South African education and the ideology of patriarchy

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Despite current legislation prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of inter alia gender, it appears that little has been achieved to facilitate equality of the sexes in the South African society (and education in particular). It seems that this can be attributed to a deep-rooted patriarchal society. This article consequently investigates the ideological nature of patriarchy and illustrates strategies that are applied to perpetuate relations of domination that serve this ideology.

Introduction

Despite attempts at transformation of education in South Africa, and legislation prohibiting *inter alia* discrimination on the basis of gender, it seems that concerns about gender relations have merely scratched the surface, which implies that discrimination remains embedded in the new educational dispensation (*cf*. Mosetse, 1998; Report of the Gender Equity Task Team, 1997:25-26; Kruger, 1997; Mehloqmakulo, 1993 and Rhoodie & Liebenberg, 1994). It seems doubtful whether the current debate on gender equality has taken into account gender stereotypes and other oppressive strategies that subtly control and di-rect deep-rooted structures of domination. Against the background of legislation aimed at rooting out gender discrimination in this country, it is an open question why attempts at transformation have only resul-ted in the accommodation of women on the surface. The answer to this question appears to be connected to the ideological status of the sys-tem of patriarchy.

Both Western and African cultures seem to be deeply influenced by the idea of the supremacy of the fathers, since patriarchy is irrevocably part of both Eurocentric and Afrocentric cultures in South Africa (*cf*. Van der Walt, 1994:160). Patriarchy is indeed "one of the strongest ideologies in cultures world-wide, and in the context of modern Western culture, it is operative on more or less the whole spectrum of hyper-normative discourses" (Visagie, 1999:7). Since patriarchy is regarded as a fully-fledged ideology, it appears that the current pursuit of gender equality in South African education is up against a powerful enemy, as indicated by the Commission on Gender Equality (1998:10):

> "It is a sad fact that one of the few profoundly non-racial institutions in South Africa is patriarchy ... indeed, it is so firmly rooted that it is given a cultural halo and identified with customs and personalities of different communities. Thus to challenge patriarchy, to dispute the idea that it is men who should be dominant figures in the family and society, is to be seen not as fighting against the male privilege, but as attempting to destroy African tradition, or to subvert Afrikaner ideals or undermine civilised and deemed British values ... Patriarchy brutalises men and neutralises women across the colour line."

The aim of this article is therefore a critical analysis of the ideological nature of patriarchy as it is manifested in the South African society and education in general. This will be done primarily through a study of relevant literature on gender discrimination in South African education. It seems that attempts to eradicate gender discrimination in any society will not succeed without first identifying deep-rooted structures of domination that serve to perpetuate the ideology of patriarchy.

The concepts *ideology* and *patriarchy*

For the purpose of this article ideology is referred to in terms of a (false) value or belief system in society, where one social group exercises some form of domination over another (Visagie, 1999:3).

In the initial stages of their development, ideologies however concern cherished and legitimate social ideals, and are pursued in good faith and as honourable ends and objectives (Schoeman, 1998:

11). When one of these ends are idolised (absolutised, deified), thus pursued in a fanatical and obsessed way, the legitimate goals become ideological (Van der Walt, 1994:358). This means that an ideology relates to the promotion of some norm, value, idea, motive or goal to a position of paramount importance in society. Visagie (1999:4) refers to the elevation of such a norm or idea as a *hypernorm*. The elevated norm or idea: the hypernorm, thus dominates all other norms of social intercourse. Illegitimate power relations are consequently elevated to the position of a *hyperpower*, engulfing and relativising all other power relations in society. An ideology thus establishes relations of domination, among opposing interest groups in the struggle for supremacy, not only in the political sphere of life, but also in all "extra-political sectors of human life. In the instance of gender oppression, ideology can be seen as a tool consciously (or unconsciously) implemented in the struggle for social supremacy. In this case it can be identified as obvious "asymmetrical power-relations", which includes the relatively unobscured power structures, such as those of class, race or gender (*cf*. Strauss & Visagie in Schoeman, 1998:13). To perpetuate these structures of domination (in order to retain the position of supremacy), certain strategies are employed.

