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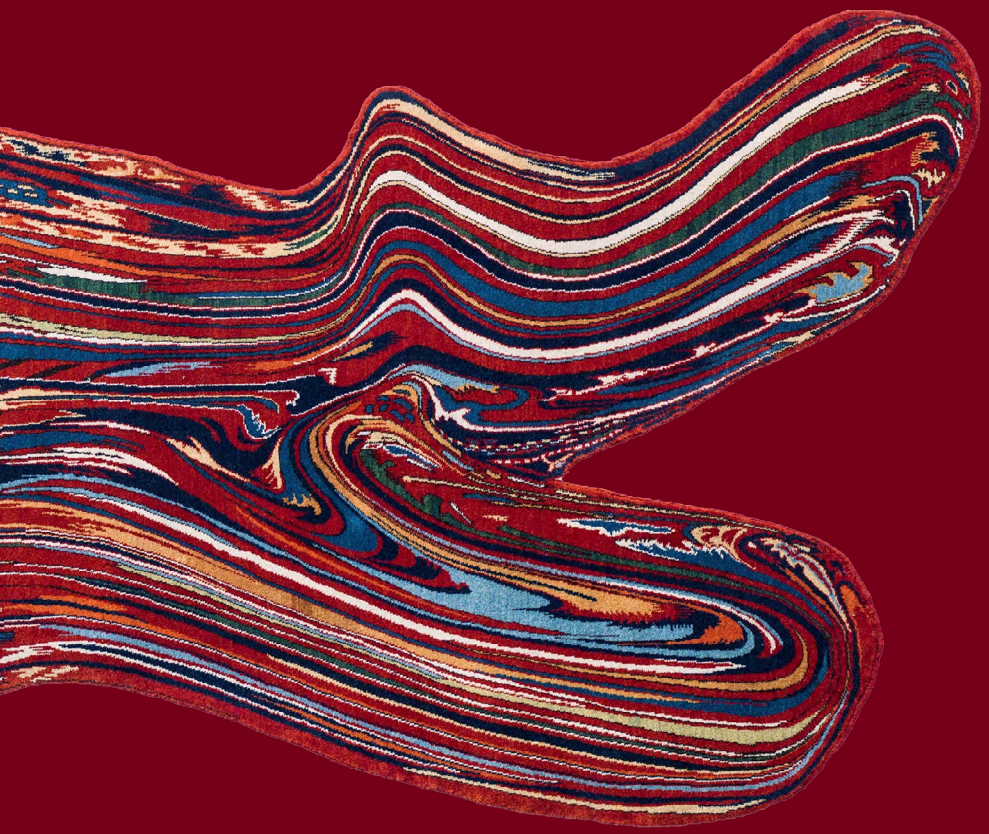

Silence is the *kosmos* of women listening to female noise

by Penelope Rae Allsobrook

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My sincere thanks, to you, my family, simply for being my family.

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Chapter 1

ON *GATVOL NOISE*

Fuck, Kathy, I can't get my head around how long-suffering people can be."

"Ja, ons het 'n lang asem. Maar *as* ons gatvol is, is ons dan rêrig gatvol mos."[1]

Gatvol /'χʌtfɔl/ - an unseemly term, some would express in dismay, and notably unrefined coming from the mouth of a woman, while to others a refreshingly gratifying description,

> "[i]t is in large part according to the sounds people make that we judge them sane or insane, male or female, good, evil, trustworthy, depressive, marriageable, moribund, likely or unlikely to make war on us, little better than animals, inspired by God. These judgments

[1] March 2016, in conversation with Katherine Aranes from Development Action Group (DAG), a non-profit organisation in Cape Town. A translation of the Afrikaans original would be, "Yes, we have a long breath. But once our holes are full (we are fed up), they are really full (then we will take no more)."

> happen fast and can be brutal. Aristotle tells us that the high pitched voice of the female is one evidence of her evil disposition, for creatures who are brave or just (like lions, bulls, roosters and the human male) have large deep voices […]. Just how uncomfortable [women's sounds make men feel] may be measured by the lengths to which Aristotle is willing to go in accounting for the gender of sound physiognomically; he ends up ascribing the lower pitch of the male voice to the tension placed on a man's vocal chords by his testicles functioning as loom weights." (Carson 1995: 119).

The poet and classicist, Anne Carson, poses the question of how our beliefs about gender affect the way we hear sounds. In so doing, she uses Sophocles' maxim which she translates as "[s]ilence is the kosmos [good order] of women" (Carson ibid. 127), asking the reader to look anew at the ideology underlying patriarchy's loathing of female sound, literally characterised as unsound. "[W]hat differentiates […] civilization from the wilderness is the use of rationally articulated speech, logos. […] Every sound we make […] has a totally private interior yet its trajectory is public." (ibid. 128-130). Following this ideological argument, Carson discusses how humanity is thus divided into two 'species', namely into those who are said to be able to contain themselves and those who are not. She refers to the Hellenistic gynaecologist Soranos' claim that the lips of the uterus can never be closed again after the start of a woman's sexual life, apart from the moment of conception when the mouth of the uterus closes upon the seed. "This closed mouth provides the model of decorum for the upper mouth as well." (ibid. 132).

Passing swiftly through from the gaping and (un)contained mouths of antiquity to those in contemporary South Africa, a model of decorum seems to be just what Pumla Gqola is searching for when she states that "[r]ape is not a moment but a language" (2015: 22), so highlighting how gendered violence is not limited to

a specific event but that it rather surrounds the multiple ways in which feminine agency is threatened.

> "We have a constant preoccupation with the topic. We read about it, we talk about it, but we can't make it go away. It is an enigma in post-apartheid South Africa. […] As newspapers seem to publish more and more, we read these articles as isolated moments, moving us further and further away from the issue at hand. We have the same conversation. We are outraged, horrified, mystified. But the discourse is not moving on. […] What enables rape? And what is it about our society that makes it possible to rape with such impunity?" (ibid.).

Gqola's disquiet clearly reflects prevailing concerns in South Africa. The country's continuing to top international rankings of gendered, and other forms of violence has resulted in the phenomenon becoming a focal point in a wide range of empirical research during the past decades of the country's post-apartheid history. With the inauguration of the ANC-led government in 1994, a new identity was shaped and a new social imaginary created in the country (Gunkel 2010). South Africa became one of the first countries world-wide to recognise LGBTIQ* rights, incorporating gender equality into the post-apartheid Bill of Rights in 1996 (Mkhize et al 2010). However, democratisation and attempts to secure gender equality appear to have had limited effect, as the rape figures have remained relatively constant from the political transition in 1994 to the present (du Toit 2009). Violence statistics against those who do not conform to gender norms also remain high despite Constitutional rights to non-discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation (ibid.). Refusing gender norms means being doubly silenced; the language of those who question and resist these norms is corrected, while the people themselves are corrected by rape.

Many of the studies' rape figures place low-income groups of women in the spotlight. While statistics serve a useful purpose, this focus risks reinforcing negative stereotypes so that violence promptly becomes synonymous with pity for, and/ or disdain toward the poor. As women, regardless of their backgrounds, are not simply products of but shape their environments, this ongoing identification of women as victims is enfeebling, according to Africa (2010). "Our stories of victimisation are spoken into a racist, sexist world, and could make us complicit in our own oppression." (ibid. 84). Women are not passive symbols but act as subjects and as agents, in both senses of these words,[2] within memory and within history. This being said, not bearing in mind the stringent restrictions incurred by social structures and practices which construct people can lead to "a celebration of agency on its own, becom[ing] romanticised." (Lazar 2007: 147).

This thesis presents a collection of stories which were entrusted to me. Its aim is, in making these voices available, to contribute toward a fuller picture of how South Africans understand and express their sexual identity now over twenty years into the post-apartheid context. Its aim, moreover, is to add to the documentation of responses to traumatic experiences of sexual violence, and in so doing, to challenge patriarchal discourses within South African society. The data is drawn from sixteen of the twenty-eight interviews I conducted in a twenty-eight day cycle, beginning in October 2015 and continuing later in February/ March 2016. Taking discourse into account as a social practice (van Dijk 2001), I use this data in an attempt to provide a form of critical analysis, showing how my interview partners' linguistic resources and communicative strategies reveal their ability to make choices in actively confronting the challenges they face.

[2] I examine these terms in more depth in Chapter Two.

Unlocked, the mouth gapes open and could blurt out the unspeakable, says Carson (1995), who suggests that the dictum "silence is the good order of women" can be traced to anxiety surrounding female ejaculation, mirrored in Hellenistic amulets picturing a uterus adorned with a lock at its mouth (ibid. 132). This age-old understanding is finely depicted with Laura Burns' choice of response to 'Baubo'.[3] A work-in-progress collaboration with Xenia Dwertman, the artists have used experimental performance to explore this myth, forming part of their larger 'Reclaiming the Cunt' project.[4]

With these silent raisings-of-the-skirt, these 'blurtings-out-of-the-unspeakable' (re)entering the stage, (re)claiming visibility, John Cage's "[t]here is no such thing as silence" (1961: 8) comes to mind. Cage contends that "[t]here is no such thing as an empty space or an empty time. There is always something to see, something to hear. In fact, try as we may to make a silence, we cannot." (ibid.). The narratives which were presented to me show the importance of what you in fact *do* play.[5] These narratives do play very clearly - *they speak refusal*. Refusal, sometimes described as silence, can be an exceedingly noisy business, perhaps particularly so when refusing to speak within the established societal frameworks surrounding gendered violence. I call this noisy-silent refusal *gatvol noise*; and while exploring the noise in this silence, and the silence in this noise, my aim is to advance a discourse which is not intrusive but rather confronts existing structures of othering upheld by activists like Zanele Muholi.

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[3] Baubo is to have unveiled herself to Demeter (mourning the loss of her daughter), wearing her face in the region of her genitalia. 'Lifting the skirt' is a common trope, e.g. as Anasyrma in Ancient Greece.

[4] Burns, Laura, and Xenia Dwertman, http://www.lauraburns.co.uk, accessed 07. Nov. 2016.

[5] "Funk is […] what you *don't* play. It's very important in funk what you don't play." (Melvin Parker, in Preston, Jerome. 2011), http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MYlElwVd5kE, accessed 16 Jan. 2017.

Lending an ear to the *gatvol noisy* audio lens, these are my foci: 1) Listening to individual voices addressing their understanding of their own sexuality; 2) Bearing aural witness to personal testimonies of sexual violation: How is subjectivity constructed within the narratives of violence, and how is it listened to within the macro-discourses on gendered violence? I combine a feminist critical discourse analysis framework (Lazar 2007) with a narrative interview method (Hollway and Jefferson 2008). Narrative allows human voices to speak for themselves; it records the common history of the country, while at the same time each person puts into words a story of their own life. Narratives are bound to the contexts in which they take place; they are in other words shaped by cultural, social, economic, political, historical factors. They become different histories of what people think, understand, and remember of events. Documenting what people believe in or mistrust, they bring to light their illusions, their hopes and their fears. Narratives can also uproot certain banalities associated with women, and bring into view largely hidden politics and hegemonic ways of speaking history (McKenzie-Mohr and Lafrance 2015).

The violent and oppressive historical context of South Africa, and the ongoing transformation affecting all levels of society accordingly has implications for the construction and narration of interpersonal relationships within the country as a whole, respectively on a much smaller scale with reference to this study. Bearing this in mind, I refrain from a focus purely on scholarly literature. My intention is rather to open up alternative discursive possibilities, by drawing on a range of sources which I consider equally valid in forming a response to my research questions. This applies, for example, to my use of poetry in the main by South African writers which I have chosen as a means of counter-balance in consolidating the narratives. Poetic language is inherently healing, weaving itself from the psyche. More on this follows in Chapter Three.

Perhaps the relevance of the dictum passed down through the centuries that "[s]ilence is the kosmos [good order] of women" (Carson ibid.), in the context of this study, is that it allows us to question whether it is not in fact our very acceptance of the masculine symbolic order (du Toit 2009) that we read silence unfavourably. If there is no such thing as silence, as Cage (1961) maintains, in the sense that silence is not a void; if silence is in fact a central part of speech, then is the enigma not rather that silence is heard as un*sound*? The puzzle is implicit in silence's not being listened to; as likewise when latches are fastened on the gaping, 'loudly uncontained' mouths. It seems that the blockage which occurs is not in the speech - which includes silence - but much more in the listening. Could gatvol of un*sound* then indeed be the female kosmos? Let us listen to this sound.

