are freer to express their feelings and talk about sensitive issues like sex, drugs, masturbation, etc. They also have more material things and more luxuries, which could potentially take away from their drive to work hard and succeed. Overall though, they are maturer and freer lead well balanced lives since they are living at a more sexually liberated time than previous generations like my parents and my grandparents.

The Machismo Role

All societies distinguish between males and females based on their particular socially constructed rules for manhood (Brettell & Sargent, 1997). In the Greek-Cypriot society, all men must make the life choice of machismo identity and abide by the prescribed rules of sexual comportment (Lancaster, 1995). Such socially prescribed masculine rules and ideals become embodied in moral communal standards against which all men are judged as worthy members or

not. Men, in turn, internalize such standards—through various conventional socialization practices—to the extent that they assume a life of their own thereby becoming part of such men’s psychological identities and serving as a basis for self-perception and self-esteem. Gilmore (1997) explains how the Greek Aegean seafarers of the island of Kalymnos demonstrate strict adherence to dangerous and irrational masculine standards in their endless quest to achieve the machismo ideal:

Far away on the Greek Aegean island of Kalymnos, the people are also stalwart seafarers, living by commercial sponge fishing. The men of Kalymnos dive into deep water without the aid of diving equipment, which they scorn. Diving is therefore a gamble because many men are stricken and crippled by the bends of life. But no matter, they have proven their precious manhood by showing their contempt for death. Young divers who take precautions are effeminate, scorned and ridiculed by their fellows. (p. 187)

Machismo Identification

Exclusively identifying with the machismo ideal tends to bring about many misunderstandings and confusion in men’s lives and increases their sexual anxiety. This is because according to the basic premise of the machismo ethic, he has to “hold his ground” at all costs and no matter what. Even if his machismo actions hurt those he loves the most, he has to uphold them. Even if the doctor tells him that he will die if he does not quit drinking tequila, saki, or whiskey excessively, “he holds his ground.” Even if his girlfriend or wife pleads with him to stop seeing other women because it is destroying their relationship or marriage, he “stubbornly holds his ground.” Why this stubbornness and self-destruction? Because the genuine “macho” man charts his own course. He does not need anyone’s help and no one tells him what to do. Changing his mind or habits is a sign of weakness and he is anything but weak.

My great grandfather was the personification of machismo in all its forms and representations. He was a big man, around 6’7” and 280 pounds, with a coarse manly voice. He was a fisherman by occupation, drank excessively, chased tourist girls, and always invited his loud friends to my aunt’s house for a poker game every Friday night. His wife and three children were afraid of his violent temper and harsh disciplinary practices. But there was goodness and

kindness underneath his tough exterior masculine shell, the true virtues of a real family man who risked his life week after week, year after year fishing in the deep blue waters of the Mediterranean sea.

Just before his oldest daughter was given away for marriage to one of his closest friends, the unthinkable happened. During one of his fishing expeditions, desperate to raise enough money to pay for her wedding, he resorted to using the dynamite fishing technique; the riskiest of all techniques. Excited from the hundreds of fish he killed, he tried to emerge to the surface very fast and, as a result, depressurized faster than normal and died from too much nitrogen bubbling out of his blood. He always gambled with the sea, always boasting how he could fish under the worst of circumstances. In a way, he sacrificed his life to prove his manhood, to prove that he was man enough to pay for his daughter's wedding. He did not accept help from anybody, even from his closest friends and relatives when they offered their help at this time of need. After all, "only women receive help, real men tough it out" as he used to say.

Women's Oppression

Feminist researchers have contributed greatly to understanding violence against women in the context of a patriarchal society (Flax, 1990a; Counts, Brown, & Campbell, 1992; Yllo & Bograd, 1988). Patriarchal ideology exaggerates biological differences between men and women ensuring that the former—having been endowed with the dominant masculine roles—always have the upper-hand in any kind of relationship with the latter who, having been accorded the subordinate feminine status, tend to assume positions of inferiority in their personal or public dealings with the former (Dahlerup, 1987; Millett, 1970; Tong, 1989). The structuring of patriarchal ideology has molded men's thinking patterns in terms of "power-over" instead of "power-with" women leading to the perpetration of all kinds of abuse against women (Gelles & Strauss, 1988; Smith, 1990).

Although actual statistics of wife and child abuse are not available, the marginalization of women brought about by the predominantly patriarchal economic, political, and religious institutions—which advocate male dominance and female subordination—coupled with age-old culturally entrenched conceptions of masculinity, have contributed to gender-based discrimination and male supremacy. It is still very much the case that a Greek-Cypriot boy's formal and informal socialization embraces the machismo culture.

Both gender-based discrimination and male supremacy in the Greek-Cypriot culture would be expected to result in the unfair treatment of women and children, as well as to certain forms of violence. According to Heise (1995):

hierarchical gender relations - perpetuated through gender socialization and the socioeconomic inequalities of society - are integrally related to violence against women. Male decision making in the home and economic inequality between men and women are strongly correlated with high rates of violence against women, while women having power outside of the home (either political, economic, or magical) seems to offer some protection against abuse. (p. 131)

Among the Greek-Cypriot community, there exists low tolerance and strong proscriptions against violence as a way to resolve conflict. The existence of strong sanctions against violence and the presence of active community and family interference, seem to work towards reducing incidences of wife and child abuse.

Traditional Gender Ideology and Double Standard

My father, unlike my great grandfather (his grandfather) and most of his male friends, did not drink to excess, gamble, or seek extramarital conquests to attain a manly image. Neither did he take the time to systematically socialize me into adopting the identifying characteristics of machismo culture: “[a culture characterized by] an ideal of masculinity defined by assertiveness, aggression, and competition; relatively privileged access to space and mobility; disproportionate control over resources; and a willingness to take risks” (Lancaster, 1995, p. 140). He indirectly did so however, through actively encouraging my school success and professional aspirations, while simultaneously pushing the idea of “marrying up” for my sister; that is, marrying somebody of higher socioeconomic status than her.

Dad did not participate in our activities and discussions, but even when he did, it was always, “Paula (pseudonym) do this,” or “Andy do not do that,” or he would deliver us his usual “philosophy of life” speech, “Well, Andy is the man of the family and so he should try really hard to get a scholarship to study in the US; he is going to carry the family name you know. As for Paula (pseudonym), she is just a girl and so she should start acting like one. As soon as she finishes high school, she should find a nice boy and get married. After all, that’s what most

descent girls do. Besides, why on earth would she want to get into acting; most of the actresses have to sleep around in order to make it in the industry.”

Distant Father and Over-Involved Mother

Distant fathers involuntarily constitute the “tools” for traditional gender role socialization, and, as a result, cause considerable “damage” in their young children; in terms of socializing such children into adopting polarized gender-role attitudes, values, beliefs, expectations, and behaviors. According to Pipher (1994):

Fathers also have great power to do harm. If they act as socializing agents for the culture, [just like my father, acting as an agent of the Greek-Cypriot machismo culture] they can crush their daughters’ spirits [just like he did with my sister]. Rigid fathers limit their daughters’ dreams and destroy their self-confidence. Sexist fathers teach their daughters that their value lies in pleasing men. Sexist jokes, misogynist cracks and negative attitudes about assertive women hurt girls [like my sister]. Sexist fathers teach their daughters to relinquish power and control to men. (p. 117)

Distant fathers were generally perceived as more rigid than mothers, less understanding and less willing to listen.

Distant fathers did not know how to stay emotionally involved with their complicated teenage daughters. They hadn’t learned to maneuver the intricacies of relationships with empathy, flexibility, patience and negotiation. They had counted on women to do this for them.

Some distant fathers had more than a skill or time deficit. Because of their socialization to the male role, they did not value the qualities necessary to stay in close long-term relationships. They labeled nurturing and empathizing as wimpy behavior and related to their daughters [as well as their sons] in cold, mechanical ways. (p. 118)

My father was gone most of the time but even when he was around, he seemed to be very cold and distant (fits nicely with the traditional machismo script prescribing a functionally

present but emotionally absent father). Mom, on the other hand, was around most of the time and she was also very much involved with our adolescent problems (fits nicely with traditional gender-role ideology advocating a nurturing, emotionally present mother). She would share our joys, give us advice, and attend at our every physical need (as if we were babies). At times, though, she tended to be overly conservative, bossy, and nosy, especially when it came to accepting my sister's adolescence and her physical and psychological transformation from a girl to a young woman.

Young Adulthood: Male Sexual Anxiety

The Etiology and Manifestations of Male Sexual Anxiety

Traumatic bonding results from insecure attachments with ones primary caregiver while growing up which lead to faulty perceptions about the self and relationships in general as well as an overall inability to tolerate intense intimacy and its absence; hence the pursuing and distancing dance. Attachment theory is based on bonding theory, which is, in turn, based on early caregiver-infant observations. The normal bonding process between mother and child takes place in infancy—mainly around feeding and physical contact—during a constant ebb and flow mother-child interactive process revolving around the satisfying of the infant's needs and the lowering of his/her distress. Those individuals who had experienced developmental problems during the time of the bonding cycle tend to also experience personal and interpersonal problems later on in life (as adolescents and young adults). Such problems result from the downplaying of the self, the idealizing of the other, and a general inability to tolerate the fluctuations of intimacy (Cline, 1995).

I used to be a regular at the various bars around town and across town, always running and raving like a wild dog. I could not, and to some degree still can't, see myself with a proper girlfriend. I have always desired someone similar and different from mother. Similar, in the sense of being neat, clean, kind, and giving, but different, in the sense of being sexually uninhibited, wild, and free spirited. This combination, this admixture of wildness, craziness, and seriousness, hits right at the heart of my very essence. It's as if my behavior is governed by a pre-programmed balancing system, regulating my swinging back and forth from wildness to seriousness and back again. (From Diary Entry, 6/6/95)

Mother's Familial Abuse

In their paper, Dunne and Legosz (2000) argue that childhood sexual abuse is an important predictor of poor physical and mental health and social well being. The authors suggest that child sexual abuse constitutes a fundamental personal, interpersonal, communal, and societal problem not only because of its potentially long-lasting damaging effects but also due to its potentially irreversible nature. They further posit that the sexual abuse of children tends to satisfy many of the defining criteria for causation, mainly that: (a) it usually precedes other life problems, (b) it is strongly associated with poor health in the population, (c) there is a clear association between the extent of abuse and the intensity of its consequences, and (d) there is consistency in findings across many studies that use different populations and employ a variety of research methods.

There exist serious long-term effects of female childhood sexual abuse in adulthood, such as depression, eating disorders, personality disorders, and relationship and sexual dysfunction (Buist, 1995; Neumann, Houskamp, Pollock, & Briere, 1996). The consequences of early childhood sexual trauma last for a lifetime and are detrimental. According to numerous studies, the majority of female prostitutes, strip dancers, and drug and alcohol users are women who had been sexually abused or molested as young girls (Barry, 1995; De Young, 1982; Fortune, 1983; Gilmartin, 1994; Mayer, 1985).

As a result of the social construction of power differentials between men and women (Hare-Mustin & Marecek, 1990), the eroticisation, sexualization, and objectification of the female body came about for the pleasing of men in patriarchal arrangements. This has resulted in the widespread perpetration of sexual, physical, and emotional abuse towards women resulting in their devaluation and humiliation. The long-term effects of the objectification of the female body on a macro-societal level, and women's psychosexual abuse on a micro-individual level, are especially devastating for some women who resort to alcohol, drug, and sexual addiction as faulty coping avenues (Dank & Refinetti, 1999; Ronai, Feagin & Zsembik, 1997; Ussher, 1997; Vance, 1984; Williams, 1989).

Abiding by the premises of existing sexual narratives is inherently limiting for women who have been sexually, psychologically, and emotionally abused at an early age because it tends to lock them into never-ending vicious and inflexible patterned cycles of thinking and

acting which eventually lead to the generation of powerful restraining forces (Gilmartin, 1994; Hare-Mustin & Marecek, 1990; McAdams, 1993). In turn, such forces tend to throw them further into the self-fulfilling prophecies of alcohol, drug, and sexual addiction in addition to having a limiting effect on their free will, and, ultimately, on their capacity to initiate acts geared towards their sexual emancipation and amplification of their self-concept and self-esteem (Schlesinger & Revitch, 1983).

The deep-seated essentialist, patriarchal ideological scripts concerning the sexual exploitation of women are hard to locate and bring to the surface because they tend to become one with the psyche and total personality of women at an early age and therefore indistinguishable from it (Guidano, 1991; McAdams, 1988, 1993). This is especially true for women who have received most of their familial, peer, and sociocultural socialization according to traditional gendered sexual and economic exchange scripting and, as a result, came to be the recipients or perpetrators of abuse in their own intimate relationships (Elliot, Halverson, Matthews, 1993).

Adult women with histories of severe childhood abuse often experience considerable difficulties with interpersonal trust and strongly desire to desperately bond with someone as a way to alleviate the painful aftereffects of their traumatic pasts; mainly feelings of isolation and shame. The various manifestations of guilt, shame, and interpersonal distrust may result in their assuming either the role of victim or perpetrator of abuse in their interpersonal relationships (Saunders & Edelson, 1999). In their sample of physically, psychologically, and emotionally abused women, McNutt and Carlson (2000) found that women who were abused as children reported higher clinical levels of clinical anxiety and depression compared to their non-abused counterparts. Likewise, women who reported abuse were four to twelve times more likely to report a multitude of physical and mental health symptoms—such as non-specific physical symptoms—than were never abused women.

My father went through a host of turmoils and personal crises ever since he got married to mother. The enormity of the sexual, physical, psychological, and emotional abuse my mother had suffered in the hands of her biological father took a considerable toll on her emotional and psychological health and stability and greatly affected her relationship with dad and mother role in general. She was the oldest among five siblings and was born in a little village off the coast of

Kyrenia. Her father, Meizatos (pseudonym) (my grandfather) was among the well to do in the village but he was mean, hateful, and a violent drunk most of the times. During his drinking binges, he used to make everybody around him suffer just for the sake of seeing them suffer, especially his children, his own flesh and blood. He destroyed my mother's life. When she was ten years old, he made her quit school and work in the orchards and later on, when she turned thirteen, he forced her to work in the hazardous asbestos furnaces.

The kids were scared to death of Meizatos (pseudonym) because oftentimes, in his stupor, he behaved like a complete madman. For example, it was not unusual for him to come home at night drunk, hitting and yelling at his children (especially mom who was the eldest). Sometimes, he would even go so far as to lock them out of the house in the freezing cold, at which point they had to rely on their neighbor's good will and generosity for food and shelter. All people in the village were well aware how deranged and abusive he became when he got drunk, including my great grandfather Trevor (pseudonym) the great, as they used to call him. At one point, my grandmother finally broke down the code of silence and decided to tell great grandfather Trevor (pseudonym) that she just had enough of it and that she was going to divorce him. Instead of siding with his daughter, however, as every father would do, Trevor (pseudonym) urged her to stay with her husband no matter what, after all, wives were supposed to obey their husbands' will. One has to realize that growing up in the hard-core Greek-Cypriot patriarchal society of the 1960's and 1970's was a very tough thing for women. Husbands and fathers had all the power over decision-making issues, while wives had very little or none at all. They were totally dependent on their husbands who oftentimes sexually, physically, and mentally abused them and their children. Only when he (my grandfather) chased down mom with an ax during one of his drunken states did my great grandfather finally consent to a divorce. I think that my mother and some of her bothers and sisters would have been seriously hurt or even dead by now had grandmother not succeeded in divorcing him in time.