The concept "patriarch", as 'the father and ruler of the family and tribe', was first used during Biblical times and refers specifically to the sons of Jacob, (as well as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and their forefathers) (Oxford Dictionary, 1969:890). The Commission on Gender Equality (1998:1) however defines "patriarchy" as the common denominator of the South African nation. It is a system of domination of man over women, which transcends different economic systems, eras, regions and class (Boonzaaier & Sharp 1988:154).

The 'ideology of patriarchy' therefore seems to have developed as a result of the elevation of 'the idea of the leadership of the fathers', to a position of paramount importance in society. Boonzaaier & Sharp (1988:155) refer to the 'once positive ideal' of the father as the head and protector of the family:

> "... patriarchal tradition of the household is one of the most beautiful legacies of the Afrikaner ... As main characteristic of the old farm house-hold we can mention that it was a community of authority. In this small community the father was the highest authority. In other words, he was at the head of the specific authority structure. Since every authority structure can have only one head, the woman was under the authority of her husband ... the mother, on the other hand, was pre-eminently the loving and understanding party who cared and served in silence.

This ideal was, however, absolutised (idolised) when it was promoted to the position of a hypernorm. This means the idea of the father leading and protecting the close circle of the family, was extended to other spheres of society, and thus dominated all other forms of social intercourse. The norm according to which the father headed the household, now regulated all other man-woman relationships in society. It is important to note that the original ideal was not based upon the premise that women were inferior, but most probably upon a loving relationship in the family circle where the husband protected and guided the mother, with her support. However, as a result of the elevation of this ideal to acquire hyper-normative status, women were regarded as inferior to men. An uneven power-relationship developed through which the male sex obtained supremacy over women, resulting in their subordination to men throughout society. The ideal of the "supremacy of the fathers" thus gained hyper-power through which this relation of domination was kept intact. As a result of this, the intrinsic authority of women in all other appropriate contexts of life, was relativised (*cf*. Coetzee, s.a.:8). The argument that ideology ope-

rates as "a conscious tool, implemented in the struggle for social supremacy" (*cf.* Visagie, 1999:4), is especially valid when reflecting on the oppression of women in the education sector.

Characteristics of an ideology

Before attempting an exposition of the ideological nature of patriarchy, it is necessary to briefly reflect on the general characteristics of an ideology:

- An ideology assumes almost "religious" status, as it serves its idolised norm or idea.
- Reality is viewed by those in the grip of an ideology in a reduced manner — part of reality is seen as the "total reality". This reductionist view of reality, ultimately leads to a "tunnel vision", which ignores certain states of affairs, whilst making use of methods of coercion and oppression.
- It adversely affects every aspect of human existence, every facet of human culture, and every structure in society, which implies that it brings about the domination of some people by others.
- The ideological justification of an idea or objective ignores all other valid claims and interests, and does not tolerate criticism.
- It uses every means of power (the end justifies the means) in its pursuit of supremacy.
- It adjusts norms to suit its purpose; and
- Uses certain strategies to sustain its structures of domination (Van der Walt, 1994:356-362).

Exposition of the nature of the ideology of patriarchy

Patriarchy assumes *religious* status

An ideology provides its own system of values in order to justify its objectives. As such, these values regulate human behaviour and function almost as a pseudo-religion, according to which the "final ideological destination is in line with the will of God" (Schoeman, 1998:59). This can be illustrated by the way in which ideologues in the grip of patriarchy interpret Scripture to suit their image of man as superior to the female species. These interpretations are however not based on exegesis (explication), but on eisegesis (reading into) of Scripture, and are as such founded upon a misconception (*cf.* Van der Walt, 1994: 160-161 for specific examples).