Come

I want to sit on your lap
with my legs around your waist.
In a basket: beads, combs, oil and shells,
so I can play with your hair.
I want to massage your scalp with oil
until my fingertips feel it come alive.
With a fine-toothed comb I want to scrape
specks of dandruff I find, then blow gently.
With the forked comb I want to part your hair this way
and that way, expose your scalp, letting it breathe.
Come sit, it's time to play with your hair:
twist sections,
braid others,
tie a few,
adorn some with beads
and others with those shells we picked
on that day it all began

Xaba (2008: 18).

Chapter 2

WORKING WITH THE BOUNDARIES OF GAPING MOUTHS

Feeling my fingertips come alive while twisting, braiding, tying, and adorning; in similar vein to Xaba's (2008) depiction above in 'Come', my reading of the literature for this study is shaped by attention to the fringes. I examine the patterns which emerge while considering a range of texts which focus on sexuality and on gendered violence in South Africa. The strands are interwoven to enclose, and also to unpen them. To (un)hem them.

Faig Ahmed and Zanele Muholi are two artists whose work exposes the fluidity of the boundaries in different ways. While Ahmed's carpet art engages with classic designs, aiming to unsettle established structures/ to disrupt convention, Muholi calls attention to disarray in a seemingly contrastive, yet equally unhinged and pertinent manner. The image depicted here is part of her series 'Period Pains/ Periods of Pain', a rough translation of 'Isilumo Siyaluma'.

FIGURE 1. © Ahmed.
Wave Function, 2016[6]

FIGURE 2. © Muholi.
Thokoza, 2013, Rape & Murder[7]

[6] Faig Ahmed. Courtesy of Faig Ahmed Studio.

[7] Zanele Muholi. Courtesy of Stevenson, Cape Town/Johannesburg and Yancey Richardson, New York. Digital print on cotton rag; digital collage of menstrual blood stains.

Having chosen this title to describe the secrecy of this period in time, Muholi uses menstrual blood stains to create a sequence of pictures both as a response and as a means of "begin[ning] to express and bridge the pain and loss I feel as I hear and become witness to 'curative rapes'."[8+9] A form of hate crime against people who do not conform to perceived social norms regarding human sexuality or gender roles, sexual assault here attempts to reinforce societal norms, and was first identified in South Africa as cases in which men think they can teach women to be 'real' African women (Mkhize et al 2010). Each piece in this series represents a victim of hate crime," says Muholi (ibid.), continuing to assert that

> "The passage in which we bleed
> The passage where we are/ were born
> The passage through which we become (wo)men?
> The erotic passage meant to be aroused, is raped
> The passage we love is hated and called names
> The sacred passage is ever persecuted." (Muholi ibid.).

As stated in the introduction, in the over twenty years' post-apartheid, we have seen growing priority being given to the understanding of sexuality and related issues like sexual and reproductive health rights, identity, and gender within (South) African research. Scholars have found countries on the African continent to be largely hostile to dialogue regarding sexual rights. In South Africa, the setting of my research study, women's rights to reproductive freedom are increasingly being called into ques-

[8] The use of the terms 'corrective rape/curative rape' is advised against by the United Nations UNAIDS 2015 Terminology Guidelines, as this creates the perception that something needs to be fixed; 'homophobic rape' is a proposed alternative, http://www.unaids.org/en/resources/documents/2015/2015_terminology_guidelines, accessed 21. Nov. 2016.

[9] Muholi, Zanele, http://www.vaslisouza.com/exhibitions/we-live-in-fear/, accessed 09 Oct. 2016.

tion, articulated for instance in an increase in demand for the 'virginity testing' of young women (Vincent 2006; Kang'ethe 2014). Deep-seated animosity and opposition has also been expressed toward LGBTIQ*[10] civic and human rights (Mkhize et al 2010), with the result that queer sexuality and hate crime have become the subject of still more extensive documentation. According to Brenna Munro (2012), questioning heteronormativity was made possible and was even encouraged in the newly democratic state of the 1990s, as it made people feel 'modern'. The shift which was signalled via transformation led the country through division to an imagined future of basking under the glow of a sparkling rainbow.

Could the rise of unmitigated homophobic violence in a country where there is such inequality then possibly stem from the deduction that 'being-queer-means-being-novel-means-capitalism-means-still-more-inequality(?)-means-no-future-for-a-disadvantaged-me-means-find-the-scapegoats'? One could argue that the contradiction is apparent: with apartheid left behind, how can one not continue striving toward reconciliation? At the same time, while patriarchy continues to execute both physical and discursive violence against women, how can women not want to awaken a feminist discourse which crosses national boundaries? Gayatri Spivak calls this the " weave of knowing and not knowing which is what knowing is." (1998: 104). Does 'homophobic rape' come at all as a surprise, one wonders? Nation-states are frequently imagined through gendered tropes; with women carrying the symbolic weight of nationalism time and again, their bodies become the sites of dispute on which to erect national identities. With the ongoing attacks against the LGBTIQ* community for their 'unAfrican' behaviour, Munro accounts for how queer activists are now spurning their go-between guise, and are standing up to the

[10] Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Questioning.

scapegoating they have been faced with for the apparent failures of the 'rainbow nation' (Munro 2012).

But let us go back a few steps again. Examining the dramatic increase of discussion on sexuality in post-apartheid, Deborah Posel (2004) makes note of how South Africans are playing a game of catch-up after many years of rigid prohibition on sexual matters. Using Foucault's (1978) 'putting sex into discourse', she questions the how and why of contemporary 'sex-talk', and its specifically local ties to sexual violence. Posel (2004: 54) explores the different ways in which sexuality is discursively framed, calling these the "discordant - yet interconnected - grammars of speech and silence". She further brings to attention how the various immorality and prohibition of mixed-marriages acts put into place during apartheid were in aid of avoiding the dreaded mixed bag of iniquity. Sex across the boundaries of 'race' was forbidden, as was being homosexual, and explicit images or references to sex in the media were censored. Sexual violence was of no concern unless the perpetrator was black and the victim white; in which case it was seen as a barbaric act, and became immediate cause for outrage (ibid. 59). It was a matter of course that law-making policies became necessary to cultivate these notions of black virility and left-wing sexual permissiveness (ibid. 54).

With the Constitution of 1996, sex as a concept has become public: sexual preference is now a matter of right protected by law, gender equality is promoted, and sexual violence to be fought against by the State. The outburst of sexual imagery on display post-1994 is associated with imagery of style, upward mobility, and freedom. There is, however, also a flip side to its public representation which is sex's betrayal "as a site of painful, hidden abuses and violations" (Posel 2004: 62), with rape having become an over-saturated catch-phrase. Reports of gendered violence have increased dramatically; yet despite the "greater preparedness to puncture the silence" (ibid. 60), most sexual violence remains

undercover.[11] Africa Check's 2014-2015 assault and sexual crime results for South Africa[12] note that police statistics for gendered violence are known to be unreliable, as most victims refrain from reporting these crimes to the police, so it is difficult to show how pervasive the problem of rape is in South Africa. Victims are often forced to work through trauma resulting from rape on their own, due to a lack of services.

Much shame remains in sex-talk, further maintains Posel (2004), as does resistance to modes of discourse which see sexuality as a "site for reconciliation through truth-telling to produce a 'safe' society respectful of human rights." (ibid. 62). The effect of the discursive shift in register has subjected conventions of masculinity to public scrutiny: sexuality is more on display in a range of public settings, for instance in magazines' advice columns, or soap operas which focus on sexual violence, generating discussion on issues of sexuality (ibid. 57). This growing knowledge and discussion of sexual matters, the recognition of one's right to sexual assertiveness, to resisting sexual advances, and the right to sexual pleasure appear to be understood as threatening previous norms of sexual authority, and as destabilising the foundations of masculinity (ibid. 61). Posel calls for the continued need to encourage discussion about sex; normalising it and finding a vocabulary that eases itself away from the 'seedy' and the 'naughty'; where sexuality can become a site of "rational, individual choice" (ibid. 58), and where people can make informed, responsible decisions for themselves.

A huge challenge in a country with "the worst figures for gender-based violence […] not at war", and where "at least one in

[11] According to police crime statistics from September 2015, there were a total of 53 617 sexual offences reported to the South African Police Services (SAPS) in 2014/15, i.e. 147 cases per day.

[12] https://www.africacheck.org/factsheets/factsheet-south-africas-201415-assault-and-sexual-crime-statistics/, accessed 16 Dec. 2016.

three South African women will be raped in her lifetime." (Moffett 2006: 129).[13] Although in no way wishing to minimise the effects any form of sexual assault has - a point I return to in the discussion chapter - gendered violence in South Africa is nevertheless a crime jointly linked to extreme physical violence. Linked to the militarised society of apartheid and the liberation struggle, where conflict was resolved through force[14] and where extremely violent masculinities were nurtured, South Africa's 'culture of violence' is a common feature of scholarly research, and a topic of great concern to counsellors from local organisations like Rape Crisis. These centres state that over half of those women who request their counselling services have been raped by more than one, and at times by up to thirty perpetrators.[15] Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) and its link to intimate femicide is endemic to South African society, at six times the global average (Dekel and Andipatin 2016); in her interview with me in March 2016 at the Woodstock Victim Support Centre in Cape Town, a police officer estimated that a South African woman is killed every six hours by an intimate partner. On World Aids Day 2016, approximately twelve percent of the South African population is estimated to be HIV-positive,[16] while the rate among fifteen to fourty-nine year olds is seventeen percent. This, a challenge in itself, is accompanied by an increase in child rape - an estimated fourty percent of all rape cases are of children under the age of twelve (du Toit 2009) - and the 'corrective' rape of lesbian women.

Rape is a legal term which has a culturally determined perception. In South Africa, the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences)

[13] This reference includes only those countries which officially collect figures.

[14] In an interview with a police officer from Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences (FCS), he equated the extreme violence of his recent rape cases to the inhumanity he witnessed during the 1980s on the Cape Flats.

[15] http://www.rapecrisis.org.za/rape-in-south-africa/, accessed 16 Dec. 2016.

[16] http://www.www.tac.org.za, accessed 02 Dec. 2016.

Amendment Bill of 2007[17] defines rape not only as vaginal penetration perpetrated by one person against the will of another, but forced or coerced anal or oral sex, irrespective of the gender of either the victim or the perpetrator. The Bill also names penetration with an inanimate object or animal genitalia as rape. More recently, the 2014 Amendment of Section 1 in the 2007 Bill has altered the definition of 'child' with reference to its Section 15.[18]

Let us consider the most prevalent misconceptions in public and private discourse about rape. First, that there is no such thing as a 'rapist'; that rape is something that simply happens to women's bodies. Implicit in this statement is the idea that rape is a woman's problem, that it is unrelated to men. In response to my question of why men rape, Lulama S., one of my interview partners, tentatively proposes that this is "[b]ecause they can?" "Men rape women because men are men and women are women," reiterates Louise du Toit (2009: 3); a point I address further on. Connected to this is a second destructive misconception which ignores the basic facts of female physiological sexual arousal and response in its claim that the female body is not rapable. The essence of this claim is that rape is not always an act of violence. Those who view the vagina as a vacuum forget to regard lubrication, engorgement, and the retraction of the cervix as being necessary conditions for women to have sexual intercourse.

A third widespread fallacy is that if there is a rapist, the perpetrator is an unknown 'barbaric Other'. The undertone here is that one cannot be raped by someone who is 'respectable', known and liked. Linked to this is the misplaced idea that rape is a story

[17] http://www.justice.gov.za/legislation/bills/2014-b18-sorma.pdf, accessed 02 Dec. 2016.

[18] This means that a person (A) who commits an act of sexual penetration with a child (B) who is 12 years of age or older but under the age of 16 years is, despite (B)'s consent to such an act, guilty of the offence of having committed statutory rape, *unless* (A), at the time of the act, was 12 years of age or older but under the age of 16 years; or (b) A was 17 years of age and the age difference between A and B was not more than two years. http://www.justice.gov.za/legislation/acts/2007-032.pdf Accessed 02 Dec. 2016.

about 'us' and 'them'; alluding to the idea that rape cannot happen in a safe community and suggesting that women who dress in a certain way and who are under the influence of alcohol or other drugs are women who ask for trouble. This in particular is a point vehemently disputed in my interviews, where my participants argue that rape occurs in commonplace spaces by known faces on a day-to-day basis[19]; and yet there is agreement by sexual health counsellors that it is still one of the only crimes in which the victim tends to be treated as the perpetrator.