A history of physical and emotional abuse in the mother's family of origin tends to lower her psychological well being, self-concept, and self-esteem, as well as increase her level of depressive symptomatology (Belsky, Lerner, & Spanier, 1984; Moeller, Bachmann, & Moeller, 1993; Steinberg, Belsky, & Meyer, 1991). This, in turn, come to negatively affect her parental role and overall level of marital satisfaction , quality, and well being of her own marriage

(Cicchetti & Toth, 1998). Full-time housewives that had experienced the full spectrum of abuse in their families of origin, and who also have little or no formal education, like my mother, eventually come to describe their housecare and childcare duties—a major source of their marital and life satisfaction—as less interesting, less appreciated, lonelier, and not as well done and mother-child relations cease from being pleasant, enjoyable, and interesting (Acock & Demo, 1995; McGrath, Keita, Strickland, & Russo, 1990).

Mothers that come from relatively violence-free family backgrounds, and experience low levels of depressive affect in their everyday lives, tend to enjoy relatively conflict-free relationships with their young children and adolescents characterized by a minimum of physical, emotional, and psychological abuse and disagreements. Such children and adolescents tend to ‘breeze’ through the challenges posed by the various developmental stages, are usually happier, get along well with others, and are less anxious and fearful compares to their counterparts whose mothers come from violent family backgrounds (Acock & Demo, 1995; Beavers & Hampson, 1990; Bowlby, 1988).

Intense and prolonged maternal depression tends to lower children’s self-esteem, self-concept, and psychological as well as socioemotional adjustment (Casler, 1970; Cicchetti & Toth, 1998; McCaslin, 1993). Such depression also increases the likelihood of their experiencing considerable sexual and generalized anxiety as adults and engaging in conflict-ridden and otherwise poorly intimate relationships (Bowlby, 1980). Children of depressed mothers tend to seek partners that are good prospective receptors of the maternal inadequacies they had experienced during their childhood—but which they now as grown adults well repress—so that they can easily project such inadequacies onto their partners in an effort to uphold the self-fulfilling prophecy of their childhood hurt and drama and maintain their fragile sense of self (Belsky & Nezworski, 1988; Bowlby, 1973; Steinberg et al. 1991).

Insecure Caregiver Attachment and Projective Identification

According to Schnarch (1991), an infant tends to experience his/her primary caregiver as some kind of a psychological soup, an admixture of good and bad images, consciously identifying with the good parts while suppressing the bad parts. As development progresses, the conscious good parts come to constitute idealized expectations for a potential partner while the repressed bad parts emerge in the form of projections, attributions, anticipations, and distortions

of significant others (Breunlin et al. 1992). In my previous intimate relationships, I admit that I have tried over and over again to mold my partners into acquiring those good parts—of self-sacrificed motherhood as epitomized by my own mother, who I call, the martyr—in a failed attempt to attain instant intimacy and develop rapport so as to comfortably attach to them. Ultimately, I was using my partners’ weaknesses to re-mold myself through their helplessness and neediness in my desperate and failed pursuit of assuming the idealized internalized role of a caretaker and sympathizer, just like my father did with my mother.

During my past intimate relationships, I have been projecting to my partners all the bad repressed maternal themes and parts, themes that were primarily responsible for creating my childhood images of clinical maternal depression, anxiety, and over-involvement, and parts that I have been struggling to dissociate from ever since adolescence (Breunlin et al. 1992). As such introjections and projections obviously failed, I found myself becoming more and more intolerant and frustrated. I am only now beginning to realize that every person is his or her own island where a partner can assume the role of a guest, a symbiotic inhabitant, or a parasitic intruder but the island remains separated no matter what.

Unrealistic Personal Perceptions and Expectations: The Fantasy Bond

The illusionary fantasy bond with an intimate partner that will supposedly satisfy all of the partners’ wants and needs originates in the self-parenting process that partners undergo while initiating and maintaining their intimate relationship. Self-parenting reflects the relative deprivation partners experienced as infants in the hands of their primary caretaker (Batgos & Leadbeater, 1994; Belsky & Isabella, 1988). Partners tend to nurture and punish themselves in approximately the same way as they were nurtured and punished as children. As Firestone and Catlett (1999), suggest:

By introjecting the negative, hostile, or defensive parental attitudes and at the same time retaining painful “primal” feelings formed during the early developmental phases, an individual develops the fantasy of being at once the good, strong parent and the weak, bad child. When a fantasy bond develops in an adult relationship, aspects of self-parenting are externalized, and individuals may alternately act out either the grandiose, critical, punitive parent or the helpless, worthless child with their mates. (p. 164)

The strength of the fantasy bond is amplified by the widespread unrealistic sociocultural myths and expectations regarding love (love will conquer all), intimacy, relational stability (till death do us apart) and personal happiness and satisfaction (living happily ever after) (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Sarsby, 1983). Partners are continually bombarded with visual images from movies and television series about finding the perfect partner and attaining the perfect love relationship. Love songs are replete with unrealistic relational imagery extolling the tribulations of real love as a necessary prerequisite towards its attainment. Cultural myths also abound and are passed on from generation to generation, from parents and grandparents to children, and perpetuated within peer and friendship groups regarding the definition of true intimacy and true love. The medieval romanticization of love had elevated it to the top of a person's hierarchy of wants and needs, without which one would be rendered incomplete, unsatisfied, and possibly even a failure (Branden, 1980; Buss, 1994; Jankowiak, 1995):

I feel so sad and depressed tonight. I cannot stop thinking how wonderful it would be to have someone by my side, someone to love and cherish someone to need and long for. For, finding true love is the most important thing in life. One can have all the money in the world and all the titles and toys but without love, there is not much joy. Oh, how wonderful it would be indeed if I find someone to love and bond with. Not only physically, but emotionally as well. The emotional connection is what makes love stronger, what feeds the spirit, and, in turn, what pleases the body.

Sometimes, I feel like Odysseus, you know, the main character from Homer's Odyssey. He instructs his crewmembers to tie him on one of his ship's masts so as to avoid getting seduced by the Sirens as they cross the straits of Skyla and Charidus. Unfortunately, in my case, I am cursed to circle the dangerous straits of my loneliness and aloneness endlessly, always finding myself seduced by the Siren of love. (From Diary Entry, 9/9/01, 12:30AM)

The child, and later the adult, uses the fantasy bond as a defense mechanism against the awareness of aloneness, separation anxiety, and death anxiety (Ainsworth, 1989; Bowlby, 1973). Partners not only go to great lengths to construct their interpersonal fantasy bonds—their

personal exaggerated versions of their intimate relationship—but oftentimes do so at the cost of their emotional and psychological health and personal growth. Their ultimate goal becomes the protection and maintenance of their fantasy bonds at all costs, and they come to prefer fantasy gratification to real satisfaction and love from others (Brennan & Shaver, 1995). The stronghold of the mental construction of the fantasy bond becomes so intense that any individual or circumstance that arouses an awareness of separateness or individuation—by prompting the partner to invest his/her mental and emotional energy away from the fantasy bond and towards a realistic bond or individual pursue—becomes anxiety-producing (Hindy & Schwarz, 1994). Such diversion away from the fantasy bond often leads to the generation of unconscious anger and hostility, which, in turn, as a motivating force to restore the influence of the fading fantasy bond (Firestone, 1993). As Firestone and Catlett (1999), suggest:

Threats to the fantasy bond also create anxiety because the reawaken painful feelings that were operating at the time the original defense was formed.

Therefore, people often avoid positive experiences, distort and misperceive loving situations, and may even provoke negative outcomes. To the degree that they are defended, people no longer want or pursue what they say they want. Once a fantasy bond has been formed, experiences of genuine love and intimacy interfere with its defensive function, whereas [unrealistic and illusionary] symbols of togetherness and images of love strengthen the illusion. (p. 176)

Unrealistic Relational Perceptions and Expectations

Most individuals oscillate between the fear of intimacy and fusion and that of aloneness. Their solution is to create a make belief fantasy bond characterized by illusionary feelings of connection and closeness that enables them to maintain a comfortable level of emotional distance from their partner—and therefore avoid becoming fused with them—while at the same time meeting society's expectations regarding intimate relationships—thus avoiding the socially stigmatized and psychologically hurtful condition of loneliness (Brennan & Shaver, 1995; Firestone & Catlett, 1999; Hindy & Schwarz, 1994). This fantasy bond becomes the relationship blueprint used by the partners in their attempt to mold themselves, their partners, and their relationship.

The illusory relational fantasy bonds that partners create in their minds are unhealthy and destructive not only to the dating or marital relationship but also to the partners' emotional and psychological health and personal development. The process of forming such fantasy bonds is loaded with unrealistic beliefs, expectations, attitudes, and behaviors regarding appropriate personal and partner conduct and amount of personal satisfaction derived from the relationship. This leads to the generation of considerable anxiety in the quest for a "perfect" partner (Bartholomew, 1990).

The problem that I have been having, over and over again, is that partners that are too wild and sexually uninhibited tend not to have much sense of personal responsibility and trust. Why is that anyway? Who says that you cannot have it all, good sex, good fun, good career, and a good outlook on life. Maybe that's because people generally tend to think in terms of either or, not either and or.

My erroneous thinking led me to believe that it is OK to explore the sexual field as long as sexual play, and the adventures that come with it, occurs between consenting adult partners who, at a minimum, like each other and of course as long as no one is sexually, physically, emotionally, or psychologically abused or exploited. I say erroneous now because in retrospect, I am beginning to realize that sex without love and friendship is likely to lead to some form of abuse, exploitation, and addiction. (From Diary Entry, 9/10/98, 12:30AM)

The IFS Model

The relatively new IFS (internal family system) model in family therapy provides a good explanation for my intense experiencing of male sexual anxiety, particularly, my constant recurring feelings of personal guilt and fear of happiness. According to this model, the mind is a collection of autonomous sub minds, sub personalities, or what is commonly referred to as parts. Throughout the course of a day, some of these parts dominate more than others but their intensity and duration of dominance is monitored by the self so that they can all co-exist harmoniously with one another. As Breunlin et al. (1992), suggest:

Living as a human being is a very complex enterprise. We have to do and think

many things at once. We need specialized minds [parts], which operate with a certain amount of autonomy and internal communication, to accomplish all this simultaneous activity.

The sub personalities (called *parts* here, because that is what most people call them) that inhabit this world are both interconnected and autonomous. These parts, like members of an “external” family, vie for control, interact sequentially, organize into alliances, and sometimes go to war with one another. (p. 65)

Although all parts in their natural state of harmonious co-existence want something positive for the person, since each part’s positive intentions may contradict those from other parts, conflict may ensue. The same positive feedback escalations that characterize polarizations in “external” family and intimate relationships also characterize polarization in the internal family of parts. For instance, in my past relationships, I remember many times when I experienced considerable fear and guilt when everything was going my way and I was feeling happy. Each and every time, the fearful and guilty parts in me were activated and in so doing, served as cautionary alarm indicators warning me of the possible onset of unhappiness in my immediate future horizon—sort of an anticipatory preparatory mechanism preventing me from becoming too relaxed and taking my happiness for granted. Therefore, although unwanted, the fearful and guilty parts in me constitute functional parts serving me indirectly (by directly serving my internal family of parts) by preparing me for the worst:

I feel that I am always pulled and pushed by all these competing forces inside me. For instance, when I am in a relationship with someone, I feel pulled and carried away by the joy and happiness a partner can bring to someone’s lonely life, but also pushed away by the dark forces of guilt and fear. I feel guilty for being happy (as if I somehow do not deserve happiness) and fearful of losing my partner, my greatest source of happiness and satisfaction. This self-torture, this self-punishment could be nothing more than a self-defeating cycle that I had consciously and subconsciously designed because I was, and to a certain extent still am, too scared of happiness. Too scared to lighten up and live my way through life instead of worrying my way through it. Too scared to focus away

from the dark alleys of my perpetual fear and guilt. (From Diary Entry, 9/10/98, 11:20AM)

In some of my intimate relationships, however, the more my self (the overseer of all my internal parts) was seeing my relationship with my partners as becoming increasingly characterized by turmoil, uncertainty, and overall unhappiness, the more it (my self) allowed my fearful and guilty part to dominate over the other parts of my internal family system. This constituted an attempt by the overseer of my internal parts (my self) to better prepare my internal system of parts for the onset of even more unhappiness. In other words, to render my self better able to combat and alleviate the increasing levels of unhappiness and bring about more tranquillity and stability among the parts, and hence, more happiness. At the same time, as my fearful and guilty part was growing out of control, my self, sensing that, tried to suppress it. The more my self tried to do so, the more uncontrolled the fearful and guilty part became, which furthered my self's commitment to suppress this part even more thus setting a vicious cycle in motion. The only alternative to the escalation of my fearful and guilty part—and for the subsequent escalation of conflict among all my internal parts—was to find the personal strength needed to enable my self to regain some of its lost organizational and leadership skills—skills that became weak as a result of the prolonged battle of the polarized internal parts. This was done by downplaying the fearful and guilty part, thus depolarizing it and reinstating its functioning as a differentiated, useful part operating in moderation and in harmony with the rest. As Breunlin et al. (1992), suggest: “It seemed that people, when they could differentiate from their parts, all had a similar experience, described as feeling “calm,” “lighthearted,” “confident,” and “in the present” (pp. 67-68).

Men's constant insecurity for not having achieved perfect masculinity becomes either externalized in the form of abusive behavior towards women, children, and weaker men or internalized in the form of loneliness, sexual anxiety, and depression (Miller & Knudsen, 1999; Real, 1997). The prevailing sociocultural ethos of masculinity has been silently damaging to men as evidenced by the far greater incidence of sexual restlessness they experience in their everyday lives compared to women. A considerable number of men are under constant anxieties about their sexual virility, prowess, and performance. The veil of silence surrounding male sexual anxiety had been activated following the centuries-old patriarchal stigma that fervently

dismisses any form of externalization of male physical, emotional, psychological, or sexual weaknesses and shortcomings to protect men's superior status in the social hierarchy. As Giddens (1992), suggests:

Male anxiety about sexuality was largely hidden from view so long as the various social conditions that protected it, noted above, were in place. If women's capacity and need for sexual expression were kept carefully under wraps until well into the twentieth century, so also was the concurrent traumatizing of the male. Lesley Hall's analysis of letters written by men to Marie Stopes illustrates this vein of sexual in quietude and despair—which is far from the image of the carefree lecher or impetuous, unbridled sexuality as one can get. Impotence, nocturnal emissions, premature ejaculation, worries about penis size and function—these and other anxieties occur again and again in the letters. (p. 118)

Even though men are driven by their sexually anxious selves to seek sex in their long-term intimate relationships, or in their short-lived extra-relationship affairs, getting it only relieves their anxiety temporarily (Carnes, 1994; Schnarch, 1991). As soon as their partners start to become more emotionally and physically intimate with them, most men begin to experience a different kind of anxiety, mainly that of emotional bondedness. As the emotional boundaries between the male and female partners begin to disappear, most men begin to feel anxious at the possibility of emotionally fusing with their partners and losing themselves in the process (Schnarch, 1991).