When referring to the idolised nature of the ideal of patriarchy, this literally implies that "rule by the fathers" was made into an idol, a supposed god. All behaviour is thus influenced by, and directed at serving this man-made god (*cf.* Coetzee, 1998:12). Adherents of this ideology subsequently believe and honour their man-made god, which was created in the image of man. As such the struggle for supremacy of the fathers is a projection of man's specific needs. In this way the cultural activities of man, such as educational relationships, more and more resemble the idol of patriarchy. Idolatry, however, is hard, demanding, full-time work, because the gods have to be created, maintained and suffered (Van der Walt, 1994:355). It has been said that "patriarchy brutalises men and neutralises women" (Commission on Gender Equality, 1998:10).

Patriarchy views reality in a reductionist way

By elevating the ideal of "the father as the head of the family", to a position where it engulfs all other relationships, part of reality is regarded as the "total reality". This reductionist view of reality, represents a warped (slanted) perspective and is without exception coercive (Schoeman, 1998:12). In the grip of the ideology of patriarchy, the world is thus interpreted in a way that is profitable for the perpetuation of the ideology. To regard women as intellectually and physically inferior to men, suits the interests of the adherents of the ideology. If an ideology is in place long enough, "... even those suffering oppression, are restricted in their thinking by these distorted interpretations of reality" (Schoeman, 1998:21). History is proof of the fact that women have eventually accepted their subordinate and inferior position in society (and consequently in the educational domain), as natural and a fact of life that cannot be altered. The result of this is that

in the South African society (and especially with regard to the female teaching corps), the liability for social, economic and other injustices to women are, amongst other things, attributed to female stereotypes. There is sufficient evidence to prove that women in South Africa have grown to accept these views as facts, and for this reason they feel themselves to be inferior and unable to assume their rightful place in society (*cf.* Louw, Louw & Van Ede, 1998:292; Coetzee, s.a.:18-20).

Patriarchy adversely affects every aspect of society

When one is confronted by statistics that refer to the position of women in society, and specifically in education, it is evident that this ideology adversely affected (and still does) every aspect of human life (*cf.* Ramphele, 1995:33; Duczek, 1988:169-170). In the first instance, women have been oppressed for generations and have been kept from liberating themselves by structures of domination, designed to maintain the ideology. In the struggle to maintain the supremacy of the fathers, women were kept in their position of subservience through measures such as less educational opportunities than men, economic dependence, physical harassment, exclusion from leading roles in education, politics, the church and society at large (*cf.* Lemmer, 1993:23; Report of the Gender Equity Task Team, 1997:23-25).

It seems that the effects of patriarchy on society and education in particular relate to a situation of perpetuated inequality (*cf.* Commission on Gender Equality, 1998:29). A situation that is summarised in the Education and Training Policy of the African National Congress (Commission on Gender Equality, 1998:29), which identified women as part of the most neglected and marginalised group in society. Women have thus been discriminated against, in literally every sector of society (*cf.* Lemmer 1993:22, 23), by adherents of the ideology, mobilising every possible means to attain their goal of supremacy.

The ideological justification of patriarchal ideas ignores all other valid claims and does not tolerate criticism

True to the characteristics of an ideology, patriarchy can also be regarded as guilty of building up a clever system of arguments with partial truths to justify its views. Whole theories have been built around the assumed inferiority of women, based upon the physical differences between the sexes, and elaborated on, to portray women as in for example, Freud's theory of the Oedipus complex (*cf.* Mwamwenda, 1996: 329; Lewis 1993:190; Louw *et al.*,1998:290). Justified by sexism, women are believed to be intellectually inferior to men (*cf.* Lewis, 1993:196), and consequently not suitable for positions of management, in the sphere of education, and elsewhere. If women are, mainly through measures such as affirmative action, appointed in managerial positions, their capabilities are often doubted, and the fear exists that they may reduce intellectual standards (*cf.* Report of the Gender Equity Task Team, 1997:147). Furthermore, valid claims that dispute stereotypes of women, supported by research (*cf.* Basow, 1992:38; Brannon, 1995:77; Lemmer, 1993:21; Kaplan, 1994:786-799; Louw *et al.*, 1998:11) are ignored, or regarded as the exception to the rule.