Ann Levett (1997) notes the stigma involved when women treat themselves, and are also treated differently to others, depending on how they identify themselves as traumatised after experiencing sexual assault. She argues that whether from the cities or from the rural areas, all women in South Africa grow up with an omni-present sense of their 'rapability', and that this lends itself to "the construction of subjectivities […] different from men […] we learn to avoid some situations, control ourselves, restricting our choices and options as agents in the world" (ibid. 127). In similar vein, and in taking this point further, Ann Cahill (2001) maintains that rape affects all those who adjust their behaviour in the knowledge that their body is rapable. These rape fallacies are associated with another misconception alluded to above, namely that victims tend to report false rape claims,[20] when in reality the number of false rape reports is proven marginal. Some of the reasons for this are lack of access to services and a lack of faith in policing, rendering women "unlikely to report [their] attacker" (Moffett 2006: 141); what is seen as the personal humiliation of being exposed as someone who was raped; intimidation by and/ or financial dependence by the

[19] Police officers from my interviews at Woodstock's Victim Support Centre (in Cape Town) estimated that fourty percent of all rapes in South Africa are perpetrated against children by members of the family.

[20] Confirmed as his personal opinion in one of my interviews with a police officer at the Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences Unit in Cape Town.

perpetrator; linked to this, the fact that the perpetrator is a known member of the family, so not wanting to cause pain to the rest of the family; and the personal psychological trauma of having been sexually violated. The idea of there being a tendency to report false rape claims can be seen as one of the most destructive in the fight against sexual violence. It highlights the breadth and width of rape culture.

The term 'rape culture', used first during the 1970s in feminist discussions on rape, defines the societal belief structure which assigns blame to the victims and disregards the actions of the perpetrators. One response to this from the U.S.A. was 'Three Weeks in May', a three-week performance in 1977 by Suzanne Lacy[21] which unmasked the reported rape count in Los Angeles at the time and served as a model for further projects. Gendered violence in South Africa has also been taken up by a number of non-governmental projects whose focus is to raise awareness by bringing the discussion into the public space. An example of these efforts is 'Street Talk TV' which, in partnership with Rape Crisis Cape Town has been addressing the topic since 2014. A number of South Africans have chosen to come forward and share their stories of violence in interviews on this platform.[22]

'Sonke Gender Justice' is another example of such a project, holding regular workshops as part of its awareness-raising efforts. The question, "What do you have to do on a daily basis to avoid sexual assault?" was posed at one of its workshops: dividing into groups according to gender identity and sexual orientation, the participants listed precautionary measures they found necessary in reducing their risk of sexual assault. The group of (heterosexual-identifying) men listed and then crossed out their ideas, with one participant saying, "[i]t's like asking a lion in the

[21] http://www.suzannelacy.com/three-weeks-in-may/, accessed 11 Nov. 2016.

[22] http://streettalktv.com/episode/challenges-women-face/, accessed 11 Nov. 2016.

bush what it does to protect itself from becoming a prey." Despite evidence of men also suffering sexual violence (Boonzaier 2008; Gavey 2005), this quote highlights men's 'untouchable' self-image. A similar comment surfaces in one of my interviews, to be found in Chapter Four. One recalls also the large, deep 'masculine' voices of the lions, cited in Carson (1995). The figures below depict Sonke Gender Justice's workshop and juxtapose its proceedings with Muholi's seemingly hastily scrawled police statement of 'rape and assault'.

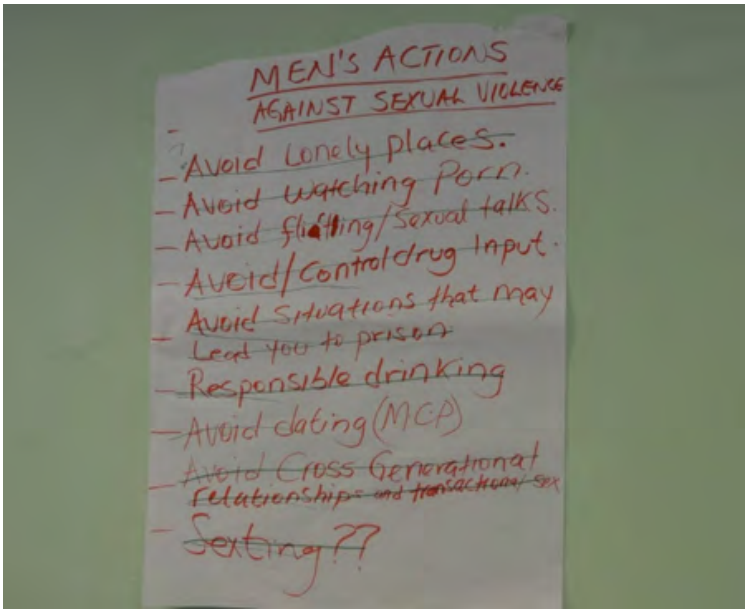

FIGURE 3. Gender Justice, *Avoiding Sexual Assault* [23]

[23] http://www.genderjustice.org.za/news-item/daily-basis-avoid-sexual-assault/, accessed 29 Sept. 2016.

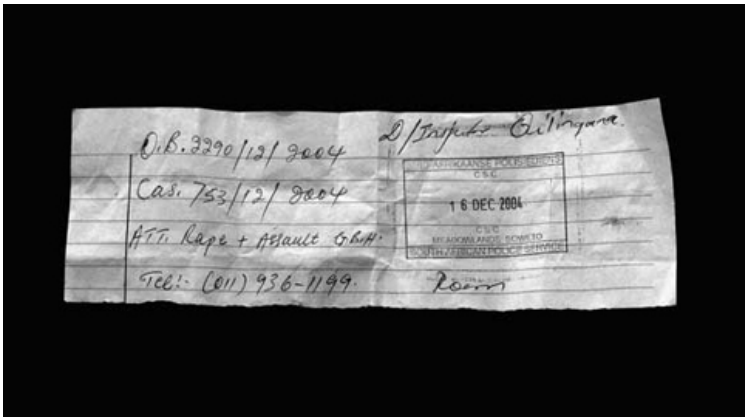

FIGURE 4. © Muholi, *Case Number, 2004*[24]

If these myths are so pervasive within South African society, then where and how do women enter the picture as resisting and refusing subjects? In her study of rape, du Toit (2009) contends that the sexual violence committed against women in contemporary South Africa should be understood against the backdrop of the political transition in the mid-1990s and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)'s failure to acknowledge rape as having been used as a political instrument during apartheid - where women were raped by 'struggle soldiers'[25] as well as by the security forces.[26] She argues that the TRC's attempt to authorise an end to a violent and illegitimate past has resulted in a vacuum with respect to present violations (ibid.), and that

[24] Zanele Muholi. Courtesy of Stevenson, Cape Town/Johannesburg and Yancey Richardson, New York. Silver gelatin print, 385 x 255mm, edition of 8 + 2AP.

[25] Anti-apartheid soldiers, i.e. Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK).

[26] The sexual abuse that took place in ANC freedom fighter camps abroad is the subject of, not only scholarly but also emergent fictional literature (e.g. Xaba 2013). "It was expected that women make their sexuality available in the interests of the struggle." (du Toit 2009:18-19). "Common in times of war, rape becomes politically justifiable, and is used as an instrument of torture and a reward for soldierly acts." (ibid. 16).

> "rape […] functions as a way of grounding and maintaining the political space as a masculine space, defining that space through its violent differentiation and separation from what is construed as the private, sexual, 'feminine' space. Rape is thus a political instrument, dividing those with public power from those without, but on such a basic level that it does not appear as political, within the political, at all. The TRC's relative neglect of rape victims corresponds with this broader picture, with the effect that the transition becomes characterised by an effective erasure of sexual difference as a political issue and by a reinstatement of the newly established political sphere as a masculine space." (ibid. 9-10).

Du Toit highlights, in other words, the Truth Commission's 'single-sex political model'. With Archbishop Tutu as its symbolic head, the TRC was situated in the religious context of forgiveness, reconciliation, and healing; it was an imitation of the greater western symbolic order in which women are not taken seriously as subjects (ibid. 2009: 11-12). She argues that dominant African symbolic frames in fact collaborate(d) with western frames in so far as both endorse each other's serving the hegemonic patriarchal order (ibid. 6-7). Du Toit criticises the TRC's disregard of rape, showing this negligence up as a concrete example of the greater picture of feminine invisibility (ibid. 3), where female sexuality and agency are separated. In making rape a focal point of her study, the author thus emphasizes the necessity of addressing the larger masculine symbolic order, and she unveils a fuller account of women's political agency and subjectivity within this masculine symbolic order. When considering theories of the subject, I refer to Judith Butler, who maintains that the subject presumes to be the presupposition of agency, yet is at the same time subjected to laws that precede the subject (1993). Butler argues that agency lies not in forsaking the position into which one is subjected but in inhabiting this position and then destabilising it. Being a subject and being

subjected: the space between voicing one's silence and being silenced is an unstable space.

Who gets to speak and to be heard, and under which conditions do people speak? The Truth Commission was not only negligent of gendered violence as a serious issue but also did not reflect on political reconciliation between the sexes. The hearings took place in a masculine context: the process of reconciliation was fashioned in such a way that women were expected more so than asked to forgive the human rights violations against their male family members, something which hundreds of women duly did (du Toit 2009: 20). Those women who testified were expected to forgive in masculine terms seen as universal, neutral terms, leading to the silencing of female voices (ibid. 18-19). According to du Toit, rather than being a thoughtless oversight, the practice was key to the patriarchal symbolic order which dominates politics in the country to this day. The revival of patriarchal power in the present day and the ongoing regulation of women's conduct is to her, then, shaped by the patriarchal symbolic order.

Where are the accounts of women who oppose socially constructed norms in their narratives of violence? Teamed together, a psychologist, a writer and a linguist (Krog et al. 2009) return to the mothers' testimonies of seven young ANC[27] activists; known as the 'Gugulethu Seven', they were murdered in the 1980s. As the mothers' testimonies unfolded, they unmasked the framework of the TRC: in "demonstrat[ing] humanness, so that [the killers] in turn may restore their humanity" (ibid. 11); through pardon, hate was to be conquered. Memory was in other words given a decisive role here as the women came to reflect that which was desired, namely the archetypal mother. Only one of the Gugulethu mothers, Notrose Konile, refused to conform to these expectations, her anger contrasting with the other mothers' testimonies. When Mrs

[27] African National Congress - the ruling party in South Africa since 1994.

Konile retold the story of the death of her son, it did not follow a chronological order. Her speech was not heard, scattered as it was with spells of silence, sighs, and dreams.[28] When asked about forgiveness, she asserted that "I wouldn't be able to talk to them; it is their fault that now I am in this misery. I wouldn't know what to do with them." (ibid. 2009). Hers could be seen as a testimony of resistance to being placed in the masculine symbolic order of which du Toit speaks. Returning to the archive testimony, and while re-translating the transcript into English, Nosisi Mpolweni, the linguist amongst the authors discovered errors in both the translation and the transcription of the original 1996 version, as well as references which are hard to translate from rural isiXhosa into urban English. Mrs Konile's narrative speaks of dreams, rural traditions, and of her ancestors; illustrating how articulate she in fact was through her resistance to the set TRC framework. "Her narrative defied all the elements that render narratives 'audible' within what we considered to be the dominant discursive framework operative at the hearings." (ibid. 46). Examining this narrative, Krog et al (2009) question whether other tools could not have been put to better use than the more usual western trauma theories.

> "By analysing Mrs Konile's testimony through the notion of African individuality, we have taken a rather radical step. We are saying that within a post-colonial context a woman might appear either incoherent because of severe suffering, or unintelligible because of oppression - when in fact, she is neither. Within Mrs Konile's indigenous framework she is logical and resilient in her knowledge of her loss and its devastating consequences on her life […] However, the forum she found herself in, and the way the official version of

[28] Mrs Konile's surname was misspelt in the records, and her testimony also left no trace on the TRC website. It seems not to have been understood (Krog et al 2009).

her narrative was arrived at, made it very hard for her to convey the depth of this devastation." (ibid. 63).