Uncontrollable and Intense Feelings

Men become so fixated towards the sexual and emotional objectification of their love relationship(s)—and so immersed and preoccupied with the dynamics of their love relationships—that they lose themselves in the process of glamorizing and idealizing their sexual and emotional attraction to their intimate partner. This, in turn, leads to the generation of intense and recurring feelings out of fear of loneliness for losing their emotional and sexual object and fear of engulfment for fusing with such object and subsequently losing themselves.

Male sexual anxiety is associated with the continuous, uncontrollable, and intense feelings and thoughts experienced by the person as a result of getting preoccupied with sexual

conquests or the pursuing of a sexual relationship for the sake of resolving greater issues of personal loneliness and appropriate boundaries for intimacy:

The emotional feelings are starting to overwhelm me again. I feel anxious, not the good variety that keeps me going; the unpleasant one that keeps me from going. (From Diary Entry, 9/1/98, 8:10PM)

Familial Abuse

The long-term effects of familial abuse are multifaceted, detrimental, and at times irreversible. They span from personality disorders, to sexual dysfunctions, to illicit drug usage, and general impairment in social and interpersonal relationships. In her study on the relationship between familial abuse and drug use, Perez (2000) found that physical abuse and sexual victimization, as well as the co-occurrence of both, were significantly associated with the frequency of various types of illicit drug use. Results also suggested that physical abuse was generally more strongly related to illicit drug use than sexual victimization or the co-occurrence of both.

Male Physical Familial Abuse

Childhood and adolescent brutalization of adults has become an increasing social issue. Wolfe (1999) examined the role child abuse plays within the everyday realm of a victim's individual development from childhood through their adult life. In his research, the author identified four major types of child maltreatment that include: physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse and pointed to the detrimental effects of abuse on adult development, including the emotional, cognitive, academic, and social consequences in childhood and adolescence. The author also provided detailed analysis of the long-term negative influence of abuse on everyday adult social functioning and its positive association with general psychopathology—including depressive symptomatology and anxiety. Research evidence points to humiliation and shame as the major long-term consequences of childhood physical abuse with both playing an integral part in the etiology of specific adult psychological and emotional problems and overall mental health status (Westaway, 2000). Because the family is where children have their earliest social experiences, family humiliation and child abuse can have profound effects in children.

Other research also shows that physical abuse of a child by a parent negatively effects the child's socioemotional adjustment (Katz, Hardesty, & Hardnen, 1997). In particular, the authors showed that physical abuse of the parent significantly increased the perceived personal problems as reported by the child. Paradoxically, the authors also found that children who were physically abused by their parents report significantly higher grades—just like I did when I was in junior high when my father exploded all over me because I was doing so poorly in school. This may have been due to the children's internalization of academic motives out of fear for potential physical abuse for poor grades. Commenting on the role of parental education the authors found that as the parent's amount of education decreased, the child's adjustment and grade point average significantly decreased while the child's reports of personal problems significantly increased. Needless to say that my father never finished junior high and my mother never even completed her elementary education. Even though I haven't personally experienced chronic physical abuse in the hands of either my father or my mother, I still remember vividly the few instances when my father beat me.

One incidence that I will never forget till I die happened back in 1980 when I was thirteen years old. I was talking to our next door neighbor across the fence of our townhouse—in the refugee reservation where we used to live—with my sister standing next to me. I do not really remember the details but I think I was jerking the tall garden faucet for no reason and then, it suddenly occurred to me that it was cool to see the soil on top of the faucet pipe shake as well so I told the girls, “Hey girls, look, this would seem like an earthquake for an aunt.” I always used to fantasize a lot with this thing or another, taking myself to another world, that of make belief. Well, unfortunately, for me, the faucet broke at its joint with the main water pipe and water suddenly start spraying all over the place. My mother rushed out and cut off the main water supply. When my father found out—about twenty minutes later—he got so incredibly mad that he rushed out in the garden where I was standing and started hitting me in the face as hard as he could for about 5-10 minutes. I was so embarrassed and humiliated, not so much from the physical pain but from the fact that he was hitting me in front of our next door neighbor. As usual, he apologized a couple of hours afterwards. He was a quiet man but he just had a violent temper, especially when it came to me. Fortunately, this happened only a few times throughout

my childhood. For a short while after these incidences happened though, I used to go to bed at night wishing that he would die in an accident.

My father always wondered why I am such a modest guy even though I have achieved so much and according to him, should be more arrogant and act like a real man. How could someone be proud and arrogant and have high self-esteem after having experienced such intense physical abuse?

Many battering victims report having had abusive childhoods and the fact that a large number return to abusive partners after seeking help (Muller, Hunter, & Stollak, 1995). Young and Gerson (1991), argue that psychoanalytic concepts of masochism can be used to further illuminate the behaviors described in traumatic bonding and the cycle of violence theories. Also, since children tend to identify with their parents, the physical, emotional, psychological, and sexual abuse they suffer in the hands of their caregivers becomes a way in which they then abuse themselves primarily through entering into abusive relationships (Ney, 1987).

Comments by the Researcher

In conducting this study, I am the sum total of my physical, sociological, and psychological attributes that came to constitute who I am today at my 34 years of age, had to open myself up in order to shed light into some of the darkness and unpleasantness of my inner alleys. In doing so, I am aware that I have opened a Pandora's box in addition to rendering my socioemotional solidarity vulnerable to both outer and inner attacks and criticisms. I was also moved and challenged in many ways throughout this self-investigation, this self-introspection. In bringing the various intricate and painful facets of my life story to the surface, I was considerably touched by the extent of my stress, agony, and suffering that I have ultimately brought to myself.

Intrafamily child abuse is not limited to biologic or "blood" relatives but refers to any family member that has been indoctrinated and incorporated as part of the family—for example, a stepfather, a mother's boyfriend, or fictive kin who is considered "almost like family." A great deal of evidence suggests that victims of sexual abuse experience serious social and psychological problems in later life, including sexual dysfunction and adjustment problems (Wyatt, 1991), personality disorders (Waller, 1993), and substance abuse disorders (Barrett &

Trepper, 1992a). As Kaslow (1996) suggests, there exist a number of factors that are associated with incestuously abusing families:

- Socioenvironmental factors, such as high levels of familial stress, marital problems, insufficient income, alcohol and drug abuse, and social isolation
- Transgenerational patterns of abuse whereby the sexually abused victims become more vulnerable to sexual or physical victimization in their adult intimate relationships and/or it becomes more likely that they will abuse their intimate partners
- A family structure characterized by poor communication (Levang, 1989), poor emotional responsiveness (Carlson, Gertz, & Donaldson, 1991), poor conflict resolution skills (Dadds, Smith, Webber, & Robinson, 1991; Madonna, Van Scoyk, & Jones, 1991), and weak generational boundaries (Carlson et al. 1991)

Children from abusive backgrounds tend to become very distrustful of others in their close relationships and “put up walls” in order to protect themselves from possible abuse. They may even go so far as to physically or sexually abuse their own partners as a way to prevent their possible victimization, or, occasionally, in order to relieve themselves of the overwhelming burden of abuse they have been carrying. They feel a great deal of shame and guilt, which prevents them from becoming intimate with their partners and initiating effective communication in order to receive the social and spousal support they desperately need. Their low self-esteem may also become manifested in the form of substance or object addictions.

In spite of the pain that I saw and experienced in both my own circumstances and those in my immediate familial and relational environments, I came to realize that ultimately we, as researchers and lay people, are all actors in our respective micro-sociocultural and macro-social environments. Being social actors, we therefore find ourselves living in and playing out different roles imposed from within and from outside, roles that ultimately help us grow and change at different rates as we act them out and pick up new ones. As individuals with diverse circumstances and perspectives, we—my close family, significant others, and I—tend to externalize our subjugated stories of abuse, pain, humiliation, and frustration in our own idiosyncratic ways within the contexts of our familial and relational social environments. In the process of externalizing and re-narrating our stories in our respective contexts, we come to illustrate the utility of the intrapsychic (the micro) as well as the eclectic contextual complexity

of the sociocultural (the macro). They both constitute the driving axioms for the study of machismo, sexual oppression and liberation, male sexual anxiety, relational and familial abuse, and sexual addiction.

When I started this project, I had no idea that I would be embarking in the mythological odyssey of unearthing the skeletons of my earlier childhood and adolescent socialization and abuse. I had no idea what I would gain in the process or what this soul searching would do to me. Upon externalizing the childhood and relational dynamics of my life, I came to realize how persistent and overpowering problematic stories can be. I have been living them and “brewing” myself in them for a long time. I am also now realizing that I have, unknowingly perhaps, altered the sociocultural structure of my immediate environment to make room for my problem-saturated stories (Freedman & Combs, 1996).

Through my personological writings, I have come to “thicken” the plot of my stories and make it more multi-stranded and hence more open to manipulation and re-narration. The application of social science knowledge to the amorphous mass of my child, adolescent, and adult development helped refine its strands thereby clarifying and increasing my personal awareness of the psychosexual and socioemotional workings of my inner self as well as the historico-socio-cultural determinants of my surrounding environment. Bruner (1990) suggests that as we begin to construct crude conceptualizations of our self-narratives, we search our pasts for “old” stories that will justify them. This is because the crude self-conceptions of who we are constitute the bonding material that keeps us together, that maintains the totality of our existence. Failing to find “old” stories to justify our abusive and dysfunctional narratives would render our lives chaotic and meaningless. Furthermore, through self-questioning, we tend to thicken and add complexity to our “old” narratives thus enabling us to spot “sparkling events” in the old stories that help us reconstruct “new,” alternative stories. These “new” stories become liberative by connecting them with the “old” stories of past events and hypothetical future situations. As Freedman and Combs (1996) point out:

We have found that repetition and thoroughness—especially in terms of (1) asking about detail, (2) inclusion of more people, and (3) inclusion of various perspectives—are extremely helpful [in the reconstructing of liberative and empowering “new” narratives] (p. 195)

Reflecting on my familial and relational experiences helped me connect and better understand the emotional and psychological intricacies of my inner world. In addition, it enabled me to attune better to the predicament of other men that may find themselves in similar circumstances but may be too shameful to admit, and to other women that have been lifelong victims of the horrendous manifestations of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse and emotional neglect. The externalization of my personal data illustrates the thorny road of long-term traumatic early childhood and adolescent socialization, male sexual anxiety, sexual addiction, and abuse. While there exists a plethora of diversities among men like myself and the female partners I have been involved with, and parents like mine and my partners' parents—as well as differences within the particular sociocultural environments we all grew up in—there is simultaneously a common ground. There exist points of intersection across traumatic early childhood and adolescent socialization, relational and familial abuse, and addictions.

Collaboration with Doctoral Advisor

My doctoral advisor, Dr. Katherine R. Allen, has been an invaluable source of assistance with this academic endeavor as well as a source of inspiration for me personally. As I desperately sought a way out of the maze, out of the labyrinth of my tumultuous emotional and psychological world, Katherine was always there for me providing a steady, dependable behind-the-scenes stream of support and guidance. Such guidance was particularly helpful in delineating the feminist processes of reflexivity, emotionality, and connectedness.

Through her own work and reflexive writing (Allen, 2000, 2001), Katherine provided me with considerable assistance in the understanding and written expression of my reflexive thoughts and recollections of past events and experiences. The painstaking process of transforming journaling material into a qualitative piece of work increased my awareness of the totality and complexity of the human experience in relation to the surrounding sociocultural environment. At the same time, I came to realize how the various theories and axioms of social science are nothing more than formalized expressions of the workings of everyday living, be it acting, feeling, or thinking. As she comments in her latest article (Allen, 2001), transforming the personal to political or even using the personal to create general awareness constitutes an invaluable source for the generation of social scientific knowledge:

I weave in stories from my private life to illustrate a key principle of feminism,

that the personal is political. What occurs in private life is a reflection of power relations in society. The analytic strategy I employ in this article is to reveal the connection between the personal and political by using my own life as a bridge for the transfer of feminist insights into family studies. My aim is to invite others into the conscious, reflexive practice of applying feminist knowledge to one's own life and scholarship. (p. 791)

As she poignantly suggests, some of the greatest works in social science have originated from the observation and subsequent formalization of real life experience in the author's immediate historico-socio-cultural environment:

Real life is the greatest teacher, and it is not surprising that some of the most profound and lasting insights have come from lived experience, as evident in the process by which Piaget's observations of his three children metamorphosed into an intellectual industry in the behavioral and social sciences. (p. 805)

Finally, throughout my conceptualizations and expressions of my self-reflections, Katherine was always there for me, collaborating with me, nurturing my intellectual spirit, and, most of all, giving me invaluable feedback on my writings and understandings of the data. In particular, she continually challenged me not to over generalize and refrain from blaming someone else for my own tribulations and mishappenings. Katherine advised me to replace projections of blame with detailed self-analytical introjections of personal attributions and etiology. As she often told me during our meetings and frequently wrote on the margins of my rough drafts, "You can't totally project blame on someone else. Instead, you have to own it and deconstruct it from your own vantage point only." Katherine helped me edit my personal writings to make them more professional and academic. This proved to be an especially pertinent problem for the current study given the morally sensitive and offensive nature of the topics under investigation and their personal orientation—which renders the study more susceptible to personal errors, exaggerations, and biases. As she frequently commented, "When it comes to the self-storying of events, the first draft is usually to satisfy the author's gratuitous goals and the subsequent edited drafts are toned-down for the audience." I have to admit though that I sometimes disagreed with her suggestions to take out all the sexually explicit material. At

times, I felt pushed by her to do so but also pulled by my personal agenda to “say it as it is and as it happened” leaving nothing out and by the scientific need for objectivity for the generation of “true” knowledge in the autobiographical mode of inquiry (Gergen & Gergen, 1991; Steier, 1991). After careful thinking and consideration over the matter, I came to a compromise whereby I resorted in replacing all the sexually offensive words and phrases with more acceptable language or deleted the sensitive, controversial, and offensive parts altogether.

Summary

As Goodman (1998) suggests, all addictions (especially sex and substance addiction) share a common psychobiological behavior profile of erroneously trying to produce pleasurable sensations, and relieving painful affects, while at the same time initiating futile efforts to control such behaviors (the consequences of which tend to be harmful). I think that the source of my sexual anxiety has a lot to do with the limited and stifling conditions characterizing my upbringing as a second born in a family plagued by poverty, living in a socially suppressed patriarchal society, and dominated by an over-involved clinically depressed mother and a functionally present but considerably unemotional and distant father. Having lived in the U.S. for 14 years now—and after intense physical and emotional isolation and, I would add, covert parental hatred (focused primarily towards my father)—I am finally beginning to realize the enormity of the difficulties endured by my parents who heroically and successfully navigated their way through their torturous life path. Only now I am beginning to forgive and forget.