Patriarchy misuses power on the road to supremacy

To highlight the issue of power relations with regard to gender, one has to have a closer look at the distribution of power in a patriarchal society. The definition of Kate Miller (in Mosetse, 1998:97) is especially appropriate:

> "... our society ... is a patriarchy. The fact is evident if one recalls that the military, industry, technology, universities, science, political offices, finances — in short, every avenue of power within the society, including the coercive force of the police, is entirely in male hands."

Patriarchy can thus be described as a set of social relations between men, which have a material base, and which create interdependence and solidarity among men that enable them to dominate women. Although patriarchy is hierarchical and men of different classes, races or ethnic groups have different places within the patriarchal system, they are simultaneously united in their shared relationship of dominance

over their women and they are dependent upon each other to maintain that domination. According to Miller (Mosetse, 1998:87) hierarchies 'work', at least in part because they create vested interests in the *status quo*. Those at the higher levels can 'buy off' those at the lower levels by offering them power over those still lower. In the hierarchy of patriarchy, all men, whatever their rank in the patriarchy, are bought off by being able to control at least some women (Coetzee, 1998:21).

The material basis upon which patriarchy rests, lies most fundamentally in men's control over women's labour power (*cf*. Commission on the Status of Women, 1998:15). Men maintain this control by excluding women from access to some essential productive resources and by restricting women's sexuality. Where children are needed for their present or future labour power, women's sexuality is directed towards reproduction and child-rearing (*cf*. Hay & Stichter, 1984:57; *cf*. Walker, 1979:19).

Although it is theoretically possible that a sexual division of labour should not imply inequality between the sexes, in most societies, the socially acceptable division of labour by sex is one which accords lower status to women's work. Partriarchy is therefore not simply a hierarchical organisation, but a hierarchy in which particular people fill particular places.

Male power in the South African society is however not only exercised by assigning "female-specific" jobs and in securing superior employment, but also on a psychological level. Schoeman (1998:21) argues that ideologies frustrate well-balanced interpretations of reality, to such an extent that even the oppressed become restricted in their thinking: "They eventually become to accept their subservient position in society and presumed inferiority as natural, as a given state of affairs that can never be changed". It has been recorded that female teachers often do not "feel" themselves competent to be appointed in managerial positions. They have been "brainwashed" through patriarchy to accept themselves as inferior (*cf*. Duczek, 1988:173) — a condition that is seen to relativise their authority as competent teachers and potential leaders of society. The sexist and patriarchal assumption that "... any kind of authority is incompatible with the feminine" (Friedman in Ng, 1995:135), denies the woman educator to speak as a figure of authority.

True to the workings of an ideology, patriarchy thus seizes illegitimate power, elevating it to a so-called "hyperpower", that "does not tolerate opposition or resistance and in turn dominates other power relations by robbing them of their intrinsic authority in appropriate contexts" (Visagie, 1999:4-5). To escape from power as coercion is therefore no easy task — as indicated by a statement such as the following, which indicates an ambivalence, evident in the ideological entrapment of victims of patriarchy:

> "... women must combat the effect of socialisation; our induced desire for independence and subordination, our guilt when we deviate from the norm; our need to accommodate and please; to avoid conflict ...The process of demystification reveals the effects which follow from the use of power in the male culture. It is this alienation that ... traps both the powerful and the powerless in hegemonic structures which are cruelly dehumanizing (Packer, Laney & Adler, 1993:95).

Patriarchy adjusts norms to suit its purpose
The elevation of the practice of patriarchy to a position of hegemony in South African society, can be described as the birth of a so-called 'hypernorm' (Visagie & Pretorius, 1993:54). In the face of such a 'hypernorm', all other practices, values and institutions that have legitimate claims to diverse and unique spheres of competence and existence are subordinated (Schoeman, 1998:13). This means that the assumed 'superior position' of the male sex is erroneously given the status of a norm, a hypernorm, thus regulating human behaviour in all spheres of life, and subjugating all other values and standards.