This being said, some western trauma theories indeed tie in to Krog et al's argument seen above. Lawrence Langer (1993), for example, a Holocaust theorist, sheds light on the forms and functions of memory in his analysis of Nazi death camp survivors' videotaped oral testimonies. He speaks of 'deep memory' and of 'durational time' where the trauma experienced is ever-repeating and can never enter "what we call the stream of time." (ibid. 55). Langer's concept of 'deep memory' challenges the notion of the talking cure, given such high status during the TRC hearings.

Langer maintains further on that recovery is not possible, as "nothing is recovered, only uncovered and then re-covered, buried again beneath the fruitless struggle to expose the way it was." (ibid. 205). The survivors who speak with Langer tell him he cannot know of what they speak; that he might even suspect they are lying. He maintains that it is possible to gain some understanding, provided we listen on the speaker's terms. Langer, on the other hand, also warns against glorifying the survivors by imposing on them an invincible human spirit.

Kristie Dotson (2011) presents a related theoretical interpretation of the violence at hand when members of exploited groups are silenced through their testimony. She sees this violence as the hearer not being able to meet the vulnerability of the speaker, and differentiates between various types of silencing which people face when testifying. 'Testimonial quieting' is a term she uses to identify situations where the audience does not recognise a speaker as a knower, whereas 'testimonial smothering' is viewed as 'unravelling' one's own testimony to the testimonial competence shown by the audience. For Dotson, then, the case of Notrose Konile could be seen as a model example of 'testimonial quieting'.

Before returning to these concepts further on, however, I draw attention to Krog et al's approach as an apt example of increasing critical response to situations of 'testimonial quieting': by questioning the relevance of some forms of western trauma theory to African testimony, the authors present an impression of contemporary perspectives in post-colonial memory studies. Described by Michael Rothberg (2013) as 'multidirectional memory' studies, meaning memory work which links European to post-colonial contexts, these 'truth' explorations within testimony have been forging new paths since the Truth Commission hearings over twenty years ago (Nuttall 2009).

One of these critical respondents is Nthabiseng Motsemme (2004), whose writing is shaped by women's silences in the TRC testimonies as she explores the boundaries of verbal language, the gaping mouths referred to at the beginning of this chapter. Similarly to Langer's 'deep memory' (1993), or Cahill's (2001) 'rape affecting all who see themselves as rapable', Motsemme understands the TRC narratives as "examples of violation whose effects transcend the actual moment of violence." (ibid. 909). She encourages their reading "as another language through which women speak volumes […] allow[ing] us to then explore other, perhaps hidden meanings." (ibid. 910). Silence to Motsemme can be heard "as resistance and courage" and she contends that it is "when the language of silence, which forms part of the economy of the invisible, is revealed, that we have a better view of those privatised experiences of daily living in violent contexts." (ibid.). Motsemme challenges the notion that we become social subjects through our capacity to understand and to articulate language (ibid. 915), while asking us to consider those who have not been afforded the opportunity of relating their story as they see fit. In so doing, she encourages us to rethink pain as something which has its "own morphology and own logic which governs expression and representation." (ibid. 916). In Motsemme (2004), then, we are again

directed toward listening for the voice of pain in sighs, the images in dreams, or in silence.

Listening further afield, we become aware of how the voice finds utterance in still other forms: "Have you ever heard a stranger sound than Angus MacPhee knitting with grass?" is the opening to the song 'A'fighe le feur' (Weaver of Grass), the original version sung in Gaelic by The Mackenzie Sisters.[29] This brief excursion to South Uist in the Outer Hebrides takes us to the home of a man who chose not to speak for over fifty years after returning from his service as a young man in World War II. Angus MacPhee's story, related in Roger Hutchinson's 'The Silent Weaver' (2011) tells of how a man diagnosed as mentally ill creatively used his traditional craft skills as his form of expression.

> "Does my sexiness upset you?
> Does it come as a surprise that I dance
> like I've got diamonds at the meeting of my thighs?
> Out of the huts of history's shame I rise;
> up from a past that's rooted in pain I rise.
> I am the dream and the hope of the slave.
> I rise I rise I rise."
> (Angelou 1978).

How far have we come since the pioneering days of Maya Angelou and the feminist movement of the 1970s? Or, as in Xaba's (2005) poem 'She said, he said, we said', where the unnamed woman's voice is subdued by both her husband's and broader society's big talk; the lines in the poem repeating powerfully as '[y]ears went by [and] nothing changed', until it does change, with its harrowing and irreversible results. Women in many countries can nowadays theoretically charge for rape even if they aren't virgins, and also even if they're married to the rapist says

[29] http://www.gaelicmusic.com/album.php?SKU=SKYECD10, accessed 15. Dec. 2016.

Estelle Freedman (2013), adding that another big step was taken when black men and white women[30] were given permission to show their love for each other and be physically intimate without the former immediately being accused of rape. She accounts for how a culture which distrusted both women and blacks in the past cooperated in keeping both on the outskirts of law-making. Freedman remarks that this has greatly influenced definitions of rape over time. Women's use of the media as a podium from which to describe experiences of sexual violence is relatively new, at least in South Africa, with as of yet not much discourse analysis having been done on these public statements. Noticeable, however, I argue, is a global pattern where emerging stories continue to fit into the accepted narratives. An example of this is 'Straight Outta Vagina': a song by the punk group Pussy Riot, it is a reaction to the misogynistic practices during the U.S. presidential election campaign of 2016.[31] While responses such as these are useful in generating discussion, the song seems to use all the tropes and clichés of male-driven pop video instead of subverting them.

Listening on, our awareness grows. The 'unutterable' indeed exists and is expressed in many different forms. That which is beyond words does not necessarily become forgotten in history. It is related, suggests Jane Bennett (1997), to the level at which one wishes to define language. Texts, she says, also in the form of oral communication, can be read in ways that relate to being human, through the embodiment of human experience. When a culture then consists of disparate social discourses, how exactly is the experience of sexual violence represented? Bennett grapples with this question after remarking on her "pathological interest in language because [she] live[s] within and across the failures of

[30] Freedman is referring to the U.S.A but her statement can be taken further.

[31] http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2016/10/25/pussy-riot-reminds-trump-where-he-came-from-in-straight-outta-vagina.html, accessed: 07 Nov. 2016.

language." (ibid. 96). She explores the representation of subjective 'truth', while emphasizing the complexity of the latter, as well as of 'social memory'. When it comes to sexual violation, she continues, a body is visibly as 'whole' after the rape as before; the physical injury, if there is any, is only an indication of the wound beneath. She explores how the pain caused by rape is represented when this pain is "laced into the social production of power (and hence language) in an endless cycle of exchange between silence and narrative, 'the wound' and the regime;" and continues by saying that this is the case "[w]hether it is an 'unfortunate accident' or whether it is the temporary annihilation of the semiotic process through which a woman may make sense of her Self." (ibid. 98-99). In Chapter Four, I comment on Bennett's 'plausibility' and 'credibility', together with some other insightful texts which attend to the significance of the context in shaping narratives of relationships, violence, the Self and the Other.

Chapter 3

3.1. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

My qualitative corpus consists of twenty-eight face-to-face, semi-structured interviews which I recorded, and later transcribed verbatim. Of these twenty-eight interviews, I have chosen sixteen for the purposes of this study. My intention has been to offer a selection of material in the form of individual voices rather than a representative sample, so that the individual voices speak for themselves. The interview questions were open-ended, broad, and flexible to the specific context at hand; the purpose being to elicit the participants' stories. My questions have explored the participants' language use with respect to more generalised notions of sexuality within the post-apartheid South African context, as well as when related to the participants' own experiences of gendered violence. I clarified the nature and purpose of the research at the beginning of each interview, and then encouraged the participants to speak in their own words with

as little prompting as possible, particularly when I knew them to have a history involving sexual violence.[32]

As the subject matter lends itself to an interdisciplinary approach, I employ a critical discourse analysis (henceforth CDA) framework in this study; advocated by, amongst others, van Dijk (2001). Feminist studies are adjoined to CDA (henceforth FCDA) in Lazar (2007), and this inclusion also serves to inform my study. CDA is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of discourse, drawing from social and linguistic theory, whereby the two practices embody one another.

CDA is provocative research which sees discourse as a form of social action: it explores the mutual influences of language and social structure, where power relations are embedded, reproduced, supported and/ or resisted in society through language (van Dijk 2001). It can be linked Foucauldian theories, where discourse is a medium through which power relations produce speaking subjects; where these power relations are seen as a struggle over interests. Critical discourse analysts' "overtly political agenda" (Kress 1990: 84) thus aims to illustrate how power and dominance is (re)created through discourse structures. It questions whose interests are being served in our choice of words, as our means of expression acquires substance within particular social, historical, and political contexts (Fairclough & Wodak 1997). Discourse analysis takes position in its being critical. It seeks to understand how language use is involved in relations of power (van Dijk 2001) where language use itself can be termed the micro-level of analysis, and where power, dominance, and inequality the macro-levels (van Dijk 2001). In other words, where what those in power say tends to be taken as the undeniable truth, and where the voice of those not in power is often dismissed as irrelevant, CDA's objective is to reveal self-serving, hidden agendas. It views the discursive-social relationship

[32] This was the case, for instance, at Rape Crisis in Port Elizabeth.

as dialectical, in that discourse constitutes and is constituted by social situations and structures (Fairclough 1995). Every act of meaning-making through both spoken and written language thus contributes to the recreation and maintenance of the social order, and also in the sense of resisting and transforming that order.

FCDA which, as its name suggests draws also on feminist studies, adds another perspective to critical language studies; its focal point being to challenge patriarchal ideology within discourse which upholds unequal gendered social orders. Feminist studies and CDA are mutually beneficial, according to Lazar (2007).[33] While CDA shows us that social practices are reflected in, and constituted by discourse (Fairclough 1995), a feminist perspective shows us how many social practices are not neutral but are gendered in particular ways. Gender acts as a category within which people understand and structure their social practices, while an activist stance focuses on creating critical awareness and on developing strategies for resistance and change (Lazar 2007).

FCDA moreover problematizes 'scientific neutrality', seeing knowledge as socially and historically constructed and value-based. The feminist understanding of gender, for example, is as an ideological structure which divides people into two classes, men and women, based on domination and subordination. This assigning of sex onto gender is criticised within FCDA, where 'sex' itself is seen as something that is socially constructed (Butler 1993),[34] and where the gender structure based on sexual difference enables access to

[33] FCDA aims to "show up the complex, subtle, and sometimes not so subtle, ways in which the frequently taken-for-granted gendered assumptions and hegemonic power relations are discursively produced, sustained, negotiated, and challenged in different contexts and […] not merely an academic de-construction of texts and talk for its own sake, but comes from an acknowledgement that the issues dealt with […] have material and phenomenological consequences:" (Lazar 2007: 142).

[34] Butler has, among others, argued that gender non-conforming individuals experience greater discrimination in being marginalised by the hetero-gendered order, and are so made further invisible. Feminist political action thus needs to be contextually constructed.

capital. Gender ideology is hegemonic in that is seems to be natural, consensual and acceptable; a feat largely accomplished through discursive means. The taken-for-grantedness and normalcy of such knowledge, says Lazar, is what keeps the power differential at work (2007: 147). Lazar stresses the contemporary necessity of feminism in relation to CDA, especially in light of recent reactionary backlashes against reclamations of women's sexual agency which she claims are a response to the "whittling away of the patriarchal dividend" (ibid. 154). She warns against falling into the neo-liberal discourses which claim that feminism has outlived its purpose and ceases to be of relevance once certain equality measures have been achieved. Physical violence against women is clearly a form of overt gender asymmetry, and a daily reality in South Africa, despite anti-discrimination legislation, as seen in Chapter Two. We should also not forget the more hidden, and yet omnipresent, self-regulating discursive operations of power ingrained within our networks of relations (Foucault 1975) which affect us in different ways as gendered subjects.