Even though my sexual anxiety, addiction and preoccupation is not remotely as intense or pathologically rooted as that of some of the case studies that I’ve been reading, it, nonetheless, may have something to do with my tendency to separate or compartmentalize sexual relations from friendships instead of trying to find someone who could offer me both. This tendency tends to put undue stress on the sexual realm since it has to somehow substitute for the missing friendship part. I believe that sexuality, devoid of friendship, leads to either overly mechanical or chore-like sex or to sex that’s overly impulsive and compulsive and hence addictive.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Some Concluding Remarks

The overarching conceptual paradigm of early childhood, adolescent, and young adulthood masculine socialization permeated the major themes of the present study. The major themes of male sexual anxiety and familial abuse emerged repeatedly throughout the analysis of my personological data from my personal recollections and diary entries. A number of other themes have also emerged from such data, such as structured patriarchal sociocultural relationships, traditional sexual beliefs, the problematic male sexual adolescence, sexual revolution, as well as machismo and women's oppression. My extrapolations and conceptualizations from my personological data led me to make inferences regarding issues of traumatic bonding, codependency, sexual addiction, and relational abuse. Structured patriarchal relationships, manifested in traditional sexual beliefs and gender-based oppression and hurt, constitute the macro level determinants for the creation of preferential meso level masculine statuses and micro level machismo practices in a particular historico-socio-cultural environment—such as the traditional Greek-Cypriot society of the 1970's and 1980's (see Figure 3 on the next page).

The Personal and Interpersonal Manifestations of the Machismo Ethic

The machismo culture refers to the culture of men, found in most Latin and Eastern European countries and many subcultural pockets in various parts of North America, whose personal identity is inextricably intertwined with the essentialist sociocultural patriarchal notions of masculinity. Loosely defined, it is the label used to describe the unrealistic and unattainable standard used by many men to rate their own masculinity in terms of how they fare with other men regarding their virility, physical and intellectual strength, overall ability to handle potentially difficult, stressful, and dangerous situations, and general ability to “stand their own ground” as “true men among men.”

The machismo ethic, being the primary agent of patriarchy, tends to propagate and perpetuate male sexual anxiety and stifles the nurturing and development of male intimacy with repercussions in the personal and interpersonal domains (see Figure 3 below). Personal problems tend to occur, such as the generation of intrapsychic trauma resulting from inadequate

caregiver identification, inadequacies in male adolescent sexual development and sexual rebellion, as well as the development of male sexual anxiety in late adolescence, early, and middle adulthood. Negative manifestations tend to also take place in the interpersonal domain, mainly in terms of traumatic bonding, codependency, sexual addiction, and abuse.

Insert Figure 3 about here

The machismo ethic becomes one of action, for, a “real” man has to constantly assert his masculinity through a number of practices which exemplify himself as an active leading agent on top of things, not a passive submissive follower, in other words, as a real man, not a woman. Equating maleness and the machismo stance with action results in the constant close scrutiny of every gesture, posture, or any human acting in the social world in general, and its immediate branding as masculine or feminine depending on whether it connotes activity or passivity. All social actions are governed by a relational gender-based system, which gives rise to a code of conduct, which ultimately comes to determine everything we do, from the way we conceptualize our own bodies to how we use them to relate to other bodies, and then, depending on the feedback we get, to how we come to feel about ourselves. As a result, all social actions enter a value system across a hierarchical continuum with weak actions labeled as feminine and strong actions labeled as masculine. All strong actions, then, become part of an ongoing exchange-system between men in which women almost never assume the role of direct transactors but only that of intermediaries. In order to maintain one’s masculinity, a man must become a successful player in this exchange system, eradicating his enemies—other men—on his way to the top. But, to lose in this competitive system of exchanging strong actions and avoiding weak ones results in the ultimate loss of face, which, in real life, becomes translated into a loss of status and a loss of masculinity (Lancaster, 1995).

Under these circumstances whereby men are desperately seeking to perfect their masculine status, their biggest fear and threat becomes the progressive loss of such status, in

which case one descends to the bottom of the gender well and strives endlessly to reach the top. But even if he manages to stay afloat in the gender well, he faces the constant recurring fear and threat of sinking to the bottom either by being pushed down by other men or by getting overwhelmed by his own emotional inadequacies. Male sexual anxiety is therefore inevitable for those at the top and for those “at the bottom of the well of masculinity:”

men are constrained by extremely harsh mandates about acceptable “male” behavior, as well as by their meager training in emotional skills. The male gender role deprives men of opportunities for emotionally rich interpersonal relationships. The need to repress (or suppress) important and wide-ranging aspects of self thus becomes a primary source of chronic anxiety [male sexual anxiety] in the psychological makeup of men (Brooks & Silverstein, 1995, p. 311).

Adequately or overly masculinized men tend to invest a considerable amount of effort and energy in maintaining their fragile pseudo image of strength, power, and dominance that they often fail to notice how they themselves show how weak they are through their domineering actions and practices. For, their disposition to “overpower” and “put down” others not only creates covert resentment towards them—that negatively affects them, directly or indirectly, at some point or another—but also reflects on their inability to utilize the widely accepted humane practices of cooperation, kindness, sharing, and support.

Under-masculinized men, like myself, who haven’t been able to attain an “adequate dose” of the masculine standard turn towards sex as a viable alternative for proving their masculinity and easing their sexual anxiety. Their quest for proving their masculinity “once and for all” takes them in a voyage of sexual escapades from casual sex with multiple partners and one-night love affairs to initiating intensely eroticized sexual acts with their steady partners, to sexual experimentation with unconventional sexual acts. For, unlike overly masculinized men, their disposition is not to prove their masculinity by “overpowering” and “putting down” others but by constructing and assuming a “sexualized identity” thereby utilizing sex as a means to attaining their idealized masculine end.

Discussion

The problems of male sexual anxiety, sexual addiction, and abuse are not easy to resolve because they are embedded in the very foundations of the centuries-old sociocultural institutions of patriarchal domination. Such domination, passed on from one generation of young boys to the next through the socialization mechanisms of masculinity (Collier, 1995) constitutes the underlying problem, the monster, in every man's sexual narrative. Unless we—as educators, parents, workers, and above all, members of the human race—attempt to overthrow the king of patriarchy (O'Donovan, 1993) and cease his torturous reign over the lives of all men, male sexual anxiety, emotional, psychological, physical, and sexual abuse, and addictions will continue unabated.

I contend that male sexual anxiety and its by-products, such as sexual addiction and female-male relational abuse, are associated with losing the harmonization and integration of one's psychological, emotional, and sexual constituents, which, over the years, become interwoven in the fabric of one's evolving sexual narrative and help bring about completeness and tranquillity in a man's life (Philaretou & Allen, 2001). It is evolving because it is part of a lifelong processual sequence of construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction with, in this case, the man as the actor and the greater sociocultural environment of masculinity as the script. Many men, like myself, however, end up falling into the trap of masculine determinism, only to find themselves abiding by the premises of inherently limiting essentialist masculine scripts, which fall under the auspices of age-old social prescriptions and proscriptions advocated by the sociocultural status quo (McAdams, 1993). In turn, abiding by such sexual- and gender-based prescriptions and proscriptions tends to lock men into never-ending vicious and inflexible patterned cycles of thinking and acting which eventually lead to the generation of powerful restraining forces.

Proper and Functional Masculinity

Abiding by the proper and functional premises of masculinity and the machismo stance may prove beneficial to men's physical and psychological health as well as to their loved ones around them. “What is proper masculinity?” “How can machismo and the “macho” stance it perpetuates be attained and actualized in a functional way?” If a man can honestly look at his personal strengths and talents and come to realize that he is strong, virtuous, or intelligent, then,

he can conclude one thing: that he is to utilize his personal strengths to assist others in need of his abilities. They may be his own wife or girlfriend, his children, his parents, his friends, coworkers, or neighbors. He could adopt a more functional masculine motto that “the strong “macho” men ought to bear the infirmities of those in need.”

The “reformed macho” man, in his willingness and enthusiasm to utilize his masculinity positively through the enactment of good deeds for his loved ones, could risk taken advantage of by the very people he is assisting. His offers for help and self-sacrifice could negatively affect him, by depleting his own resources for self-development and by even putting him in dangerous and unpredictable situations, especially if he gets involved with an unappreciative and selfish partner. Learning to assist others without personal risk may prove a viable way for proving one’s masculinity.

General Implications: Sexual Addiction and Male Relational Abuse

Non-Clinical Sexual Addiction

Non-clinical sexual addiction is more than just the pursuit of carnal satisfaction and satiation. It’s a camouflage to a man’s endless efforts and tribulations of trying to meet all his emotional and psychological needs through sex; of putting all his eggs in one basket, the basket of sex. Becoming sexually addicted to one person constitutes a viable way for indirectly externalizing one’s own drama of self-pity, helplessness, and neediness through that of the person’s. Living through her drama—her meaning the object of the sexual addict’s own sexual addiction—tends to temporarily distract him from his own chronic drama thereby providing him with temporary relief. At the same time, the anticipation and actual carrying-out of the sexual acts constitute the epitome, the climax of his mounting personal turned sexual anxiety; an escape valve for his suppressed intimacy needs which have been pressurizing him for so long. The entire cycle of sexual addiction is repeated over and over again as his anxiety levels start increasing again right after sex, throwing him further and further into the abyss of sexual addiction.

In the present study, the term non-clinical sexual addiction is used to refer to an important by-product of male sexual anxiety, and by extension, masculine socialization and patriarchal scripting. Based on my personal conceptualizations and observations of my male significant others—with whom I have had the opportunity to interact extensively—I come to define non-

clinical sexual addiction as a personally and socially maladaptive pattern of sexual behavior, leading to:

- Considerable mental preoccupation with the particular source of the erotic stimulus be it a person, object, or activity
- The expenditure of a great deal of time, money, and energy in obtaining and securing the source of the erotic stimulus
- The risking of one's personal relationships, professional career, and social standing in the community in obtaining and securing such source
- The risking of one's physical, emotional, and psychological well being in obtaining and securing such source
- The ignoring or by-passing of one's moral and ethical values for the sake of obtaining and securing the erotic source

DSM-IV does not employ the term sexual addiction at all but employs the term substance dependence to refer to the more generic addictive disorders of alcohol and drug abuse (Morrison, 1995). Using DSM's definition of substance dependence, Goodman (1990,1995) proposed the following set of diagnostic criteria for clinical sexual addiction, which I have further modified based on my personal conceptualizations and my observations of some of my close friends and relatives. These modified diagnostic criteria presented below, corroborate my term for non-clinical sexual addiction as an intense longing, need, desire, and want for obtaining and securing the specific sexual processual pattern accompanied by:

- Tolerance, as defined by: (a) a need for a moderate increased amount or intensity of the sexual behavior to achieve the desired effect, and (b) a moderate diminished effect with continued involvement in the sexual behavior at the same level of intensity
- Withdrawal, as manifested by: (a) a particular psycho-physiological withdrawal syndrome of psychologically described changes upon discontinuation of the sexual behavior; that is, the manifestation of intense generalized sexual anxiety, and (b) the engaging in similar or closely related behavior to relieve or avoid withdrawal symptoms; such as, work, hobbies, or substances
- Preoccupation with the sexual behavioral pattern and interference with work tasks and daily functioning

- A persistent desire, accompanied by unsuccessful efforts to control or eliminate the sexual behavioral pattern
- The expenditure of considerable time in activities necessary to prepare for the sexual behavioral pattern, to engage in such a pattern, or to recover from its effects
- The continuance of the sexual pattern despite awareness of it being the source of one's own persistent or recurrent dependence on it
- The giving up of other sources of personal happiness and gratification, such as any social, occupational, or recreational activities, to devote exclusively on sexual behavioral pattern

Sexual addiction, just like any other form of addiction, originates in the delusional and faulty thought processes rooted in the addict's belief system, which consequently provide the momentum for his addiction (Carnes, 1994). These include: (a) negative self-conceptualizations leading to feelings of personal inadequacy and low self-esteem, (b) a general feeling of untrustworthiness concerning the addict's interpersonal relationships with his significant others since he does not believe that others would care for him or meet his needs especially if they knew about the addiction, (c) a self-fulfilling prophecy regarding the addict's socioemotional isolation from meaningful relationships with significant others with the sexual experience as the only potentially viable activity that would make such isolation bearable. For the sexual addict, the sexual experience becomes processed through a four-step cycle and the gratification derived from it becomes intensified with each repetition (Carnes, 1994):

- Preoccupation—the mental state whereby the addict's mind becomes engrossed with sexual thoughts and imagery leading to an almost obsessive search for sexual stimulation
- Ritualization—an anticipatory preparatory period whereby the addict prepares the front stage (Goffman, 1959) that would eventually accommodate the carrying-out of the sexual experience with such a ritual also amplifying his sexual arousal and excitement
- Compulsive sexual behavior—the actual enactment of the sexual experience which the addict feels unable to control

- Despair—the accompanied feelings of powerlessness, emptiness, hopelessness, shame, and guilt following the completion of the sexual experience

Men tend to be poorly differentiated from themselves and their partners and fail to obtain the necessary psychological and emotional gratification during the enactment and completion of the sexual acts they participate in. This lack of psychosexual satiation oftentimes leaves men with considerable sexual anxiety that ultimately becomes dissipated in sexually addictive practices. Such lack of psychological satiation becomes the primary reason for some men's incessant preoccupation with explicit paper or electronic pornography (Segal & McIntosh, 1993). It also explains why some men tend to assume a violent, predatory sexual stance against women, children, and other weaker men (Heise, 1995). In addition, it tends to be behind the initiation of risky, costly, and time-consuming extra-relationship sex, and/or it constitutes a stepping-stone to compulsory sexual behavior in the form of clinical sexual addiction (Goodman, 1998).

Resource Investment: Personal and Professional Risk

The failure of some men to tie their emotional intimacy to their sexual potential is the main reason for their participating in risky sexual practices and their developing non-clinical sexual addiction. Men's constant preoccupation with actualizing one of the most important premises of the masculine mystique, such as proving their sexual prowess and virility, oftentimes throws them in a compulsive cycle of sexual addiction. While active in this cycle, they succumb to their uncontrollable sexual desires and urges. In the process, they tend to take risks, ranging from their peace of mind, time, money, energy, and professional careers, to the most important thing in their lives, their mental and physical health.

Uncontrollable Sexual Desires and Urges

Non-clinical sexual addiction is a by-product of male sexual anxiety and has to do with the insatiable desire and longing for the initiation and participation in sexual behavioral acts geared at sexual satiation—through orgasm or other forms of sexual satisfaction—but with failure to do so (Schnarch, 1991). Men suffering from non-clinical sexual addiction could be considered as victims of the modern obsession with sexual selfishness, in particular with self-centered genital sexuality and the incessant pursuit of orgasm. The sexual addicts' exclusive association of sexuality with body parts, and their withdrawal into the illusionary world of their private fantasies, hinders them from being wholly present—bodily and spiritually—during the

enactment of their sexual play and sexual acts (Goodman, 1998). This traumatizes the addicts considerably by preventing them from enjoying the full spectrum of their sexuality. In other words, this robs them of their fair share of sexual satisfaction and satiation and limits their personal growth since they tend to succumb to all their self-indulgent sexual whims at the expense of integrating them into their spiritual needs (Feuerstein, 1989). The pursuit of sexual experiences becomes an endless digging for happiness and satisfaction in the bottomless abyss of ephemeral passion and desire.