According to Foucault (1980) individuals who do not comply with the social norms of the dominant discourse in society, are branded as "abnormal". This is especially applicable in a patriarchal society

when women who do not adhere to, or criticize norms interpreted by patriarchy. The following exposition illustrates the ideological manipulation of truth (what is true in terms of the ideology of patriarchy) and meaning (what is meaningful in terms of this ideology) in an anti-normative way (*cf*. Schoeman, 1998:126, on ideology in general):

*   In the sphere of morality, the ideology of patriarchy suggests that women and men ought to demonstrate different (fixed) characteristics, in terms of which masculine values are viewed as appropriate to the public sphere (of social power) and feminine values relate to the private sphere (of domestic interchange) (*cf*. McLennan, 1994:59). In South Africa the metaphor of the "mother of the nation" (*volksmoeder*), emphasises female qualities such as self-sacrifice, resilience, suffering, virtue and nurturing of the family and the nation. However moral this may sound, this metaphor portrays the "mother" as a political subject rather than a political agent (Enslin, 1993/1994:20). According to Walker (in Enslin, 1993/1994:20) this symbolism "... has nothing to do with citizenship and everything to do with Woman as Mother: mother of the nation, mother of heroes and martyrs, mother, above all, of sons ... 'Mother of the Nation' often has nothing to do with tangible benefits". It seems therefore that women have been allocated a role, emphasising so-called feminine values to accord them status and respect, while simultaneously subordinating them to male control.

*   In the sphere of justice, the norms of fairness, impartiality, tolerance and the absence of prejudice are also perceived through the eyes of patriarchy. The implication that fairness, impartiality and tolerance do not apply to women as they do to men, however, underlines the domination of women. In addition, selective legislation and administration of justice for women — decades of exclusion from superior positions in *inter alia* education — are paternalistically perceived as fair when justified by patriarchal stereotypes. Although the (current) tendency to appoint women as vice-principals at schools is viewed in most circles as "a step in the right direction", it only serves to underline the patriarchal perception that the role of the principal is not a female one. Linked to the supposedly inferiority of women, tolerance and justice thus acquires a paternalistic colour.

*   In the sphere of economic activity, a patriarchal answer to norms include practices of preferential treatment (intentionally or unintentionally) resulting in a situation of imbalance, inequality and disparity with regard to the position of women in *inter alia* education. Although it is generally believed that the economic position of women has been improved by policies and campaigns calling for "equal pay for work of equal worth", research indicates that "... throughout the labour market women earn notably less than men, even with equivalent educational attainment" (Report of the Gender Equity Task Team 1997:137).

*   In the sphere of social life, inter-personal relations in the family, the school, the church and the work-place are still regulated by the super-norm of 'the superiority of the male sex', thus leading to a situation of discrimination against, and dehumanising of, the female sex. In a society where social values are determined by patriarchy, women are regarded as "... socially powerless — objects rather than agents of wars, economic plans and political policies" (Ruddick in Enslin, 1993/1994:20). The picture becomes even bleaker when the issues of sexual harassment and sexual abuse are addressed. The report of the Gender Equity Task Team (1997:148-149) indicates that: "... rape — one of the most violent forms of male control and domination — is widespread on campuses". It is further stated as an indisputable fact that sexual harassment and violence exist in all educational institutions (Report of the Gender Equity Task Team, 1997:149). Where the "macho image" is valued as the highest ideal of manhood, supposedly 'real' men are aggressive, repress emotions and do not admit to fears (*cf*. Duczek, 1988:173). Enloe (in Duczek, 1988: 173) thus argues that militarism is an essential facet of the ideo-

logical structure of patriarchy "... because the notion of 'combat' plays such a central role in the construction of concepts of 'manhood' and in justifications of the superiority of maleness in the social order".

- In the lingual sphere, normal communication between the sexes is often obstructed by sexism, which finds expression in subtle gestures and use of language. These discriminatory practices may not always be immediately recognisable as oppressive, but are often related to covert forms of behaviour, such as failure to take women's verbal inputs seriously (Report of the Gender Equity Task Team, 1997:147-148).