In acknowledging that competing discourses may be available to narrating subjects, and exploring how power and dominance are discursively produced and resisted, FCDA ties neatly into my narrative interviewing method of inquiry; a result of wishing to "address how respondents' meanings are related to circumstances." (Hollway and Jefferson 2008). Narratives can be transformational in their consequence; how stories are composed, exchanged, and spread is "central to our meaning-making, contributes to our identities, helps us cope with challenges, shapes how we see the future, helps determine the nature of our interpersonal relationships and our unique positioning in the world." (McKenzie-Mohr and Lafrance 2015: 64). This author upholds the idea that in order to give a framework to our own experience, we make use of pre-existing narratives which evolve out of particular historical and cultural times and places. We draw on the available repertoire of discursive resources provided

by the culture to make sense of our own relationships; in other words, narrative can be used as a tool with which we construct ourselves. A narrative approach aims not only at meaning-conveying but also at constructing subjectivity for the individual narrator. Interview participants thus tell stories about their lives but at the same time they also construct themselves within these stories (Boonzaier 2008: 186).

Listening to the narratives of my own interviews, I have thus been attentive to the discursive resources the participants drew on.

At the same time, the discursive realm should not be upheld at the expense of the material realities of people's lives; social and political factors cannot be ignored, as these entrench different forms of inequality (Boonzaier 2008: 185). In my study, I have been attentive also to the approach taken by Gavey (2005), who challenges the vast body of research within the medical discourse which situates the response to gendered violence in an individualistic and pathogenic model; a model which does not go further in explaining how societal attitudes are informed by patriarchal ideologies. She argues that this understanding is highly necessary in order to challenge widespread, and yet often obscure, pathologising ways of understanding gendered violence. Narrative can consequently be used to explore (gendered) violence (Boonzaier 2008: 184) where hegemonic gendered constructions are embraced as well as resisted. I observed much resistance in my interviews to the double standards and gendered constructions of women's sexuality and desires as being purely responsive to men. There is, however, want for a discourse which centres more on women's sexuality as positive, and which acknowledges female desire (Schefer and Foster 2001: 375).

The significance in my attention to poetry is well recounted by the poet, Ted Hughes. In a *Paris Review* interview with Drue Heinz[35],

[35] http://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/1669/the-art-of-poetry-no-71-ted-hughes, accessed 16 Jan. 2017.

he speaks of once having become acquainted with a healer who had suffered for many decades from illness and who was cured when, in his sixties, he started healing others. Hughes' idea is that art, poetry, functions similarly.

> "[Art] works on the artist as a healing. But it works on others too. Hence our great, insatiable thirst for it. However, it comes out - whether a design in a carpet, a painting on a wall, the shaping of a doorway - we recognize that medicinal element because of the instant healing effect, and we call it art […] It's a living medicine that we can still use […] Prose and narratives can carry this healing. Poetry does it more intensely."

Poetry is a discourse which provides its audience with insight into individualised, personal human experience and linguistic expression. While valuable in advancing an understanding of human diversity, poetry equips us with a counterweight to our tendency to generalize (Hanauer 2003). And so, much as Gqola (2015) makes a relevant point in advising us to steer clear from seeing acts of gendered violence as isolated moments, each story is nevertheless unique. Each individual's understanding, and expression of their sexuality, and of sexual violence, is told in an individual way. Sharing these stories can provide a form of healing in of itself. I regard the stories told in the interviews I conducted, and which are discussed in this thesis, as distinctive art forms; as "living medicine [which] still works. We feel it working."[36] The poems which interweave throughout the thesis have accordingly been chosen as a reflection of the strong voices in these narratives. "Poetry is the voice of spirit and imagination and all that is potential." (Hadley 2013: 196).

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[36] http://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/1669/the-art-of-poetry-no-71-ted-hughes, accessed 16 Jan. 2017.

3.2. STUDY SETTING

My three-week journey in February and March 2016 took me along the South African coastline, beginning in Durban, where I conducted four interviews. The first was with a performance artist and her partner, the second with a sexual health counsellor; the third with a school teacher and film-maker, some of whose films address LGBTIQ* topics; the fourth with a nurse and activist who at the time did HIV prevention work for the South African Correctional Services. They are first language isiZulu speakers and the interviews were conducted in English.

I then travelled to the Buffalo City Metropolitan region, where I conducted eight interviews in East London and in Phakamisa, a settlement south of King William's Town. My interlocuters here consisted of a community leader; a pastor at a local church; two students of Fort Hare University; a school sports teacher; a pensioner and small business owner; a retail salesperson and gay rights activist; and an unemployed, homeless person. Amongst these interviews were personal stories of sexual violence. Apart from the pastor, all of these participants are female and their first language is isiXhosa. I worked here with an interpreter, conducting the interviews in English, with the participants responding in a mixture of isiXhosa and English. While in this region, I travelled to a rural area in the Eastern Cape, where I conducted an interview in English with an isiXhosa speaker who co-runs a cultural centre there.

The Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality became the third leg of my research journey. Thanks to the hospitality and graciousness of Rape Crisis and of the participants, I was able to interview six women who had volunteered to speak with me at Rape Crisis' Port Elizabeth city centre branch. These women either had personal experiences of sexual violence, or else an immediate family member had, to whose narrative they were

closely connected. These women's first language is isiXhosa, and here I worked with two interpreters. In all of the interviews where I had an interpreter, I have transcribed only the English sections of the recordings.[37] Excluding interviews with men who had experienced gendered violence was a conscious decision. I am aware of and acknowledge the damage that rape incurs on male victims. There are, nonetheless, crucial differences in men's and women's response (Gavey 2005) to rape which go beyond the capacity of this research. My focus here lies rather on grasping an understanding of gendered violence as the laming of female sexual subjectivity and agency. While in Port Elizabeth, I also conducted an interview with a journalist who covers news reports of hate crimes. Her first language is isiZulu, and the interview was conducted in English.

My last fieldwork site was Cape Town. Here, I interviewed a volunteer counsellor at the Victim Support Room of the Woodstock Police Station, and a police officer from the Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences (FCS) Cape Town central branch.[38] My final interview was conducted with a German-Dutch writer of youth literature, who is also a founding member of a non-profit organisation caring for children living with HIV/ AIDS in Cape Town.

A few months previously, in October 2015, I had conducted three other interviews in Cape Town. The first was with an isiXhosa-speaking activist from Development Action Group (referred to as DAG in the following), the second was with an Afrikaans-speaking community leader from the Cape Flats.[39] The third was an isiXhosa-speaking university student and author of a novel

[37] See the subchapter below, 'Challenges encountered'

[38] I had arranged additional interviews in Cape Town which were cancelled.

[39] A residential area on the outskirts of the city, created by the apartheid state's racial segregation and forced removal policies (Group Areas Act). Apartheid legislation classified citizens into four racial groups - 'black', 'white', 'coloured', and 'Indian'. While I acknowledge that such racially constructed terms can be understood as offensive, this terminology reflects the history as well as the reality of contemporary social-economic divisions.

about two girls falling in love in South Africa, and the intolerance they face (Ngcowa 2010). All of the interviews in Cape Town were conducted in English, except for the one with the community leader in the Cape Flats which was conducted and transcribed in Afrikaans. Apart from the interviews which took place at Rape Crisis and at the respective police stations, the interviews took place either in cafés, in community centres, or in the interlocuters' homes. The ages of the interlocuters ranged from some in their early twenties to some in their eighties.

3.3. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

At the beginning of each interview, I asked for consent from the participants. This involved informing them of the overall purpose, as well as the voluntary nature of the research, to prevent undue pressure, or feelings of obligation to speak. As way of introduction, I also informed the participants that I am a qualified social worker, having acquired my degree at the University of Cape Town; that I have work experience in South Africa, and thirteen further years of work experience in Germany doing sexual health and HIV test counselling for the Health Department of Cologne. My introduction further involved asking the participants whether I could record the interviews. Some of the interlocuters expressed the wish to remain anonymous, while others asked me to use their names. As this document is now being published and thus being made publicly available, I have given all of the interview participants fictional names except for those who, having recently been asked again, have expressed the wish for to me to use their real names.

The interlocuters at Rape Crisis had previously been asked by a counsellor known to them whether they would be willing to take part in a research study. These participants signed a consent form

handed over by me directly before the interview took place. The form was written in English and was interpreted by the isiXhosa-speaking interpreter. I gave the participants at Rape Crisis their transport fare for coming to the interview. I paid the interpreters in East London and in Port Elizabeth for their work, and I also gave Rape Crisis some money toward their running costs. I offered to buy the participants a drink and a meal during the other interviews as a sign of gratitude for their time, and for their willingness to speak with me.

3.4. CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED

A particular challenge lay in my rather limited school knowledge of isiXhosa. While the majority of my interview participants' first language was isiXhosa, and while I had purposely chosen to interview people whose first language was not my own, when conducting these interviews, I was reminded of Antjie Krog's "unlearning the past while trying to live with harmed tongues." (2013: 2). She speaks in the context of reporting as a radio team member at the opening of the newly democratic Parliament in 1996, and of the need to reinvent a language. She questions how to translate into, for example isiXhosa, unheard-of terms during apartheid like 'human rights'? Over twenty years later, and in the context of my interviews, English terminology was often given to define terms considered taboo, or 'harsh-sounding' in the respondents' first language. During reflection with the translators, my premise was confirmed that the interview partners appeared to feel less inhibited speaking about certain taboo topics in English than in their first language. Still, only being able to understand isiXhosa at an elementary level meant that I was unable to capture the finer nuances, and that most of the verbal communication

in the original language escaped me. On the other hand, this led me to being more aware of, and sensitive to the non-verbal communication that took place. I also noticed, as the days passed, that some of the language was coming back to me, and that I was understanding more and more.

An issue of concern was to what extent my interview participants felt they were able to speak freely, particularly when I worked with an interpreter. This is one of my reasons for having chosen an unstructured approach, as it allows the participant to guide the amount of input they wish to reveal of themselves. Still, it soon became apparent on two occasions that the respondent felt obliged to speak with me. Discovering this, I emphasised the voluntary nature of the interview, and brought the session to a close soon after. Apart from the language gap, I found class difference between the participants and myself - tied to different levels of formal education against the backdrop of apartheid - not necessarily a challenge but certainly an informing factor during the interviews. Assumptions were drawn about my privileged position as an 'outsider', having at the time lived for eighteen years in Germany, and also having grown up as a white South African during apartheid. Certain issues were 'explained' to me in the interviews, for example, "You know, when something happens in the location, in the black society […] I feel so ashamed for my culture." I suspect that my being female assisted in putting my group of largely female participants more at ease when discussing topics so intricately linked to gendered violence. An additional factor which perhaps alleviated the participants' inhibition to speak out on this sensitive and intimate topic was their knowledge of my professional background. The notion of 'shared identity' (Lewin 1995) is perhaps worthy of note at this point, where identity according to a poststructuralist perspective is assumed to be dynamic and fluid. 'Shared identity' rests on

individual meanings, so that the forms of identity which are important in the specific interview context are always changing; for example, sometimes racial identity is important, or sometimes one's identity as a woman is highlighted. The interviews were not only informative for my research; I was humbled by the strength of the people who spoke with me, as well as the trust they showed by speaking so candidly.

On a personal level, I experienced the interviews as energising and regenerative.

Although my original transcriptions of the interviews which were conducted with an interpreter appear in the third person singular, e.g. "She says that …" I have adapted these interpreted interviews so that the participants speak in the 'I' form. While I am conscious of the fact that the narrations were interpreted rather freely, thus taking into account that I am not presenting the speakers' exact wording, I nevertheless wish to lay more emphasis on their voices which I find come across more clearly in the 'I' form.

When introducing the participants in the next section, I use the full names *only* of those who expressed the wish to be named in full. Thereafter, in the discussion chapter, I refer to *all* of the participants only by their first names. As will become clear in the discussion, the narrators of the various excerpts are referred to at the end of each excerpt.

3.5. INTRODUCING THE PARTICIPANTS WHO FEATURE IN THIS STUDY

KHANYISWA B.

> Ewe, yes, I am Khanyiswa. I am pleased for this occasion; you see mos I dress smart, and I get the taxi early because I like to be here in good time to speak with you.

Khanyiswa, a domestic worker, is also a married mother of two daughters. She went to Rape Crisis Port Elizabeth to seek assistance after having found out that her younger daughter who was under thirteen years of age at the time had been sexually abused by an older cousin. The following is a quote I associate with her expressive manner of speaking.