Sexual Manipulation

Sexual addiction involves thinking and fantasizing about so-called “unnatural” or “deviant” sexual acts and desiring to act upon such thoughts and fantasies. Male sexual addicts, consciously or unconsciously, seek and find female partners who are prone to satisfy their sexual whims and desires. Their sexual addiction becomes an overpowering driving force that minimizes the influence of their inner logical voices and amplifies those emerging from their erotic and sexual fantasized realm. In their constant quest for satiating their insatiable sexual desires, male sexual addicts put themselves at a considerable risk for becoming manipulated and exploited by their female partners. Sexual addicts end up becoming addicted to their female partners not only by investing a considerable portion of their personal resources in their relationship—and participating in risky sexual behaviors—but most importantly by developing a constant fixation and preoccupation with the sexual persona portrayed by their partners. This sexual persona becomes a socially constructed but privately experienced reality for the sexual addict replete with sexual images and imagery of intensely eroticized sexual acts, thoughts, and fantasies.

In their quest for proving their masculinity through their sexuality, sexual addicts are always in search of female partners to actualize intensely erotic acts, thoughts, and fantasies. The majority of women—as a result of their being subjected to the strong sociocultural proscriptions regarding sexual permissiveness and expressivity—are socialized to feel considerable anxiety, guilt, and shame for yielding to unconventional sexual practices and for sharing their intensely eroticized sexual fantasies. Therefore, male sexual addicts consider themselves “lucky” whenever they meet female partners that are not bound by the essentialist sociocultural prescriptions and proscriptions regarding female sexuality.

Female-to-Male Relational Abuse

Female-to-male relational abuse refers to all the variants of psychological, emotional, and physical abuse suffered by a male partner in the hands of his female companion (Emery & Lloyd, 1994). This constitutes a neglected area of study worthy of further investigation as it is far less likely for men to report being victimized in the hands of their female companions due to the stereotypical portrayal of the male gender as the most powerful and dominant of the two. Based on my conceptualizations and observations of the relationships of some of my significant others while growing up, female-to-male intimate violence constitutes a chronic syndrome that is characterized by the episodic incidence of physical violence that punctuates the problem. Most importantly, though, it has to do with the emotional and psychological abuse that the batterer uses to enforce and maintain control over his/her mate. As Murphy and O'Leary (1989) suggest, emotional and psychological abuse refer to: "both coercive verbal behaviors (e.g., insulting or swearing at a partner) and coercive nonverbal behaviors that are not directed at the partner's body (e.g., slamming doors or smashing objects)" (p. 179). O'Hearn and Davis (1997) define emotional and psychological abuse as any intentional act whose sole purpose is to reduce the recipient's status in the eyes of the perpetrator as well as his/her significant others. Furthermore, in conceptualizing emotional abuse, the authors propose a list of prototypical emotionally abusive behaviors, such as humiliation, degradation, threats of abandonment, persistent ridicule, and threats of physical harm. In their study of the adverse effects of strong emotional attachments in abusive relationships, Dutton and Painter (1993) found that relationship dynamic factors, such as severity of intermittent emotional and psychological maltreatment and extent of power differentials among the partners, tend to considerably increase the degree of perceived long-term felt attachment for the former abusive partner. Such factors also tend to increase the intensity of experienced trauma symptoms during the relationship and have detrimental effects on the abused partners' self-esteem, immediately after separation from an abusive partner and again after a six-month interim.

The prevalence of emotional and psychological abuse in intimate relationships tends to be high for both sexes, with rates ranging from 56% to 90% (Lo & Sporkowski, 1989; Riggs & O'Leary, 1996; Rouse, 1988). Although there exist significant gender differences in the incidence of physical abuse—with men as mostly the perpetrators—there are no such differences

in either expressed or received emotional and psychological abuse (Bookwala, Frieze, Smith, & Ryan, 1992; White & Koss, 1991). Emotional abuse often precipitates and accompanies adult physical and sexual abuse (Dutton, Saunders, Starzomski, & Bartholomew 1994; Murphy & O'Leary, 1989). The bulk of the literature regarding issues of relational abuse and codependency (Beattie, 1992; Schaf, 1992) has focused primarily on the victimization of women with men as the perpetrators of relational abuse. This is because the incidence and long-term effects of female-male relational abuse are small compared to the considerable embarrassment, humiliation, and betrayal experienced by women of all ages as victims of date and marital sexual violence. The sexual and psycho-emotional trauma women suffer as young girls in the hands of male friends and relatives continues well into adulthood and tends to have a negative impact on their personality development and social adjustment (Buist, 1995; Loring, 1994; Saunders & Edelson, 1999). In addition, there exists considerable stigma attached to the coming out of men as the victims and women as the batterers. The Justice Department reports that compared to women, men are 11% less likely to report crimes when they were the victim (Greenfield, Rand, Craven, Flaus, Perkins, Ringel, Warchol, Maston, & Fox, 1998). Since most men are under the auspices of the highly critical masculine environment advocating male dominance and female subordination, they find themselves being closely scrutinized for any signs of weakness, inferiority, and subordination. This, in turn, makes it difficult, if not impossible, for men to come forward as victims of relational abuse. For example, as most police officers and emergency care physicians are male and display traditional male attributes of physical strength and dominance, it is easy to understand an abused man's reluctance to seek help and risk potential ridicule from those in charge for providing assistance, care, and protection (Simonelli, & Ingram, 1998).

Masculinity, Male Sexual Anxiety, and Female-to-Male Relational Abuse

Even though male partners are far less likely to experience physical, psychological, and emotional abuse in their primary relationships, those that seek to harness their female partners' sexuality in order to prove their masculinity are more likely to become involved with abusive women of low socioeconomic status (McLeod, 1984). Sexual addiction is made possible by the victim's low-self esteem and paves the way for the entering into an abusive relationship. Men that experience sexual anxiety may enter into abusive relationships with intimate partners as a

way to shift attention away from their anxious selves. In many cases, male partners may tolerate abuse for the sake of relieving their sexual anxiety through the initiation of intensely erotic acts with their female partners, and also as a way to relive and relieve their early childhood trauma (Everett & Gallop, 2001; Higgins & McCabe, 2000; Wampler & Nelson, 2000).

What I am about to propose here is that traditional patriarchal ideology has stunned men as well by using the sexual impositions of masculinity to instill in men the perfectionist, unattainable, and burdensome, if not inhumane, standards of absolute strength, virility, competition, success, dominance, independence, and autonomy. In other words, men who haven't been able to attain such standards—and retain a high enough status in the masculine hierarchy—may find themselves tolerating all kinds of emotional, psychological, and physical abuse in their relationships. This may be a last resort to prove to themselves, and their significant others, that they are worthy members of the exclusive club of masculinity. Their mental construction of their partners' sexuality becomes a formidable weapon in their own battle to move up the masculine hierarchy. In their fervent quest for attaining an adequate masculine standard, weakly masculinized men may unwittingly grossly exaggerate their partners' sexual persona and internalize an over-powerful but toxic sexual image of their partner. Such men tend to capitalize on the opportunity to utilize their intensely erotic sexual experiences with their female partners as a means to their masculine ends. In a nutshell, they are willing to put up with something as limiting and degradable as relational abuse in order to maintain the unique sexual favors their partners provide them because as unorthodox as it may sound, this is their only way to prove their masculinity once and for all.

Implications for Practice

Some theorists advocate for men's liberation from their restricted gender roles that tend to delimit their lives (Doyle, 1989; Kimmel & Messner, 1992; Pleck, 1981a). Since masculinity is a social construction and not a biological predisposition, these authors support a structural rebuilding or reconstruction of the gender socialization process so as to enable men to be nurturing and caring partners and parents, in addition to being good economic providers.

Several researchers (Shaver, Collins, & Clark, 1996; Van Ijzendoorn, 1995; Walsh, 1997) argue that on their way to recovering from the torments of male sexual anxiety, addiction, and relational abuse, men need to successfully challenge their psychological defense barriers to true

intimacy originating from childhood and transcend the limiting prescriptions and proscriptions of traditional masculine gender socialization. They need to challenge their idealization of women in general and abandon their unrealistic expectations of perfection; originating from stereotypical views of women's role as "perfect" mothers. In addition, they need to abandon their quest for "perfect love" based on infantile needs and re-evaluate their idealized notions of romantic love. They also need to develop the ability/practice of distinguishing love and intimacy from infatuation, compulsivity, and obsession; which all lead to the unconscious and intentional objectification of women. As Firestone and Catlett (1999) suggest:

Their unfulfilled primitive needs for safety and security from childhood are rarely gratified in adult relationships. Men must come to terms with the remnants of childhood insecurity that place heavy unrealistic demands on the women in their lives. As men develop real personal power, they become more attractive to women and more capable of sustaining intimate relationships [since they are able to rid themselves of their sexual anxieties] (p. 203)

Reconstruction at the Macro Level

Feminist scholarship stresses the centrality, normality, and value of women's (and girls') experiences at the same time that it examines the lives and experiences of men and boys. Postmodern thinkers, like Jacques Derrida and his followers, argue that there exists a series of binary oppositions in the constitution of language—man vs. woman, public vs. private, strong vs. weak, good vs. bad—that tend to throw men and women in opposing camps privileging the former while devaluing the latter. This binary tendency in languaging and the generation of scientific knowledge has not only resulted in the valuation and elevation of the experiences of men at the expense of those of women but has also resulted in the generation of preference along other lines of difference, such as social class, (working vs. middle), race (African-American vs. European American), ethnicity (Hispanic vs. Anglo-Saxon), sexual orientation (homosexual vs. heterosexual), and age (young vs. old) (Osmond & Thorne, 1993). At the same time, though, the accordance of preference along such lines of difference challenges any unitary notion of "man" and "woman" and urges postmodern feminists to consider the full spectrum of men's and women's experiences. Although men are privileged, they can still experience oppression and

subjugation of their personal experiences if they belong to a disadvantaged social class, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or age group.

Traditional notions of male sexuality have subjugated men's stories by preventing the externalization of their emotional states through intimacy (McLean, 1996; Philaretou & Allen, 2001; Pittman, 1993; Pleck, 1981a). Postmodern feminist ideologies (Flax, 1990b; Huyssen, 1990; Kipnis, 1988; Lather, 1991; Nicholson, 1990; Rosenau, 1992) can be utilized to address the negative impact of masculinity on men's physical, emotional, and psychological well being by calling for the deconstruction of traditional notions of male sexuality and the reconstruction of a balanced androgynous ideology emphasizing the historical, social, and cultural determinants of sexuality and cherishing both masculine and feminine traits (Levant, 1995; Reinisch et al. 1987; Singer, 1972); thus moving away from the essentialist binary predisposition of elevating the masculine at the expense of the feminine. The reconstruction process is primarily achieved by helping men with subjugated stories (Kleinman, 1988; Levant, 1995) re-narrate their lifelong sexual narratives; those that kept them sexually, emotionally, and psychologically suppressed, more like chained prisoners of dysfunctional and limiting age-old prescriptions and proscriptions.

The reconstruction process (Levant, 1995; Slaughter, 1989) will start out as a concerted effort mobilizing individuals from all walks of life, from professionals and politicians, such as, senators, lobbyists, administrators, therapists, counselors, directors, superintendents, and teachers, to parents and everyday lay-people. As a first step, such process is to involve the instituting of year-round sexual education classes, as early as elementary school, to be continued all the way to undergraduate and graduate schools. Classes on general issues having to do with gender and sex education need to be continued throughout one's lifetime—teaching males from boyhood to adulthood, and even well into late adulthood, various communication and constructive conflict resolution skills, as well as safe ways to channel aggression. For this reason, administrators and policy makers need not only help institute gender-neutral policies, but, at the same time, ought to mobilize community service organizations and volunteer groups to teach gender and sex education classes to the adult population of non-students (Denborough, 1996).

Teaching Human Sexuality

In their article on utilizing the postmodern feminist approach to teach human sexuality courses, Baber and Murray (2001) propose four goals to increase the utility of such courses to students: (a) shift the overall focus of human sexuality courses from a problem-oriented and deficit perspective to a strengths approach, (b) convert abstract, sociological, psychological, social psychological, and biological knowledge to practical and useful personal and interpersonal skills, (c) expand students' personal and academic horizons and increase their tolerance for diversity, and (d) help students understand the association between sexuality, spirituality, and health thereby enabling them to improve their own personal health and refrain from dwelling on the negative aspects of sexuality—that is, minimize sexual exploitation and abuse of themselves and others.

The subject matter of human sexuality is replete with problems—teenage pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, sexual abuse, sexual dysfunctions, and the decline of sexual interest and activity with aging (di Mauro, 1997). The preoccupation with male sexual dysfunction, aggression, and addiction “paints” a negative picture of male sexuality and places young males at risk for internalizing negative conceptions and stereotypes, taking on negative sexual labels, and acting out on them. It is important to create a comfortable classroom environment whereby instructors: (a) promote enthusiasm about the discussion of positive male sexuality issues, (b) devote a substantial part of the course in disseminating positive information about male sexuality, (c) counter a problems approach to male sexuality with discussions of male pleasure, desire, and positive knowledge, and (d) help their male students and their partners translate their positive classroom knowledge into personally gratifying and healthy sexual experiences (Baber & Murray, 2001).

Providing pragmatic information that is readily available to students is very important to help them deal with emergency, unexpected, or ambiguous situations. For example, instead of just discussing contraception as part of the course curriculum, instructors can make sure that all male students have access to toll-free numbers of providers of this service in the areas where the students live (Baber & Murray, 2001). Information could also be made available to all male students concerning local resources, such as those providing sexual health care, sexually transmitted disease testing and counseling, and sexually related support groups. Through in-

class and homework assignments, male students could learn to utilize their classroom sexual knowledge to construct new personal understandings about their sexuality. This could help sharpen their emotional skills, particularly their ability to tolerate high levels of emotional intimacy with their partners, as well as help them develop sympathetic understanding for their partners and adopt useful “bedroom” manners and sexual negotiation skills.

In class modeling and rehearsal techniques (Kirby, 1992/1993) for emotional intimacy, sexual communication, and negotiation skills could also be used to enable male students develop their own strategies and techniques to: (a) overcome their sexual shame, (b) dispel some of the hurtful sexual taboos and stereotypes surrounding male sexuality, (c) extricate themselves from the constant anguish of attaining unrealistic masculine standards, (d) reduce their sexual anxiety by learning to employ their spirituality and emotionality with the expression of their sexuality, and (e) combat the detrimental effects of negative male sexual attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, and patterns that oftentimes lead to male sexual aggression, sexual addiction, codependency, and female-male or male-male relational abuse.