Patriarchy uses certain strategies to sustain its position of domination

In an ongoing effort to establish and secure power, an ideology uses certain devices or strategies in order to sustain its relations of domination (Thompson, 1992:6-7).

In the service of an ideology such as patriarchy, these devices can primarily be seen as the subtle manipulation of words and symbols, often implicitly applied as a result of the deep-rooted nature of the ideological convictions. The ideology of patriarchy accordingly makes use of strategies such as legitimation, dissimulation, unification, fragmentation and eternalisation in an attempt to continue and safeguard its position of hegemony (*cf*. Thompson, 1992:60-67).

Legitimation
In order to be established and perpetuated, relations of domination can be portrayed as legitimate. According to Thompson (1992:61) the validity of claims to legitimacy can be based on rational, traditional and charismatic grounds. Based on rational grounds, domination of women rests on a belief in the legality of enacted rules and the rights of those elevated to authority (the male sex) under such rules to issue commands (legal authority). Examples of this are the exclusion of women from serving in certain Christian and other religious denominations, as well as exclusion from participation in politics in various countries (until recently) by not having the vote, and the rules whereby traditional African women are forced to be submissive in marriage (*cf*. Coetzee, s.a.:16). To this can be added the issue of housing subsidy to women teachers, which was only recently changed to include those whose husbands do not receive such benefits.

Legalised oppression of women was also illustrated by the traditional practice of married women not being appointed in permanent teaching positions, which has been changed on paper, but appears to be subtly perpetuated with regard to appointment in promotion posts, at school and on tertiary levels.

On traditional grounds "legitimate" domination of women rests on the established belief in the sanctity of immemorial traditions and the "legitimacy" of members of the male sex to exercise authority under the traditional authority (*cf*. Mabandla & Biehl, 1993:22-23).

"Legitimate" oppression of women on charismatic grounds rests (illegitimately) on the (assumed) normative patterns of Christianity of the "total commitment" of a woman having to be submissive and obey her husband, who is sanctified as the head of the household (*cf*. Van der Walt, 1994:160-161).

Typical strategies used to legitimise structures of domination are rationalisation, universalisation and narrativisation (Thompson, 1992: 61-62):

- Relations of domination are rationalised by producing a "chain of reasoning" by which a set of social relations or institutions of domination is justified. The almost total absence of female teachers as school principals is justified in this way by reasoning that: females cannot control adolescent boys at school because they do not have the physical strength, and can be easily manipulated by adolescents, who just might not respect them because they are women; they might have families to care for; and they are too emotional by nature.
- Institutional arrangements that best serve the interests of the dominating group are legitimised by "serving the interests of all", or as "open in principle" to everyone who has the ability and the inclination to succeed within them (Schoeman, 1998:17). With regard to patriarchy, 'universalisation' is most obvious in the hidden curriculum. Regardless of the prevailing policy that egalitarianism of opportunity exists in South African schools, it seems that the educational experience results in marked differences with regard to the choice of the curriculum. Girls pursue mainly those subjects that are regarded as more suitable for females, and their aspirations about future employment and the realisation of these aspirations for the vast majority do not go beyond the scope of what is regarded as a 'suitable' feminine occupation. MacDonald (Mosetse, 1998:92) affirms that much of the literature on school subject and sex segregation within the school places "great emphasis on the fact that some subjects are perceived as either masculine or feminine (*cf*. also Lemmer, 1993:21-22).

  The idea of the "mother of the nation" is also a universa-lising concept:

  > "... while apparently according women a place in the nation as a unified public, the concept of the nation [based on patriarchal values – DC] both surresses difference and conceals oppression, heading off demands for equality within a democratic public (Young in Enslin, 1993/1994:21).