> The first thing a person will say now, "Where was she going at eleven o'clock? How can she wear the mini-skirt?" But the mini-skirt is sold in the shop. And then when you buy that mini-skirt, there's no snappy warning signs that say you mustn't wear it at night, like on the cigarette boxes.

NOMSINDO M.

Mama M, a pensioner, went to Rape Crisis to seek assistance after having been raped by her over thirty-year-old grandson. She introduced herself as follows

> My name? Mna? UNomsindo. N-O-M-S-I-N-D-O. Being abused physically, or sexually, it's hurting, especially if you are being abused by someone close to you, by your husband, or even by a family member who is younger than you. It makes one feel very bad.

One of my lasting memories of this interview is, having handing her the taxi fare in an envelope, she immediately opened it, looking at me quizzically, while explaining that

> I am opening the envelope straight away because it is so flat. So I must check that it is not a butterfly you put in there.

MTHOKOZISI LEMBETHE

Mthoko's and my meeting had occurred two years previously online, after my having watched his documentary 'Paving Forward'. I had written to him, thanking him for his short film which had touched me to the quick.
We now arranged to meet at a café adjoining the KZNSA art gallery on a Wednesday afternoon.[40] After ordering drinks I asked him to introduce himself.

> You're speaking with Mthokozisi, the shorter version is Mthoko. I'm a school teacher and a film-maker. I write as well, I write film scripts; what I'm focusing on now, I'm telling LGBTI stories, that's the passion that I have. The reason I started doing these is, being a gay man myself, a black gay man from South Africa, I felt that there were not many stories being told about us in our own languages. The ones that you see on TV are stereotypes, half truths. I felt that somebody has to do something. We have to tell authentic stories because we know better; as a gay guy, I know better how it is. So I decided, "No, I'll just be brave and do it". I've always been a shy person, I only started being free with my sexuality after varsity. And that's why I decided, after all these years of being silent, the best way to do this is to film. And so I've been using film as the medium of telling stories.

[40] Kwazulu Natal Society of Arts.

FAIZA H.

The contact with Faiza, a resident of the Cape Flats, was made through Development Action Group[41] and its involvement in various informal settlement housing projects. Together with Chris Bongartz, I was invited to her home where, over the lunch we had brought, Faiza proceeded to relate the history of the community to us in which she remains is a driving force.

> My naam is Faiza en ek is 'n community leader hier. Ek myself, ek behoort in 'n Khoi groep. Ons is die first indigenous people of this land. Ek sal nie sê ons glo dis onse land nie, want dis God se land at the end of the day. En God het nie net die bruin mense gemaak nie, hy het bruin, wit en swart mense gemaak. Ek is gebore binne in die Kaap, in District Six. My ouers het daar gebly, my ouma het daar gebly. En toe het die government vir hulle daar uitgegooi. My ouma het 'n klomp huise geown. Nou is hulle dood en hulle het niks papiere agtergelos nie. Nou sê hulle dis restoration en jy kan land claims maak, maar hoe kan jy claim? Jy het níks bewyse nie. Jy weet jy het daar gebly, jy weet dit was jou ouma se huis, but jy het nie 'n bewys nie. *(See English translation in the appendix).*

NONYAMEKO T.

I had occasion to meet with and interview Nonyameko as a result of her knowing Sizwe Mqalo, my interpreter in the region. Sizwe had approached her, asking whether she would be prepared to speak with me, while also telling her broadly about my research topic. We arranged a meeting point and settled down in a room

[41] "[A] leading non-profit organisation [which] deepens democracy by working as a facilitator of change in South Africa's urban development arena. DAG supports communities in need of adequate housing to lead their own development by enhancing their capacity and resourcefulness." (DAG 2009).

on the campus of Fort Hare University. She immediately began speaking, choosing to do so in English, switching also to isiXhosa.

> You're speaking with Nonyameko. I used to have three brothers, they passed away, all of them. It is only me left, yes. Yes, I am the only one. There's no-one, there's no other one. I'm now twenty-seven years old […]. I go to school when I was staying in the shelter. The lady of the shelter, she's a social worker and she's comes to our church. She was keeping only the guys, but I was the only one I was on the street as a lady cause she met me the time when I was still young, when she saw me here on the street. We used to go to the soup kitchen and on the Mondays we going to have a coffee and milk and bread, and some clothes. After that, they gave us water and some face cloths and some soap, and also some body lotion and hot water so we should supposed to bath. But first, before we eat, there should be a Word first. And after that, there should supposed someone can speak Xhosa to interpret for those people they can't hear how to speak English. Yes, I used to said, "Ì can do it," and I helped the pastor to interpret those people. After that, we just go wash our hands, we go to the tables and we give them something to eat. But after that, the lady came on Fridays, she took me to […]. It used to be a coffee shop, yes and a restaurant, and the lady there, she's taking those children, those ladies who've been abused by their families, people who are staying on the street. Ok, the problem I was been chasing away to that house. I was want to do all the street things, you see? I was been in control, but I came out of control, and I just go out and have a smoke with some friends, and I didn't want to listen what the people are saying to me, it's like "No these people doesn't care about me." I was denying myself that; I was worrying about that because of having that fear of those people they speak about me outside because I am black.

AVIWE S.

Aviwe and I met through my having been given a list of people to phone by a very helpful employee of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality's Eastern Cape Gay/Lesbian Association, Candace Sterley. I was invited by Aviwe to visit her at her home when in town. When I arrived, she first looked at me with a strange look on her face and then proceeded with

> I am so sorry, I forgot we had an appointment. Please come in. Can I offer you something to drink? […]. So on this topic of violence, I'm thinking of intimate partner violence. For me, if anybody is violent, it's those people that are wanting to be recognised, they feel intimidated. But the violence that is amongst homosexuals, it is like it is ok, and it's not ok. Like if I am beating up my woman or my woman beats me up, then we keep it under wraps. Or if maybe one of my friends finds out, then, instead of seeking help, I'll get arrogant about it, thinking they are wanting maybe to expose me, and it is not talked about. There are similarities because you'll find out that a man who beats a woman, or a woman who beats another woman always believe that they are right to do it. "You provoke me to do it. If you didn't behave this way." But I don't think that that is how it is. You can always walk away. I mean, just go away and breathe.

ZAMA MZIMELA

We met in a hotel restaurant which Zama wanted to try out before choosing it as a venue for an upcoming conference she was organizing. During our introductions, I asked her the meaning of her full name; her response was

> [my name means] the girl of the Ngunis, which is my tribe. I grew up with boys around me most of the time, I played soccer. Now they say,

ok it's not *intombi* [the girl] Zamanguni because you've got a lot of features of being a man. So, we can't say man of the Ngunis, so *ozintwana Zamanguni* - all the Ngunis are within you […]. And at home they used to see me as this person who always tried to put people together. Even with misunderstanding from different houses within the family. "No guys, let's have family get-togethers once in a while". Someone else says, "But eish I don't understand this certain family". And I'm saying, "It's your family, own it, keep on owning it. Even if you get married to someone else, but that is your family. It's your heritage, you can't just give up on that."

KHOLIWE M.

Kholiwe was one of my interview participants at Rape Crisis. She chose to come to the interview accompanied by her personal social worker.

I am Kholiwe, I am twenty-eight years old. I come here to Rape Crisis a few times already because my step-father has been abusing me since the passing away of my mother. He wants me and my small daughter to leave the house where I grew up with my mother, so that it can be his house. I cannot accept that, it isn't right, so I come here to seek assistance.

NONYANISO S.

Nonyaniso was another of my interview participants at Rape Crisis. She is in regular contact with the Centre, having made contact to find support in addressing years of intimate partner violence. The interview with her, together with that of Nomsindo, was interpreted by Nonzukiso Stana of Rape Crisis.

I'm thanking this Rape Crisis, it helped me a lot. It helped me a lot. They were the only ones who really gave me a very good support. A

good shoulder to cry on, also. Sjoe. That is why, when I hear of other people who are being abused, I tell them my story. It helps others if you share. I've been to other places to share my story, so that I can help others. But I am strong. Thanks to god for helping me to be strong.

MANDISA P. and NOXOLO T.

I arranged to meet with Noxolo and Mandisa at an arts centre in Durban. Of the two, Mandisa did most of the speaking, while Noxolo commented every now and again. Two memorable quotes from the interview were

> Ok, so I am going to tell you how I see the world with my very own two brown eyes: We, as South Africans, need to read more. If there is one thing I would ban in this country, it is TV. You look in any poor residential area, there is no book to be found, but instead this huge antenna dish hanging on a tiny corrugated iron roofed shack. The television is dumbing down the nation.
> Homosexuality is unAfrican? I don't think Europeans invented love. And what do my ancestors say about two women in bed together? Who knows; I'll find out when I meet them.

LONDEKA DLAMINI

Londeka and I met in Port Elizabeth where she lived and worked. Hers was a name on the list of activists which I was given by Candace Sterley of the Eastern Cape Gay/Lesbian Association. Twenty-four years old at the time, and originally from Durban, Londeka greeted me with

> Thank you for picking me up outside my home. Yes, let us go to Central, there are some nice restaurants there, and I am hungry. Yes, so my name is Londeka Dlamini, and I work as a journalist. I cover LGBTI-

related stories, and incidents of sexual and gender-based violence. I also follow the criminal cases being brought against perpetrators of these crimes.

MARSHA N.

Marsha spontaneously offered to be interviewed by me at a sexual health centre, where I had gone to make enquiries and find contact persons. She spoke rapidly and enthusiastically in one of the counselling rooms at the centre.

> I'm Marsha, I am born and bred here, and I am actually the first transwoman I know who decided not to live in a closet, a transwoman that loves, that is visible all the time. I entered pageants after I matriculated, I got a job, and I also studied aside. I had no funding to study, so I ended up getting a job here as a PR outreach worker. When I came here, I had to do an HIV testing/ counselling certificate, to provide services here. I found it very hard at first; I am so sensitive. But now it's flowing like it's nobody's business. […] I also assist legally-wise, because we give advice on rights and we do support groups, workshops, and we also conduct safer sex tours. Yes, that's how Marsha is right now, that's me.

KHUNJULWA SIMONS

Mama Simon's and my meeting came about through Sizwe Mqalo, my interpreter, who had approached her a few weeks previously, telling her about my research, and asking for a chance to speak. Sizwe and I met her in a community centre. She hurried up to us, saying

> I am so very pleased to be seeing you today. You are welcome, you are very welcome. You have been travelling, you must eat. Here, I make vetkoek for you. You must eat, you must gain strength; you are too

thin. My name is Khunjulwa Simons, you can call me Mama Simons. I was a school teacher here but now I am retired since many years. I am a community leader here. Also, I take care for my grandchildren. God give me a son and a daughter but God take them away again. This one had TB [tuberculosis], that one had cancer. She was very strong, she was a strong woman, my child [… in isiXhosa]. [Sizwe Mqalo translates the rest: She says that even after they had ... um, I'm trying to use her wording, they had "ceased to be seen" - she's speaking so poetically. She says she looked to them even though they could no longer be seen.].

MANDLA M.

While giving me a tour of his cultural centre, Mandla introduced himself

Yes, my official name is Mandla. And my new manhood name is Zanimvulo, 'the bringer of rain'. Because it rained like for weeks after my initiation. Even now, when there is a drought, they say, "Hey man, bring rain". It's like a joke man, but there are actually people who can bring rain, hey? They're not traditional healers but they go to the mountains, and do their thing there. I have accompanied them but there's a limit, we can't go past that line. They go up alone and dance and chant, and then all of a sudden it turns grey and it rains. It does, I don't know how they do it, I did not believe it but I witnessed it first-hand.

PASTOR BHEKINKOSI

The interview I conducted with this pastor took place in his living room and was interpreted by Sizwe Mqalo.

I am a pastor here since 1994. I heard the call to pastor the sheep, and decided to leave everything and follow the call. But even from a very young age, I have lived the life of devout Christian. My work involves

preaching, and exhorting the people; giving communion, doing baptisms and burials; conducting services in my church and at school. I don't oppose people practising the traditional African religious beliefs; faith is in the inside, so we embrace people regardless of whether they have traditional beliefs or not. I believe in, and speak to my ancestors and they speak to me, and I disagree with the people who pretend like they don't. Because even if they say that they don't believe in ancestors, oftentimes bad circumstances come which will force them to go back to their beliefs and they'll do it in secret. So I encourage people to do it openly, and go where they need to go.