Human sexuality instructors ought to strive for constructing a classroom environment that is conducive to informal conversations and open to discussions that present and support a variety of perspectives on any topic and praise rather than downplay the importance of diversity. Instructors can allocate blocks of time on a weekly basis whereby students are encouraged to present and discuss their own observations and criticisms about specific sexual issues as portrayed by the media or experienced during the course of their everyday lives. They can be asked to express their views and criticisms either verbally or anonymously through free-writes. This approach is very important because it exposes students to diverse sexual perspectives and gives them some “hand on” experience on the process of sexual deconstruction-reconstruction and sexual discoursing (Baber & Murray, 2001).

Self-disclosing through the telling of one’s life stories is of paramount importance in feminist practice (Allen, 1995; Allen & Baber, 1992). Instructors of human sexuality oftentimes struggle with the overall usefulness of the self-disclosing technique, how to self-disclose and how much, and how much disclosure to expect in return from their students. From my personal experience as an instructor of human sexuality, I believe that self-disclosure constitutes an excellent way to get students to talk about sensitive personal issues of emotional and sexual

intimacy, dysfunction, addiction, and abuse. Students oftentimes feel a great deal of embarrassment and humiliation when asked to delve into and talk about such sensitive areas of their personal lives and the best way to counter that is to have the instructor takes a one down position and embark in the storying of the construction of his/her own sexual self. This is a good way to lift the stigma of humiliation and embarrassment and create a safe and comfortable environment for students to discuss their sexual lives and sexual selves.

This is not an easy task, however, as many instructors tend to: (a) feel embarrassed, humiliated, and ridiculed when they talk about their personal sexual lives, (b) fear students negative reactions and reprisals, such as distancing, loss of respect, and loss of reputation through gossiping, (c) fear that their dysfunctional sexual storying may contribute to the construction of negative sexual role models that could be easily emulated by the students and possibly cause them to have problems in their lives later on, and (d) fear that they may end up utilizing their sexual self-storying gratuitously to deal with some of their personal pain and anguish thus deviating from the main goal of furthering understanding of sensitive human sexuality issues. As Baber and Murray (2001) suggest, it is important for human sexuality instructors who are faced with decisions about self-disclosure: “to reflect upon their status in the institution, the subject matter about which they are teaching, their personal boundaries, and their knowledge and understanding of their students” (Allen & Baber, 1992, p. 30).

Raising Boys Androgynously

The instructing of parents as to how to socialize their young boys to develop androgynous skills and traits, in other words to shamelessly display both masculine and feminine gender characteristics (Reinisch et al. 1987) is of paramount importance. As part of such parental instructing, parents need to be taught how to encourage their boys to openly display their feeling states. This can be done by presenting young boys with real-life opportunities on how to access and exercise their rusted feminine side. This would constitute an excellent opportunity for young boys to learn some of the feeling skills women learn as girls, such as emotional empathy, self-awareness, and expressivity (Thorne, 1992).

Celebrating and enhancing men’s femininity will ultimately enable men to come to terms with maternal separation. Such separation is necessitated by traditional childhood socialization practices (Handel, 1988) advocating the dissolving of the close maternal bond and the rebuilding

of the distant paternal bond. Similarly, strengthening men's femininity will, inadvertently, reduce some of their fears and sexual anxieties for not having attained full masculine status in the eyes of their significant others (Levant, 1995).

Enabling men to come to terms with such losses, brought about by the fortification of their feminine side, will also help reduce the incidence of extremist and addictive behaviors, such as workaholism, object, and substance addiction—addiction to money, material goods, chemicals, and, most of all, sex. Having revisited their feminine side, men will be better able to connect emotionally with their intimate lovers, wives, and children (Rubin, 1992) which will inevitably help reduce the incidence of male sexual anxiety as well as translate into higher levels of physical and psychological health (Levant & Pollack, 1995).

Preventing Female-to-Male Relational Abuse

Occurring in one of every four American families, violence between intimates has become a recognized epidemic. To interrupt the cycle of violence and abuse, and prevent the sometimes irreversible consequences of emotional, psychological, and sexual trauma and possibly the incidence of homicide, it is imperative to learn the specifics of the process of the cycle of violence and how traditional gender stereotypes may influence the occurrence, severity, and reporting of abuse to the various service agencies including the criminal justice system.

Although women, in general, are more likely than men to be the recipients of physical violence in the context of an intimate relationship, research findings also point to the other direction, that is, men as being the victims of physical abuse (Simonelli & Ingram, 1998). Several researchers reported a small, albeit significant, percentage of men exhibiting visible physical injuries as a result of their female partner's aggression towards them. In particular, Makepeace (1986) reported that 18% of men received physical injuries from their female partners while Rouse, Breen, and Howell (1988) reported a 10% incidence. Findings from other studies (Kaisan & Painter, 1992; O'Hearn & Davis, 1997; Simonelli & Ingram, 1998; Waldner-Haugrud & Magruder, 1995) also urge us to think in terms of female-to-male aggression against our customary way of conceptualizing violence as mostly in terms of male-to-female aggression. Therefore, it is important to study female-to-male violence as well as male-to-female violence in intimate relationships (Riggs, O'Leary, & Breslin, 1990).

Studies investigating female-to-male aggression will hopefully increase public awareness of this phenomenon so that it will become easier for the man to acknowledge his abuse, come forward with his claims to family and friends, the legal system, and mental health professionals, and that such claims will be taken seriously by his significant others and the agents of social control. All interventions should treat all kinds of abuse, including low-level relational violence, as unacceptable (Bethke & DeJoy, 1993; Stets & Henderson, 1991). For example, in interventions directed towards women, participants should be urged to abandon popularized media notions that it is acceptable for a woman to slap a man. Instead, they ought to be urged to think that all acts of violence: (a) have the potential to be perceived as equally violent, (b) may bring about more violence, and (c) are hurtful, harmful, degrading, as well as emotionally, psychologically, and spiritually limiting.

Reconstruction at the Micro Level: Male Sexual Anxiety and Sexual Addiction

Csikszentmihalyi (1990) suggests that one's sexual potential is actualized to the fullest and blends with the person's spiritual consciousness only when normal developmental maturation leads to the development of personal skills, attributes, and characteristics which collectively give rise to goal directness and which, in turn, becomes integrated with the person's consciousness. He argues that, only then, will there exist the necessary flow of consciousness that would lead to goal directness during sex. Goal directness affects all areas of a person's life including sexual experience and allows the person to move above and beyond the mechanics of sex and relate his sexual experience to his spirituality thereby attaining transcendent happiness. Learning to be goal directed is learning to concentrate one's psychic, intellectual, and physical energy to the goal at hand. Under these circumstances, the person becomes so absorbed with overcoming all obstacles to the issue at hand that he is able to transform his consciousness to a continual and harmonious flow of experiences. This transformation of sexual consciousness into a meaningful flow of experiences helps the person grow to a more complex and happy being. Therefore, he is much more likely to pursue sex for its own sake and enjoyment and not for the sake of satisfying some arbitrary sociocultural prerequisites enforced by his significant others—all those socializing agents of masculinity and the ever present but invisible significant others in a person's bedroom.

Most men suffering from male sexual anxiety and non-clinical sexual addiction fail to maximize their sexual potential because they are unable to order their sexual flow of consciousness experiencing, instead, a disorder in consciousness: “Sexual addiction focuses on *disorder (rather than order)* in consciousness; *dissociation* is sexual addiction’s answer to Csikszentmihalyi’s observation of focused concentration that obviates awareness of all else” (Schnarch, 1991, p. 63). During the enactment of their sexual acts, such men are unable to enjoy the full spectrum of their sexuality and as a result, are left unsatisfied yearning for the next partner that would supposedly quench their sexual thirst. These men are living in an illusionary world of wanting more sex for the sake of more and not wanting sex for its own sake. They are endlessly caught in a vicious cycle of wanting more and varied sexual experiences with sexually attractive partners and end up becoming addicted to the mechanics of sex. If only they learn to concentrate less on the mechanics of sex and more on directing their flow of consciousness to the spiritual aspect of sex.

Low Differentiation and Lack of Spirituality

A considerable number of men hold on to narcissistic beliefs that the entire realm of the sexual world revolves around them thus failing to advance to a higher spiritual level and harmoniously blend their spirituality and sexuality in a collaborative, non-competitive manner (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). At the very elementary level of most men’s spiritual development lays the sociobiological process (Edelman, 1989) of intensely desiring the socioculturally cherished physical attributes of other females—such as their bodily parts, legs, thighs, chest, lips, etc. At the same time, such men want females to desire them not for the sake of initiating an intensely intimate, erotic relationship—one that would stimulate introspection, foster mutual growth and learning, and would inevitably lead to their mutual spiritual growth—but only for the sake of consenting to the physical aspects of sex. As Schnarch (1991) suggests, this constitutes the normal experiencing of sexual desire and the level of spiritual development expected from men at low levels of differentiation. Such men are relatively emotionally fused, undifferentiated or poorly differentiated, and find it difficult to display and share the full range of themselves and achieve deep intimacy with their sexual partners.

Unfortunately, poorly differentiated men come to depend so much on a reflected sense of sexual desirability that they become unable to form substantive spiritual bonds with their sexual

partner and instead desire sexual partners to continually reaffirm their fragile sense of sexual self and overall self-concept:

If you desire me, then I desire you because you desire me, since I do not desire myself. If I believe you instead of myself, perhaps I will come to accept myself. Paradoxically, this requires invalidating my own perceptions in the hope that I can develop a reflected positive sense of myself. (Moore, 1985, p. 15)

Even if such men enter into long-term monogamous relationships, their relatively low levels of differentiation eventually lead them to form pathological attachments to their mates with ample potential for fights over autonomy and power thus paving the road to the formation of co-dependent relationships with them (Beattie, 1992; Kerr & Bowen, 1988). Ironically, the stereotypical solutions to such relationship problems include, “I shouldn’t want her to want me that much because then, I would become more dependent on her and that’s not good because she would use that to exert more power over me” and “I should become even more physically attractive or more masculine in my overall demeanor because only then will I be able to increase my control over her.”

Maximizing sexual potential, through the harmonious blending of eroticism and spirituality, and transcending sexuality do not assume an important enough role in male codependents’ or sexual addicts’ relational agendas. As Schnarch (1991) suggests, both co-dependency and sexual addiction result from low levels of differentiation and a general inability to liberate oneself from one’s own emotional immaturity and existential ambivalence. Men who find themselves at the lowest levels of the differentiation hierarchy not only fail to actualize their sexual potential but are driven by a general feeling of tension avoidance, self-denial of their innermost needs for intimacy, and an overall intolerance of the unavoidable frustration that is prerequisite to achieving true relatedness. There is an underlying childlike selfishness governing the behavioral actions and thinking patterns of the sexual addicts and codependents as well as a certain degree of neuroticism and a general feeling of discomfort when dealing with intensely erotic and intimate encounters (Schnarch, 1991). Sex—and relationships with other people—is oftentimes viewed as a vehicle for the temporary satisfaction of immediate gratification urges instead of being used as a means for achieving long-term happiness, satisfaction, and content. It

constitutes a temporary filler for the holes poked on the wall of life instead of a permanent solid finishing that would resist further poking, lasting throughout one's lifetime.

The Process of Reconstruction

Re-narrating existing sexual scripts is liberating in the sense that it can provide men with the necessary means, through autobiographical self-reflection and reconstruction of our sexual identity, to rid the shackles of the confining, essentialist masculine ideology set forth by biological determinism (Freedman & Combs, 1996; Guidano, 1991; Thompson & Pleck, 1995; White & Epston, 1990). Through the process of re-narration men can, instead, redirect their energies and potentialities towards the arduous ongoing project of sexual reconstruction and development in order to achieve sexual liberation, fulfillment, and efficacy which would, in turn, lead to the reduction of our male sexual anxiety (Philaretou & Allen, 2001). Freedman and Combs (1996) describe the power of the narrative metaphor to transform and transcend oppressing realities (such as male sexual realities):

A key to this therapy [the narrative therapy using the narrative metaphor] is that in any life there are always more events that do not get “storied” than there are ones that do—even the longest and most complex autobiography leaves out more than it includes. This means that when life narratives carry hurtful meanings or seem to offer only unpleasant choices [such as male sexual narratives of psychological and emotional abuse], they can be changed by highlighting different, previously un-storied events or by taking new meaning from already storied events, thereby constructing new narratives [that are sexually liberating and emotionally emancipating]. Or, when dominant cultures carry stories that are oppressive [such as the scripts and dictates of essentialist masculine socialization], people can resist their dictates and find support in subcultures [such as the gay and lesbian subculture] that are living different stories.

So, narrative therapy is about the retelling and reliving of stories. As people [men] retell their stories [such as their subjugated sexual narratives] in therapy, [they tend to become emotionally and sexually agentic and therefore could visualize and materialize new sexual self images which would hopefully enable them to enter into healthy intimate and sexual relationships] (pp. 32-33)

Most narrative therapists expose subjugated dominant discourses, such as essentialist sexual discourses leading to male sexual anxiety, by asking about the contextual influences on the problem. In other words, narrative therapists are always involved in the process of unveiling the hurt and oppression of their clients by asking questions to determine the macro historico-socio-cultural and micro interpersonal environments in which their clients are socialized. These environments are primarily responsible for the emotional, psychological, physical, and sexual victimization and re-victimization of their clients and their eventual subjugation to the status quo forces such environments come to create. For example, a narrative therapist dealing with the problems of a male client suffering from non-clinical sexual anxiety would first of all identify male sexual anxiety as the primary problem so the next thing would be to try and ask questions to find out what contributes to this problem and who directly and indirectly benefits from it. From the corresponding answers, the therapist would then come to the conclusion that essentialist masculine ideological prescriptions and proscriptions for appropriate male gender socialization are responsible for the client's male sexual anxiety, and, furthermore, that male-dominated patriarchal institutions and their stakeholders are indirectly benefiting from such an essentialist masculine arrangement. Next, the therapist would try to determine what could be done to change the client's macro historico-socio-cultural and micro interpersonal environments so as to weaken the lifelines of the monster of male sexual anxiety. This could be done by increasing the client's awareness as to the presence of postmodernist androgynous ideologies by urging him to join in egalitarian groups where both men and women are treated on an equal basis. Next, the therapist would ask questions to determine the kind of settings whereby the problem of male sexual anxiety may prove itself useful, and, subsequently point out that it is in providing men with illusionary power over women. Finally, the therapist would ask questions in an effort to identify the various groups of people that would possibly be opposed to the problem of male sexual anxiety and that would be the countless number of men suffering from this problem through its customary manifestations, such as addictions (sexual, substance, gambling, work, etc.), emotional, psychological, and physical abuse and depression.