- Through 'narrativisation' relations of domination are legitimised by embedding claims to domination in stories "that recount the past and treat the present as part of a timeless and cherished tradition" (Thompson, 1992:61). Apart from justifying the exercise of power by those who have it, this strategy serves to reconcile others (women) to the fact that they do not have power. However depressing, from research into school texts, the impression is one of "women's inferiority, her domesticity, her lack of intelligence, ability, sense of adventure or creativity" (MacDonald in Mosetse, 1998:92). Women are also recorded to be invisible actors in the histories of western civilisation, and this also seems to be applicable to the histories of African countries. Research on school texts in general reveals a pervasive ideology: that of the legitimacy of the *status quo*. As such they are characterised by their 'untouchable' and apolitical nature: they are received as truths of a 'declassed' cultural heritage (*cf*. MacDonald in Mosetse, 1998:92-93; *cf*. also Lemmer, 1993:10-11).

Dissumulation (hypocrisy, deception, pretence)
Relations of domination are created and perpetuated by ignoring, concealing, denying or obscuring them, in a way that diverts attention from them (Schoeman, 1998:17). Strategies such as the following are employed by the ideology of patriarchy:

- An example of displacement can be found in school texts where women are portrayed mainly in occupations/ positions such as shop assistant, teacher, mother, granny, fairy, queen, witch or princess. This implies that women do not appear in typically female jobs in the ratio to which they are actually found in the economy. Women are rather portrayed in roles where they are the glamorous possessions of men, and does not have to work. This effectively displaces the idea that women do work, and so inhibits their sense of themselves as workers (Mosetse, 1998:93).
- Euphemisation is employed when actions or social relations are re-described, slightly altering their meaning to assure positive assessments. Women are thus referred to as equal, but different, when this really means that women are inferior to men. Also women are often said to be the best, and natural teachers, when in reality, this is not reflected in the allocation of promotion posts (*cf*. Report of the Gender Equity Task Team, 1997:11), and should therefore actually mean that women do not possess what it takes to be in management, and should stick to the classroom.
- Methophors often also serve as strategies to uphold structures that dominate women. Words such as "masculine" and "feminine"

are used to convey positive or negative meanings to things and situations.

A collective identity

Unification devices are often used to sustain the subservient position of women. An example from South Africa's apartheid past seems to be the establishment of a secret society such as the "Broederbond" (*cf.* O'Meara, 1996:40), which apart from its racial orientation, excluded women from membership, and promoted their members for appointment in every possible high-profile occupation. Another organisation that caters exclusively for men, and amongst other things, serves to unify the male sex, is the Order of Freemasons.

Fragmentation

The perpetuation of male power over females is also kept intact by fragmentation. Groups that may effectively challenge the dominant section of the population, are fragmented by differentiation. This means that emphasising distinctions, differences and divisions amongst *inter alia* feminist discourse, could dis-unite them and thus prevent any threat to existing relations of domination.

Eternalisation

Through eternalisation, structures of domination are kept intact by portraying transitory, historical states of affairs "as if they were natural, permanent, untouched by time" (*cf.* Thompson, 1992:65). In this way customs and traditions, such as the association of maleness and sacredness with ancestors in traditional African culture (*cf.* Turaki, 1991:135) acquire a rigidity that cannot be easily disrupted.

Concluding remarks

The exposition of the ideological nature of patriarchy can be regarded as an earnest attempt to put a finger on the cause of a serious "societal illness". To find a cure, would, however, not prove to be simple. What has especially been significant throughout the investigation, was the issue of power: the unequal distribution and "illegal" application thereof. Any attempt at transformation of education in South Africa should therefore take cognisance of the fact that mere policy statements prohibiting *inter alia* sexism in society are destined to facilitate superficial changes only. To create a truly democratic education dispensation rather requires incisive evaluation (and eradication) of deep-rooted structures of domination that permeate society and serve to perpetuate an ideology such as patriarchy. Only then might the future of which Olive Schreiner writes become a reality:

> ... this one thought stands — if I might be one of those born in the future then perhaps to be born a woman will not be branded (Olive Schreiner in Walker, 1979:1).

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