LULAMA S.

The interview with Lulama was also organised through Mama Simons. This was a challenging interview, especially after it becoming apparent that Mama Simons had told Lulama to speak with 'the lady', and that Lulama had agreed in the hope of it becoming financially profitable for her. An awkward situation, I re-stated the aims of the study, and soon after decided to conclude the session. Beforehand, however, sitting in the garden, shaded from the sun's glare under a canopy, Lulama's response (with the help of interpretation) to my question was that 'violence' to her means 'mischief made by men'. Not able to understand the isiXhosa version, the gap becomes visceral: 'mischief' races through my mind as would an imp, a rascal. 'Mischief' to me is a playful prank, a naughty trick, high jinks. Simultaneously transparent and obscure, what does 'mischief' signify in this context?

What does 'violence' mean to you?
Violence is a form of mischief that men get up to.
Mischief?
It is a hard word to translate into English; is it 'lack of care'? 'Feeling like you can'?

Chapter 4

4.1. PUTTING SEX INTO DISCOURSE OVER TWENTY YEARS POST-APARTHEID: THE HOME WITHIN THE WIDER DISCOURSE

This subchapter presents a broadly discursive exploration of contemporary sex talk which was employed by the interview participants of this study. I have purposefully chosen to present this data on contemporary sex talk rather freely, allowing it to take its own course. The participants' responses to gendered violence are examined in the subchapters which follow this one. The manner in which the participants speak has its roots in gendered discourses, and my aim has been to identify and to disentangle these different discourses within the interviews. In doing so, I listened again to the audio data while re-reading the transcripts and highlighting both implicit and explicit references to the subject. I listened not only to the words themselves but also to how they were spoken, attentive to unexpected forms of expression, indirect or vague references, and pauses (Motsemme 2004; Krog et al. 2009).

I coded the references according to what I found in the data, rather than what I expected to find. Having identified the different references, I made note of the types of discourse these references drew on (Dekel and Andipatin 2016) and, following FCDA objectives, positioned them within wider discourses - questioning how the individual discursive constructions either reproduce or challenge power relations. I also attended to individual subject positions adopted, as social and psychological realities differ accordingly. If menstrual blood for instance, as illustrated in one interview, is constructed as shameful and impure, and the subject is positioned as naïve, what subjective experience becomes viable? Central to this interpretation is the situational context, namely that expectations within the available discourses shape us as we in turn shape those around us. "Creative performance requires both a look in the mirror and a turn to the other." (Storch 2018: 49).

FIGURE 5. © Roedelius. *FRUIT*, 2013-16[42]

[42] Rosa Roedelius. Courtesy of the artist herself.

FIGURE 6.
© Proyer. *Muschi2Go*, 2014[43]

These fruity/vaginal hybrids by Roedelius, or Proyer's vending machine above ("a woman reduced to her genitals becomes a mass product") are two examples of how female artists across the globe are playing with, and questioning the visibility of the female genitalia in the public space. In so doing, they are not only reconsidering their relation to their vulvas on a personal level but are reaching out on an educational level. As one of my aims while exploring contemporary sex talk has been to expand on existing studies (Cain 2007) which examine language use amongst different language speakers in South Africa, some of my questions referred to the participants' language choice; that is, the vocabulary respectively the language chosen to discuss sex. My questions focused on the extent to which sexuality is becoming a site of "indi-

[43] Angela Proyer. Courtesy of the VAGINAMUSEUM.

vidual choice" (Posel 2004: 58). My findings show sex talk to be largely governed by customs that control the contexts in which such talk is permitted; for instance, by the use of terms such as 'these things', 'the birds and the bees', or 'four five'. At the same time, a discursive shift in register is evident in a number of initiatives which stimulate visibility and frank dialogue in the private as well as in the public space. I begin with a contribution from Zama, who alludes to communication in a multilingual context such as in South Africa.

> Yes, so most of the time you find that people from Johannesburg, they know a lot of languages, because even in their complex of flats, next door it's a Sotho person, the other door it's a Pedi person. Coming to the small towns, you might find the white person understanding the language used by the black person. [They] can understand by listening but are unable to respond. Of which the white people that can speak the Nguni languages, mostly they are farmers […]. You will find that they speak fluently Xhosa or Zulu, but unfortunately they don't reveal it that easily. But again, because it happened that English to be a universal language, everyone is comfortable to turn to English […]. And with South Africa as a rainbow nation, you find people from all over. So to not offend someone and ask "What language is yours?", so one would just start communicating in English, so everyone is in a safe space. Especially when it is coming to sexual matters, because this is a very intimate topic, of which many see it to be taboo. (Interview with Zama. 19.02.2016).

Zama's claim that "[e]veryone is comfortable to turn to English" finds support in my study where the participants are from urban areas and have at least six years of formal schooling, and provides an interesting twist in its reasoning that then everyone will be in a 'safe space'. So as not to cause offence, or to provoke: this notion of needing comfort in your 'safe space' appears in a number of the interviews, and is revealing of a sense of violence which lurks

around the corner; where Zama's reference specifically refers, as she later concedes, to the country's increase of xenophobia during the past decade. In the next passage, Kholiwe and her interpreter differ in their opinions as to what is socially acceptable vocabulary, the debate marked perhaps by their age gap. Kholiwe clearly highlights the difference for her between acceptable language use in communication with other adults, and agreeable terms for use with children - a differentiation not uncommon in other languages. I am not surprised with the terms Kholiwe uses to name the vulva, as these are terms mirrored in all of the interviews, and are also listed in the literature as common terms. The debate here centres more on the question of acceptable terms for the penis, and which vocabulary belongs to which language.

> I don't feel embarrassed when I am speaking with another Xhosa-speaking adult, I will just call it the Xhosa way. But when I am teaching my child I can't say these words, because it sounds disrespectful to name my private parts that way to a child. I use my mother tongue, in our language […] *ukuku* (chicken), *inkomo* (cow), *igusha* (sheep). So that's what I say to my child, so that is kind of a soft way. [PA: And for the male genitalia? How do you call a penis?] Sometimes I will name it in numbers, like four-five, so that represents the penis. [PA: Why numbers?] It's just a name that came. You know, there's a word that is introduced and then you use it. Maybe it represents the size or something. [PA (asking the interpreter): Do you also say four-five?] No, I find it harsh (laugh). I will rather say penis. I think it is better that way. [PA: What about other isiXhosa terms?] I think *umthondo*. No … wait … hmmm, that is the Zulu word? Or the Sotho? (Interview with Kholiwe. 29.02.2016).

When speaking about the sex education of her children, Faiza's direct reference to sexually transmitted infections is strikingly reflective of their strong presence within the wider sexual discourse.

She positions herself within traditional religious discourses: introducing herself as a religious person who is proud that her son is becoming an imam, she supports what she refers to as a pragmatic approach to sex talk. She distances herself from other parents in her community and vehemently criticises their unwillingness to accept the role of sex education in their children's schooling.

> Hulle leer [oor seks] in die skool [...] Hulle leer van die different sexual infections en AIDS en daai soort ding, maar dis today op 'n sekere level [...] Omdat nou sommige ouers voel offended because especially in die slum, onse geloof sê, en onse Qur'an sê dat jy mag nie seks hê nie voor onse marriage nie. So baie ouers voel dis 'n offensive thing om dit te leer in die skool, because soos hulle voel, so voel hulle jy sê actually vir hulle kinders gaan hê seks. But ek voel dit is nie actually dat jy sê vir hulle gaan hê seks nie, dis mos dat jy vir hulle warn, and you prepare them voor dit wat daar buiterkant aangaan. (Interview with Faiza. 13.10.2015). *See English translation in appendix: A.*

Responding to my question about whether talk about sex at home is common, Faiza stresses that "not even married couples speak openly." (An impasse - this statement seems to undermine itself in its very saying: drawing from, and simultaneously challenging romance discourses). Having constructed her views as differing from, and as challenging community expectations, a similar pattern follows throughout the interview, tying into her overall performance as an outspoken community leader.

> Oor seks? Nee man. Nou ek, by voorbeeld, praat openlik met my kinders oor seks. As hulle kom in die ouderdom dan sal ek vir hulle sê daar is die AIDS virus; my klein seuntjie, hy is tien jaare oud, hy verstaan exactly wat is sexually transmitted diseases, hy verstaan vir AIDS, so ek sê vir hulle, so as ons saam het geloop, dat jy moenie seks het voor jy vertroud is nie. Maar ons ken mos vir onse kinders,

ons ken die situation mos in onse communities, so ek gaan clinic toe, dan gaan ek haal vir condoms en dan steek ek hulle in die huis, en dan se ek as iemand hulle wil use, neem hulle jouself. En my teenage seun, hy's nou getroud, toe het hy gesê, "Mami is beskof. Hoe kan Mami condoms vir my bring? Mami het nie respek nie". Dan sê ek, "My kind, omdat ek lief is vir jou. Want ek wil dat jy jouself respek en jouself protek. So jy moenie vir Mami te wys jy vat dit nie, maar ás jy vat sal ek nog meer bring". En ek bring boksies en as ek hulle bring, gaan hulle vat, want dis om hulle self te beskerm. Ek praat openlik, even if it's met die youth leader. Ek praat openly met hom en hy sê, "Joh. My ma gaan nooit met my so praat"; hy's skaam, hy word rooi because in onse coloured communities praat hulle nie om seks nie, nie eens getroude couples praat about seks nie. Ons kan vra die neighbours, no seks word discuss around the table. (Interview with Faiza. 13.10.2015). *See English translation in appendix: B.*

The reference to menstrual blood in the following section is one example of an increasing corpus of imagery connected to female sexuality in South African literature and the visual arts. The works of contemporary artists such as Lerato Shadi, Penny Siopsis, Zanele Muholi, or Mary Sibande look at concepts like body gendering in post-apartheid, and in so doing are transforming personal and historic trauma into a source of female sexual desire.[44]

"Talking of personal histories - I need to shower, my period is on. You don't mind waiting, right? Go listen to some music in the lounge. We'll carry on talking about your research afterwards while I make us some breakfast." "Zo, what has your period got to do with personal histories?" "Well, let's see, I started menstruating the day before my fifteenth birthday. I'm thirty-two years old. That's seventeen years;

[44] See http://artthrob.co.za/2016/07/13/a-river-of-blood-flows-lerato-shadis-noka-ya-bokamoso/, accessed 16. Jan. 2017.

> 204 months of bleeding. But I missed six months when I was nineteen because of the medication I was on. In 1985, I was in prison during the State of Emergency, and my period disappeared. Stress, I think, but it was only for three months. I've been regular since. That brings the total down to 195 months. Can you imagine how many litres of blood that is?" (Xaba 2013: 37).

Accordingly, and in sequence to Muholi's 'Period Pains/ Periods of Pain' referred to in the introduction chapter, I am attentive to menstrual blood in this subchapter, as discursive practices linked to the menstrual cycle seem to be symbolic of wider discourses pertaining to female sexuality. Signifying fluidity, and negotiated in renewed interaction every month from puberty to menopause, menstrual blood is part of the vulva's 'social reality', and can thus perhaps be seen as part of 'vulvic discursive practice'. While in prison during the State of Emergency, the protagonist in Xaba's contribution above says her "period disappeared. Stress I think." Has the menstrual cycle been silenced here? Or could it be an actively silent vulvic performance, lasting three cycles? Reflecting on her adolescence in the 1970s during the heyday of apartheid, Khanyiswa explains.

> I would say, it was more like you were *intaka*, you were not understanding anything. You grew up with a mother and a father, but you don't know what happened for them to fall in love. And when you reach that stage, you can't go and ask now, "Can I have a boyfriend?" Or, "I have these feelings, what must I do? Even your period, sometimes you will have your period first time at school. You feel so guilty, you feel so dirty, you feel so ashamed, because your mother didn't even tell you now what you must do when you have your period, né? You find out yourself at that time when you have your period. At that time, you will just take anything, just to keep yourself clean; you just saw the blood and then afterwards your mother will say, "Ok, you must always wear

> a clean panty, and keep your cloth clean. But she will never explain to you why the blood is coming to your vagina, you see? The changes that happen when you have your period, the moods. You don't have anybody to share with. Now comes the stage for you to have a boyfriend. You feel for this person, né? But you feel so guilty. Because now you know that it is a dirty thing you do. Even for kissing. (Interview with Khanyiswa. 29.02.2016).