The construction of preferred sexual stories almost always goes hand-in-hand with the process of unmasking or deconstruction. This is because through the unmasking process, men begin to realize that they, too, are victims of the essentialist masculine scripting embedded in the

sociocultural pillars of societal institutions and propagated through traditional gender socialization (Derrida, 1976). Awareness then, becomes the first step to self-empowerment and personal change. When men, through the unmasking process of relating their sexual anxiety to essentialist societal sexual discourses, see their local problems as particular instances of political problems (such as essentialist gender ideology) in the larger society, they can become motivated to deal with them differently (Freedman & Combs, 1996). The entryway for inviting men to author and live new empowering sexual stories is through enabling them to search and identify unique outcomes (Reason & Hawkins, 1988), that is, anything that wouldn't have been predicted in light of the problem-saturated sexual story. Unique outcomes constitute openings that, through questions and reflective discussion, can be developed into new sexual stories.

The Role of the Sexual Crucible

Schnarch (1991) introduces the idea of the sexual crucible as a way to reduce sexual anxiety and promote relational intimacy and individual fulfillment. The individual partners' sexual behaviors—including the style and content included and excluded in their repertoire—become a window into their inner psycho-emotional workings and state of being of their relationship. Various personal and relational issues that partners are unable or unwilling to acknowledge and bring to the forefront for resolution are inevitably manifested as deficiencies and weaknesses in sexual style. Since a great deal of men seem to lack in the area of interpersonal intimacy and in the area of articulation of their feeling states, the concept of the sexual crucible would be particularly helpful as a way to facilitate greater interconnectedness and emotional, as well as psychological, satisfaction. The notion of the sexual crucible would therefore constitute a great starting point, directly, for the reduction of non-clinical sexual addiction, and indirectly, for the reduction of male sexual anxiety, and ultimately for the avoiding of entering into abusive relationships.

At the heart of men's intra-psychic and interpersonal problems lies their almost incessant preoccupation with their reflected sense of self, in other words, with how they appear in the eyes of their significant others (Schnarch, 1991). This has resulted from the stronghold exerted by the prevailing masculine ethos, which seeks to supervise all male actions, especially male sexual actions. For this end, all individuals males and females become the secret agents of the masculine ethos and the primary mechanism for doing so becomes that of the reflected sense of

one's appraisal by his significant others. The fear of ridicule, humiliation, and even isolation constitutes an effective and efficient way to keep men's behavior in line with the prerequisites of the masculine ethos. For, the enactment of any unmanly behavior tends to be readily stigmatized and utilized as legitimate grounds for stripping men of their hard-achieved masculine status. The humiliating process of "taking away" men's masculinity is done by placing them at the center of attention and making them the direct recipients of the cruel appraisals of their significant others and all the formal and informal agents of the masculine ethos.

A considerable number of men engage in sexually addictive behaviors with multiple partners or enter into and tolerate abusive relationships with partners blindly, in a desperate attempt to live up to the unrealistic standards of masculinity; like sheep headed to their demise by a wolf. Such men, who have been brainwashed and fanatized by the prevailing masculine ethos, tend to enact sexual behaviors based on the functionalist standard of male dominance and female submission whereby sex is determined and timed according to male erection and ejaculation. In doing so, they fail to effectively and efficiently bring their sexual crucibles together in line with those of their female partners. They fail to interlock their crucibles under a single reaction that could potentially metamorphose their individual and spiritual selves. Instead, they become preoccupied with trying to modify their behaviors during the enactment and duration of the sexual act to fit with those of the masculine sexual script of heterosexual sexuality (Rosen & Leiblum, 1988). At this point, the reflected appraisals they get from their female partners become of outmost important to these men who are almost exclusively concerned with the mechanics of sex in order to appear as fully-emasculated males as possible in accordance with the sociocultural expectations for appropriate masculine sexual behavior. Under these circumstances they attain critical mass below the required threshold for a truly metamorphosing reactivity; one that would produce the much desired all-encompassing single sexual crucible.

Bringing a man and a woman to sexually react together in one single sexual crucible lays the foundations for the initiation of intense intimacy during sex and therefore makes sex a physically fulfilling experience as well as a spiritually liberating one. The sexual crucible becomes a crucible for bringing together the partners' intimacy constituents in a single chemical reaction to try and attain the threshold of individual and interpersonal satisfaction (Schnarch,

1991). A threshold where the partners cease to seek sex with other partners and/or stop being preoccupied with issues of duration of male erection, size, and female orgasms. When this threshold is attained, intimacy becomes part of the sexual act and the sexual act itself becomes such a metamorphosing experience that no man or woman would be foolish to trade this heavenly sexual experience for the earthly, banal, and mechanistic variety.

The most essential prerequisite of the sexual crucible is the self-soothing of anxiety, during times of separation, and tolerance of intimacy, during times of togetherness (Schnarch, 1991). It is not the elimination of this inherent paradox of separateness and togetherness but the acknowledgment of its existence as an inevitable—although at times discomforting—part of the social psychology of human interpersonal relations that tends to rid both men and women of the shackles and chains of co-dependent, destructive, and abusive relationships. What men ought to be taught is tolerance for ambiguity, and, most of all, tolerance for the unpredictable nature of dyadic relationships. For, being able to tolerate intense intimacy and complete absence of intimacy is at the heart of the sexual crucible and the determining factor for the reduction of male sexual anxiety, non-clinical sexual addiction, and the avoiding of unhealthy, abusive relationships.

From Codependency and Sexual Addiction to True Intimacy

A codependent relationship is one whereby the individual is psychologically, emotionally, and sexually fixated at maintaining a relationship with a partner at all personal, interpersonal, and professional costs; a partner whose activities are, in turn, determined by one form of compulsivity or another—such as addiction to drugs, alcohol, gambling, or sex (Giddens, 1992). Giddens further proposes that codependent individuals become so preoccupied and engrossed with the lives of their partners that they come to define their self-identities through the actions, needs, and personal pains of their partners. In this way, codependents tend to form addictive relationships whereby self and other merge and both feed on this parasitic relationship which comes to constitute an illusionary form of secure attachment for both.

An important task of any self-help group or beginning therapy program is teaching the codependent partners how to “let go,” in other words, how to abandon all the different kinds of unrealistic attempts and manipulations they have been accustomed to so far in their futile attempts to control and change their mate. This requires the internalization of the initial basic

premise that one is only responsible for one's self and cannot bring about any kind of change but o himself/herself. Moving from a codependent relationship based on addiction to a truly intimate one is an arduous yet not an unattainable task. It requires the abandonment of the obsessive childhood dream of finding the perfect partner, fusing with them, and living happily ever after, but instead, encourages the establishment of personal boundaries to maintain the self in the face of the other thereby offsetting the effects of any projective identifications that may come from the other. Fusion and enmeshment are the most detrimental determinants of addictive relationships whereby partners become utterly obsessed with each other's problems and feelings to the point where they lose themselves in the process and become stuck in each other's psycho emotional whirlwind (Firestone, 1993). Such partners are in dire need of learning the many benefits of loving and letting go, of desiring to promote each other's well being and personal growth, but at the same time, of knowing their limitations and knowing when to stop. This is the key to moving away from the cycle of pain and despair that characterizes addictive relationships and embracing the cycle of comfort and contentment, the cycle of positivity and satisfaction that is so vital for the stability and advancement of healthy relationships (Cancian, 1987; Giddens, 1992; Hayes, 1990).

The first step in constructing a healthy relationship is teaching the partners to develop self-boundaries which clear up space for personal development thus allowing them to derive satisfaction and contentment from their personal accomplishments thereby avoiding the continual and unnecessary burdening and pressurizing of their partner to provide for their own happiness and satisfaction. Developing a strong sense of self also allows the individual to look for a romantic partner out of want not need thereby avoiding obsessing over finding someone to be with. If the person has a well developed sense of self and personal accomplishments, he/she can derive personal satisfaction and contentment from himself/herself without having to wait around for that special someone to come that will bring them happiness and satisfaction. The individual is more likely to take his/her time in their search for a partner and make a more appropriate choice of partner and not a hurried one (Crowther, 1988; Giddens, 1992; Schaefer, 1992).

The second step in forming a truly intimate relationship is teaching the partners how to embrace each other's individuality and feel genuinely happy about their mate's personal and/or professional advancement. It is important for partners to come to their own realization that what

is good for their mate is ultimately good for them too. This is because in the long run if their partners attain their dreams and goals and feel happy about themselves, that state of happiness is also bound to prove beneficial to them and directly or indirectly promote their well being. When partners encourage one another's self-development, not only do they improve individually, their relationship improves as well and becomes more dynamic and moves forward. This, in turn, makes the relationship more interesting and more appealing to the partners especially in these dynamic times where sameness is equated with stagnation and is very much discouraged and denigrated. Attempting to change one's partner to meet one's selfish and immediate needs—a characteristic of addictive relationships—will not only create overt or covert resentment from the partner that is pressured to change but will also hurt the partner that is pressing for change since any direct attempt by someone to change someone else ultimately brings unhappiness to both. The partner that is pressured to change may do so reluctantly out of fear of losing their mate and may feel unhappy in the long run since he/she is forced to compromise their own needs. If one partner is unhappy the other will ultimately become unhappy too (Giddens, 1992; Kellogg & Harrison, 1991; Schaef, 1992).

In a healthy intimate relationship, the partners not only desire one another out of want (and not need) but tend to be more patient with their desire for deriving long-term happiness from their relationship. As a result, their relationship develops slowly but steadily, matures in a developmentally appropriate manner that is compatible with the partners own developmental pace, and involves a great deal of mutuality and reciprocity of caring, love, and affection. On the other hand, the codependent addictive relationship is characterized by an expectation for immediate gratification and that one partner will somehow magically fix and rescue the other. Such unrealistic expectations unduly stress the partners and consequently strain their relationship. Whereas freedom of choice is the motto of a healthy intimate relationship, the pressuring of partners for sex or commitment is more characteristic of dysfunctional addictive relationships. In the former, sex grows out of friendship and caring whereas in the latter sex and passion tends to be confused with fear and partners tend to resort to pressuring each other out of fear of abandonment and of losing their only source of gratification and satisfaction (Schnarch, 1991). Dysfunctional partners do not perceive themselves as worthy enough or as having enough personal strength to generate their own sources of happiness and satisfaction which they

could then utilize to fall back on in case their relationship falters (Bergmann, 1987; Giddens, 1992; Luhmann, 1986).

Addictive, codependent, and dysfunctional relationships are devoid of true intimacy, mutual love, caring, and understanding. Sex in such relationships tends to be more mechanical and dependent upon the physical performance of the partners—for the males, on how physically attractive, skilled, and uninhibited their female partner is whereas for the females, on how well he fits idealized machismo expectations in general, particularly how well his stamina fares with idealized masculine notions of men with hard, long-lasting erections. Sex is therefore better described as “fucking” rather than “making love.”

Schnarch (1991) suggests that partners are not alone in the bedroom during their lovemaking but are surrounded by the ghosts of their significant others and their sexual repertoire determined not only by their personal feelings and attributes but also by the looming admonitions of these ghosts. Codependent partners experience a great deal of unresolved pain, confusion, fear, and disappointment about their relationship, and are in constant turmoil with themselves and with their significant others—as a result of the negative reflections they get from them. Their sexual repertoire is not only driven by unrealistic sociocultural prescriptions and proscriptions regarding good sex but it is also laden with all the aforementioned personal problems and tribulations. Therefore, the sexual passion in codependent relationships is fused with all their personal and interpersonal turmoil and lacks the lasting ingredients of mutual love and true intimacy. Hence, this sexual passion is fleeting and can never be satiated and constitute a stable source of personal satisfaction that will hold the relationship together. In closely intimate relationships, partners are not as much preoccupied with the mechanics of sex, burdened by the idealistic sociocultural sexual expectations, or tortured by the demons and ghosts of their personal and interpersonal affairs. Since the partners’ sexual life is a window into the general state of their relationship (Schnarch, 1991), it would be expected that partners in a healthy, functional relationship characterized by friendship, mutual love, and a healthy dose of intimacy are to enjoy a healthy, mutually satisfying sexual relationship as well, one that will solidify and not destabilize the foundation of their relationship (Rubin, 1990).

Balance of power, mutuality, and reciprocity are important determinants of a healthy intimate relationship (Giddens, 1992). Mutual problem-solving is vital for the power balance as

well as the general sustenance of a healthy relationship because it involves equal sharing of responsibility for outcomes and avoids blaming one's self or partner for problems—a characteristic of addictive relationships whereby each partner takes it upon himself/herself to fix the other or any issue that may come up in the relationship thus opening themselves up for failure and blame.

According to Giddens (1992), mutual respect, acknowledging and reinforcing each other's strengths—and tolerating limitations—, compromising, negotiating, and taking turns at leading, help balance out any relational power differentials and make the relationship more democratic and tolerable as well as less oppressive. Relationships that are characterized by power imbalances and power plays and ploys for control are inherently unhealthy and dysfunctional because such power struggles not only drain the partners emotionally and psychologically—thereby rendering them more vulnerable to fights and arguments—but also create considerable bitterness, resentment, and revengefulness in the long run. Other important aspects of healthy intimate relationships include directness and being able, ready, and willing to deal with all relational aspects (the good and the bad).

Addictive relationships tend to be based on delusions and avoidance of the unpleasant at all costs (Carnes, 1994). When the partners are able and willing to embrace one another with honesty about their feelings, want, likes, and dislikes—and show genuine appreciation for one another—they become true partners in love and intimacy. Airing out negative aspects of their relationship may lead to some general upset in the short-run but will prompt the partners to work on their shortcomings and improve their relationship in the long-run. Using lying, manipulation, deceit, and shutting down mutual communication channels when things are not working out may create a temporary illusion of normalcy and tranquillity in the relationship. Such practices tend to negatively affect the relationship in the long run as a result of the mutual resentments created after the lies, manipulations, and bottled-up hurt and frustration is uncovered. This leads to yet another issue in addictive relationships that of lack of trust. Trust is the foundation of any relationship—be it personal or professional—and lack of appropriate trust tends to throw the partners in a never-ending cycle of anxiety, agony, and wondering as to how their loved one will behave in challenging or tempting situation. Prolonged periods of distrust can therefore deplete

the partners' patience and positive energy and cause them to become more agitated and frustrated with the state of their relationship (Giddens, 1992).

Disputing Irrational Beliefs.

Disputing irrational beliefs is a simple but powerful technique for assisting under-masculinized and over-masculinized male clients suffering from acute forms of male sexual anxiety and sexual addiction adopt and identify with normalized perceptions of masculinity and dispel and disassociate from unrealistically high and stressful masculine standards (McMullin, 2000). Ellis (1974, 1996) developed this technique whereby clients are asked to break-down and articulate their irrational belief into short analyzable thoughts and then to answer a series of open-ended questions regarding the original belief. The breaking-down process enables the clients to develop an initial general understanding of their irrational belief. The therapist is instructed to ask his/her clients a series of questions regarding their irrational belief (McMullin, 2000):

- What belief bothers you?
[I am bothered by my continual anxiety regarding my sexuality and masculinity. I feel I am not living up to the expected standards of “real manhood.”]
- Can you rationally support this belief?
[Yes, because all the real men around me that have attained the expected standards of manhood (assertiveness, money, and sexual virility) seem much happier than me]
- What evidence exists for its falseness?
[Some men that have failed to attain such standards and who are not preoccupied with proving their masculinity through their sexuality seem happy too. I guess they make-up for it by being emotionally close to their friends and families.]
- Does any evidence exist for its truth?
[Yes and no. Yes, in the sense that from the time we are born, we, men, are bombarded with the idealized images of masculinity and are almost forced to adopt them. No, because these standards are not really written in stone somewhere.]

- Realistically and objectively, what is likely to happen if you think this way?
[If I continue to abide by such an irrational belief concerning my masculine inadequacy and sexual anxiety, I will never have any peace of mind and taste real happiness.]
- What could continue to happen if you do not think this way?
[I guess I will eventually find peace and happiness if I learn to lower my standards and be happy with what I have attained] (p. 178)

The therapist urges his/her clients to practice applying this series of questions to each of their irrational beliefs and come up with answers either at home or anywhere they feel comfortable. This technique may prove particularly helpful to men who agonize over their masculinity and who become incessantly preoccupied with their sexuality as a vehicle to their masculine enhancement.

The Process of Using the Personal to Create General Awareness

Allen (2001) offers an inventory of questions to be answered by any researcher who embarks on the process of self-journaling and of converting his/her private life experiences into formalized social scientific knowledge with general awareness implications. In light of the present study, I adapted such questions to apply to male sexual anxiety:

- What draws my attention to certain aspects of my personal experience? Are they aspects of myself that I do not yet understand? Why are they important to me? What kinds of emotions are evoked by the unearthing of such aspects of my personal experience? Are they positive emotions, such as contentment, peace, and happiness? Are they negative emotions, such as shame, guilt, and remorse? How can I avoid getting carried out by these emotions and objectively utilize them for shedding some light into the issue at hand?
- What are some of my hidden agendas for embarking on the social scientific investigation of these particular aspects of my personal experience? Do I want to investigate them for gratuitous or self-therapeutic purposes? Am I trying to impress anybody in order to gain their approval or for favoritism? Am I trying to put down anybody and make myself appear as a better person? In what ways do I

envision my personological undertaking to contribute to both my research and teaching agenda in the field of family studies?

- In what ways is the externalization of my personal drama negatively affecting me? How is my personological storytelling possibly affecting the lives of my significant others that were somehow implicated in such storytelling? How can I utilize the findings from my self-storying research help my significant others re-narrate the subjugated and oppressive stories of their personal lives? What are some of my personal dark alleys that got illuminated in the process of conducting my self-storying research?

Allen (2001) further proposes that answering these questions will: (a) increase the autobiographer's understanding of the process of self-reflection (such as the realization, externalization and re-narration of his/her subjugated stories), (b) enable him/her to realize the conscious and unconscious self-censorship that takes place in the externalization and recording of sensitive personal issues, and (c) bring forth much pride, joy, and peace to the autobiographer, the kind of liberatory experience that comes with being able to delineate personal issues in the service of creating useful social scientific knowledge. Citing Collins (1990), she notes: "In these ways, we can travel from silence to language to action (Collins, 1990), learning to theorize private experience in the service of creating a more just world" (p. 806).

Summary

This study investigated male sexual anxiety within the contexts of early childhood and adolescent masculine socialization and relational dynamics. I, the author—an ethnic male in his mid-thirties of Greek-Cypriot ancestry—have used myself as subject embarking on an autobiographical journey during which I attempted to explicate the overt manifestations and covert processes of male sexual anxiety.

The findings illuminated the profound long-lasting effects of structured patriarchal arrangements on early childhood and adolescent socialization practices for boys and girls. Particularly, I examine how sexual suppression, exaggerated gender differences (alpha bias), and, most importantly, how the prevailing ethos of masculinity has been traumatizing and damaging the socioemotional and sociopsychological development of young men and women. Throughout the study, I attempted to show how men are negatively affected by the prevailing

oppressive cultural arrangements of the machismo culture, a culture that cuts across national boundaries as well as ethnic, racial, and class lines. Men are located in a cultural context, which simultaneously idealizes them, for living up to the standard of masculinity, and punishes them, for getting in touch with and externalizing their emotional, psychological, and overall feeling states.

Men become victims of male sexual anxiety, sexual addiction, and abuse because of their relative inability to effectively and efficiently connect to others in meaningful, intimate, long-lasting ways. Their relative inability at forming intimate relationships with others tends to leave them with an insurmountable void, an intense and persistent feeling of emptiness and tastelessness. In their desperate attempts to fulfill this void, to rid themselves of their anxiety once and for all, they find themselves becoming addicted to behaviors, such as varied, risky sex with multiple partners, drugs, alcohol, gambling, material things, money, or even work. Unfortunately, the void of intimacy could only be filled with intimacy itself, that is, with the initiation of strong and meaningful interpersonal relationships involving the truthful exchange of feelings.

Self-Awareness Through Sympathetic Understanding

During the process of conducting the study, I have developed considerable awareness regarding my own feeling states and emotional hunger; a hunger for developing a loving and affectionate relationship with another person, one based on mutual attraction and want, not lust and need. At the same time, though, I understand that once the damage of the prevailing machismo cultural ethos has been done, it is very difficult to reverse. The remnants of the early damage of childhood socialization are like ghosts from the past, surfacing and re-surfacing over and over again in a person's life. This early damage takes a long-lasting toll on adolescent and adult development and formulates various psychological and emotional states of being which are very hard, if not impossible, to reconfigure. Nothing should be impossible though, especially when it comes to teaching men the virtues of effectuating such positive practices as the initiation of intimate relationships and the sharing of feelings, the sharing of goodness and love. The best way to develop sympathetic understanding for other people's plight—for other people's experiential reality—is when we personally experience some of its consequences and when some of these consequences come to affect our very lives. Only when we get close enough to other

individuals can we directly feel the consequences of their own reality, that is, the vibrations of their personal earthquakes.

At this point in my life, thinking back on my early childhood and adolescent tumultuous years gets me overwhelmed with feelings of sympathy and understanding for the most important persons in my life, my parents. I am only beginning to grasp the enormity of the difficulties and hardships they had to endure to raise my sister and I. My parents came from violent and poverty stricken backgrounds. They received minimum formal education (not even high school), were trained in menial minimum wage jobs, went through a war that devastated our country for a long period of time, and still, my sister and I never went hungry, always had clean clothes, and completed private, English-speaking high school education. My parents are heroes.

Throughout my early childhood socialization, I had been confronted with: (a) the enormity of the long-term negative consequences of the intergenerational transmission of childhood abuse and neglect (from my great-grandparents to my grandparents to my parents) (Boyd, 2001; Ertem, Leventhal, & Dobbs, 2000; Halford, Sanders, & Behrens, 2000), (b) the deleterious effects of maternal depression and paternal emotional distancing (Cicchetti & Toth, 1998; McCaslin, 1993), (c) the considerable hardships and authoritarian ethic of low working class families (Conrade & Ho, 2001; Crichley & Sanson, 1999; Kaufmann, Gesten, Santa Lucia, Salcedo, Rendina-Gobioff, & Gadd, 2000) and (d) the power of forgiveness and the true meaning of love and intimacy in close interpersonal relationships (Giddens, 1992). I feel I have grown to become more sensitive and less critical to the plight of low working class and poor families and to all men and women who have been the recipients of considerable abuse in their earlier years. Above all, I have come to realize that essentialist patriarchal arrangements are the “masterminds” of a great deal of our personal and sociocultural ills and misery. Such arrangements have strategically laid many of the paths to our grief and sorrow and sometimes even to our self-destruction. The entrenchment of patriarchy in our everyday lives not only denigrates and denies opportunities to many women, racial, ethnic, and sexual minorities but is also the “true face” behind the veil of sexual anxiety, sexual addiction (and all kinds of object and substance addictions), relational and familial abuse as well as emotional and psychological trauma and mental illnesses. Patriarchy “unbalances” the male gender by robbing men of their emotional

essence and setting up the unrealistic standard of masculinity which plaques men with all kinds of anxieties and addictions and throws them in familial and/or intimate abusive relationships.

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LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Male Sexual Anxiety, Sexual Addiction, and Abuse

Figure 2. The Externalization of Machismo and Male Sexual Anxiety

Figure 3. Patriarchal Relationships, Masculine Statuses, and Machismo Ethic

APPENDIX A

Themes, By Themes, Blocks, and Parts

1. TRADITIONAL SEXUAL BELIEFS
 1. Sexual Oppression: Shame and Taboos [Block A including all A part(s)]
 2. Homosexual Stigma [Block B]
2. STRUCTURED PATRIARCHAL SOCIOCULTURAL RELATIONSHIPS
 3. Oppressive Religious Environment [Block C]
 4. Militarized Masculinity [Block D]
3. THE PROBLEMATIC MALE SEXUAL ADOLESCENT
 5. Sexual Pressure and the Fast-Track Male Adolescent [Block E]
 6. Sexual Rebellion and the Fast-Track Male Adolescent [Block F]
 7. Generation Gap and Female Adolescent Rebellion [Block G]
 8. Balancing Academic Life with Sexual and Social Life [Block H]
4. SEXUAL REVOLUTION
 9. Sexual Revolution and Today's Adolescents [Block I]
5. THE MACHISMO ROLE
 10. Machismo Identification [Block J]
6. WOMEN'S OPPRESSION
 11. Traditional Gender Ideology and Double Standard [Block K]
 12. Distant Father and Over-Involved Mother [Block L]
7. THE ETIOLOGY AND MANIFESTATIONS OF MALE SEXUAL ANXIETY
 13. Mother's Familial Abuse [Block M]
 14. Insecure Caregiver Attachment and Projective Identification [Block N]
 15. Unrealistic Personal Perceptions and Expectations: The Fantasy Bond [Block O]
 16. Unrealistic Relational Perceptions and Expectations [Block P]
 17. The IFS Model [Block Q]
 18. Uncontrollable and Intense Feelings [Block R]
8. FAMILIAL ABUSE
 19. Male Physical Familial Abuse [Block S]

APPENDIX B

Curriculum Vitae
(December, 2001)

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EDUCATION

Ph.D. 2001 Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Department of Human Development
QCA: 3.8/4.0
Major area: Family Studies, with a Certificate in Family Therapy

M.S. 1993 Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Department of Sociology
QCA: 3.4/4.0
Major area: Social Psychology

B.S. 1991 Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Department of Sociology
QCA: 3.3/4.0
Major area: Social Psychology

REFEREED JOURNAL ARTICLES

Philaretou, A. G., & Allen, K. R. (Spring 2001). Reconstructing masculinity and sexuality. The Journal of Men's Studies, 9:3, 301-321.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Undergraduate Courses Taught at Virginia Tech:

HD 3324 Marriage and Family Dynamics, Fall 1996-Spring 1998
SOC 2304 Individual in Society, 1st Summer, 1993
Teaching Asst. Family Law and Criminology Courses, January 1992-May 1993

Courses Taught at New River Community College:

PSY 216 Social Psychology, Spring 2000-Fall 2001
PSY 165 Human Sexuality, Spring 2000-Fall 2001
PSY 120 Human Relations, Summer 2000-Fall 2001
SOC 200 Principles of Sociology, Summer I 2001

Teaching and Interactive Methods:

Implemented multimedia presentations in class lectures, using software packages such as Microsoft PowerPoint.

Combined the use of a laptop and computer projector with graphics, audio, and video input.

Integrated the use of multiple computer packages, such as word processors (Microsoft Word), spreadsheets (Excel), and presentation software (PowerPoint), directly into lectures.

Emphasized the importance of combining technology and teaching in the classroom to students, faculty, and administration.

Posted web pages on the Internet.

Manipulated different file formats (such as pdf, etc.).

Edited graphic and photo images to create different file formats for lectures and web pages.

Advised students on technical needs regarding computer software used to create presentations and papers.

INVITED PRESENTATIONS AT CONFERENCES AND OTHER UNIVERSITIES

Philaretou, A. G., & Bird, G. W. (2000, June). *Dynamics of physical distress for managerial families: An exploratory investigation of work and family determinants*. Paper presented at Twelfth Annual Research Symposium: Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine and College of Human Resources and Education. Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA.

Philaretou, A. G., & Allen, K. R. (2000, March). *Masculinities in the twenty-first century*. Paper presented at AMSA (American Men's Studies Association), 8th annual conference. Buffalo, NY

Philaretou, A. G., & Bird, G. W. (1999, November). *An exploratory investigation of stress outcomes for male city managers and their marital partners*. Paper presented at NCFR, 61st annual conference. Irvine, CA.

Philaretou, A. G. (1999, April). *Reconstructing masculinity and sexuality*. A roundtable presented at Inquiring Voices, 2nd annual College of Human Resources and Education Student Research Conference. Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA.

Philaretou, A. G., & Allen, K. R. (1999, March). *Men's sexual anxieties: A critical investigation*. Paper presented at AMSA, 7th annual conference. Nashville, TN.

Philaretou, A. G., & Bird, G. W. (1999, February). *Work and family dynamics for dual-career couples*. Professional paper competition entered at SCFR (Southeastern Council on Family Relations). Atlanta, GA.

Philaretou, A. G., & Bird, G. W. (1998, April). *The dynamics of family stress and well being*. Paper presented at Inquiring Voices, 1st annual College of Human Resources and Education Student Research Conference. Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA.

Philaretou, A. G., & Allen, K. R. (1998, February). *Unspoken truths: Underlying issues on male sexual anxiety*. A roundtable presented at SCFR annual conference. Atlanta, GA.

RECENT GRANT HISTORY

Assisted in the drafting of a grant proposal for a family research project entitled, *Family stress and well being among Greek-Cypriot families: A quantitative investigation*. University of Cyprus, Cyprus, Departments of Sociology and Psychology Collaborative Government Grant, U.S. Equivalent of \$50,000, 1996-1999. A. Stilianos, B. Panayiotou, A. Papakostantinou.

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

1987 Recipient of four-year Fullbright Undergraduate Scholarship
Full scholarship covering tuition and living expenses

SELECTED CONSULTING ACTIVITIES

Research panelist in workshop funded by NSF, entitled *Research Tomorrow*, Hotel Roanoke, Roanoke VA, and Donaldson Brown Hotel, Blacksburg VA, 1999

VCCS (Virginia Community College System) *Sociology Peer Group Conference*, Marriott Hotel, Richmond, VA, 2001

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

1998-2001: Assistant Information Specialist Librarian, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Newman Library.

Responsibilities include building and managing library collections in all media forms; promoting the use of information and computing resources in research and teaching; assisting faculty with the use of Internet technologies; and participation in scheduled general reference services. Assistant college librarians offer students and faculty in a college on-site, discipline-related consulting to expand awareness and use of information and technological resources, both internal and external to the university.

1996: Research Assistant

Worked for USDA project gathering data from the families of U.S. marines

Conducted child development program evaluation

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS AND SERVICE

Certified Family Life Educator-Certification-pending

National Council on Family Relations (1998-present)

Certified Family Life Educator, 2001

Southeastern Council on Family Relations (1997-present)

MEMBERSHIP IN HONOR SOCIETIES

Member of AKD, International Sociological Honor Society

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