Khanyiswa draws on a hybrid of pre- and post-apartheid transformation discourses, namely a paternalist discourse which incorporates the view that "[c]ontact with [menstrual blood] turns wine sour, seed in gardens are dried up […] it drives dogs mad and infects their bites with an incurable poison."[45] At the same time, she challenges the lack of discussion about sex, criticising the self-reproach and disgrace imbued in female sexuality. "You feel so dirty; you feel so ashamed" as a result of no explanation; thus highlighting the importance of positive discourse in women's negotiation of sex. Responding to my question about sex talk with her own children, Khanyiswa, whose first daughter was from a former relationship and was living with her grandmother while she was still unemployed, says

> I make sure. Because now, my first daughter, when I get married, I ask my husband, "Can I bring my child here?" Because now, I didn't want my child to go through what I went through, because my mother, the whole month she wasn't there, she was working as a domestic in King William's Town. So she will come at the end of the month [for the weekend] and there's so much that you want to tell her, but you forgot. You're just happy she's back. So that's the first thing I tell myself, I don't want my child to grow up without me. I don't want to miss even a day in her life. (Interview with Khanyiswa. 29.02.2016).

[45] http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Plin.+Nat.+toc, accessed 16 Jan. 2017.

She addresses a common situation in South Africa in which (black) working-class women leave their children behind with their own parents and find employment as live-in domestic workers in (white) families. She underlines the strain placed on these mothers in maintaining a trusting, confidential relationship with their children. The missing father figure in both this reference and in the other interviews is conspicuous, alluding to the migrant labour system where many men left/ leave their families to live and work at the mines. Having grown up in these circumstances, she is determined to be present in the upbringing of her own daughters. Her determination is significant, in that she seems to still feel the need to ask her husband's permission to bring her daughter to her new home; in doing so, she makes use of the traditional patriarchal gender discourse, positioning her husband as the authority (Dekel and Andipatin 2016). Continuing, Khanyiswa relates the story of her daughter's first menstruation.

> So, when she reaches the stage; you will laugh: at the time I was selling sweets on the street corner. So she was coming from the school, and she was taking the sweets and selling it, go sit in the corner. And then, when it happened, she rushed, came home. Now she came to me, and then she sat there, right in front of the door, she dropped her things there. And she says, Mommy look. Look at my panties here. And I say, what happened? And she says, I don't know. I just bleed, and I don't know what happened to me. And then she says to me, I feel sick. I say, you must know, this thing must happen to you, because it's natural. It doesn't mean you're sick. It must happen; as a woman, each and every month. But you must make sure you keep it clean. You must make sure nobody must see it. It's your thing, it's your responsibility now. I'm going to buy now new pads for you, but I don't want to find any dirty pads here. Make sure you wrap your pads with a newspaper and throw it in a bucket. Because at that time we were using a bucket system. And I told her now about the birds

> and the bees. Because now, I feel as if nobody came to me and tell me what to do, or not to do. So I was more open, I was more open. (Interview with Khanyiswa. 29.02.2016).

Menstruation is presented here as a natural occurrence; yet so is the notion that "you must make sure nobody sees" and that "you must keep clean." This is connected to a passage from Grahn (1993)[46], who maintains that

> "[m]enstrual blood is the only source of blood that is not traumatically induced. Yet in modern society, this is the most hidden blood, the one rarely spoken of and almost never seen except privately by women in little rooms who quickly change their pads and tampons, wrapping the bloodied cotton so it won't be seen by others. Blood is everywhere and yet the one the only the single name it has not had publicly for many centuries is menstrual blood."

In my interview with Kholiwe, after asking her about language use with respect to discussion about sex in her youth, and how she had approached her mother, she relates

> I grew up with my grandfather, I didn't grow up with my mother. So when I started with my menstruation cycle, I was staying with my grandfather. [PA: And your grandfather, did he speak with you?] Nobody told me anything related to my menstrual cycle at home; it was only men that I was living with. My grandfather, he told me I must wash myself, also on the inside, especially at that time of the month. No, he didn't specify what is the inside. [PA: And did you talk about your menstruation, or about sex with friends?] I had no female friends, so I didn't talk about sex. I was only playing with boys, so there was that feeling that, 'I'm one of them' (Interview with Kholiwe. 29.02.2016).

[46] http://www.www.metaformia.org/poetry/all-blood/, accessed 12 Nov. 2016.

I am evidently biased in thinking of Kholiwe's mother as the person she would approach; bias which is supported by way of the minimal talk at home or with her friends, as Kholiwe was "only playing with boys", and as "it was only men that I was living with"; or that her grandfather instructed her to wash herself, especially "at that time of the month."[47]

Hegemonic heterosexual discursive practices are both reproduced and challenged in the following excerpts from Mandla, who speaks of his unease about the abscence of fathers within the household. He positions the fathers and uncles as critical actors in passing down knowledge to boys. He alludes also to a gap between what he terms my 'white culture' and his 'African culture'; implying that the sexual discourse is more open in the former.

> Older men need to take the stand and educate young boys about sexuality and moral behaviour. The boys need more guidance. The thing is, talking about sex in African culture is difficult. Especially parents, they don't talk. Everything that I know about sex, I leaned from my peers in the street. From this game, hide and seek, that's where you learn, that's how you become sexually active. All of us, even myself. But you can't go up to your mother and ask, you'll get a big smack on your face if you do that. Also, the father is usually not in the picture. (Interview with Mandla. 26.02.2016).

Affirming my question of whether sex education also takes place during boys' initiation rituals which shape the transition

[47] In informal discussion with the Cologne-based ethnomusicologist, Sebastian Ellerich, about his fieldwork on the South Pacific island of Fiji, he related being asked by an elderly man what the difference was between a woman coming from church, or coming from the bathroom. Leaving church, said the man at the fireside, her soul is full of hope. Whereas on returning from the bathroom, her hole is full of soap. The woman returns from the bathroom hand-in-hand with the metaphor of the vagina as a dirty hole, a void which only soap can cleanse. What can be seen as an amusing sketch is nonetheless indicative of the widespread global gaps in knowledge which prevail on the topic of sexual health. Her hole is full - *haar gat is vol?*

into manhood, he then comments on the strict gender divisions and how the initiation procedure is kept strictly out of bounds for women.

> Yes, I went to the bush. In my culture, you go into the bush after you finish school, for your initiation. So I was seventeen; I spent a month there. There were about sixty of us, it was a big, big hut. They teach you how to behave, "Forget everything you have learned outside so far, there's different rules here. Most of the lessons they teach you are through song and dance. That's how the knowledge is passed on. Then there are lessons, things that only men are supposed to know. Like how to treat a woman [who] will come and stay [with the husband] and become a member of his family. (Interview with Mandla cont.).

Although patriarchal discourses shape South African society across class and ethnic lines, the manner in which 'culture' is approached here is common in histories of othering, maintain Shefer and Foster (2001). This is illustrated in Mandla's explanation of the tradition behind introductions.

> You see, here everybody knows their place, everyone knows their place. There're certain ways to address people, especially those above you. And there's a certain way you can address people below you. Let's say I go to Cape Town and I meet another man, how will I know he's a man or a boy? It's how he introduces himself to me. How he tells me his clan name, where he's from. Most people don't even know their clan names anymore. They speak of 'the sentence'. "You want to teach me that sentence?" I'm like, "How am I supposed to know your own sentence? It's who *you* are." Yes, it is always through the men, because we live in a patriarchal society. So we know our place, you see, and the place of the man is above the place of the woman, that's just how it is. If I have a daughter, she will not take my

clan name because she will get married into another clan. So it has to be the son who keeps the clan names. (Interview with Mandla cont.).

"Everyone knows their place." Gender ideology is portrayed here as consensual and acceptable for all. One consequence of this, argue Shefer and Foster (ibid. 378ff) is in women's learning to subdue their sexual desires, becoming afraid of intimidating men, or as being labelled 'bossy bullies'. This reading takes a slight turn in the interview with Khanyiswa, with her assertion that "[g]od gave me a wonderful man […] he's not a talker, he's a listener."

> You see it as dirty because now you don't know what is love. There is something pushing you to this person, *ne*? But you can't show it to anybody except a few friends, those friends who you know they will never go to your house and tell your dirty secret behind your back. And if you are lucky, the boyfriend will come to you for your hand. If you are not lucky, you will find your mother telling you, "You see those people who were there yesterday? They asked for your daddy." And that conversation will happen outside. It is only for men. Say it is three men who will discuss with your daddy something. Then your mother will tell you now, "They were sent by that family, so you can be a wife." You don't have anything to say about it. It doesn't matter if you know this person, or if you are in love with this person, if your parents agree, you can't even say, sometimes you have to drop the school to become a wife. But god gave me a wonderful man. He drinks but he's a wonderful person. He's not a talker, he's a listener. (Interview with Khanyiswa. 29.02.2016).

Continuing with the concept of listening, and fusing this concept with "letting them talk", we arrive at a reading of sex talk with reference to gender identity and the ongoing challenges within patriarchal family discourses. This was a heatedly spoken about topic during the course of the interviews. Reflected in this, and other

interviews is the close link between social norms which support heteronormativity on the one hand, and those which support the use of violence in silencing women for resisting these norms.

> And some people will come to me and actually want advice from me because I am openly lesbian. Like my aunt has a daughter who, when I went up north, at the time she was about a year old or something. She had literally grown up in front of me, so when I left her she was turning about ten or eleven. Now she says she's lesbian, and she's about age thirteen or fourteen. And I was saying, "No she's just experimenting, especially because she's still young and all of that." And her mom, who is my aunt, phoned me for advice on how to deal with it and what-what. And I was happy to give her advice, and my aunt was telling me how the people are treating her child, and how upsetting it is, and how much she has to constantly talk to her and try to really not take offence to what people say, the name-calling, and all of that. But I think it goes too far if they now try to start beating her up, you know? Enough is enough. So my aunt will ask me to please talk to my cousin almost on a daily basis on how to handle these things and now people are saying that it's all my fault. They will say things like she's trying to make herself like a man. And um, that she's confused because she grew up close to me. But then, I don't really take it upstairs. Let them talk. (Interview with Aviwe. 22.02.2016).

"Let them talk" is echoed here by Noxolo and Mandisa's input which lends itself to the presentation of a composition designed by some of the interview participants' responses to my question of what a vagina smells like to them.[48] My aim in asking this question was in keeping with other related questions, e.g. isiXhosa terminology for female and male genitalia. This particular question, however, was to discover the extent to which women

[48] A South African adaptation of Ensler (2001).

perceive of their sexual organs in a positive way. The responses were in fact more affirmative than I had expected, as for instance in the following.

> We need to keep on talking, to encourage girls to discover their bodies, to discover how and where they like to be touched, about the parts of our bodies that we keep under cover too. To not be so dependent on someone else for their pleasure. You know, boys have their sex outside their bodies so it is readily available and they start to discover how to pleasure themselves from an early age but with girls the sex is more hidden. We need to educate girls, and older women too, to be more familiar with their bodies, to be more in touch with their bodies. (Interview with Noxolo and Mandisa. 17.02.2016).

> What does a vagina smell like?
>
> Perlemoen.
> Ripe nectarines, sometimes naartjies.
> Like decayed something-or-other.
> Amasi. Wild dagga.
> Shyness. A smile at sunrise.
> It smells exhilarating; it is excitement.
> No Penelope, you can't ask that question.
> Kabeljau. Suikerbossie.
> Braai spice. Mixed spice.
> My ouma se soetkoekies.
> Morning glory.
> The Southern Cross.
> Home.

> You know, growing up, we were made to believe, as black women, that lesbians have got snakes. It was a witchcraft thing that these women have snakes. So they make love with another woman

through a snake. It was a big thing, back in the 1990s. *Umfazi onenyoka* – woman with a snake. [PA: ... *nenoka? Onenyoka?*] Yes, *onenyoka*. Yes, you've got it. The only question in their minds, "What do you do in bed?" This always was and still is my answer, "Come into my bedroom and you will find out." (Interview with Aviwe cont.).

Considering how language use resists and maintains the social order, I was interested in equivalent, 'neutral' isiXhosa terms for 'female genitalia'. In my interview with Londeka, she responded to my question with the following story.

Oh ja, yes, I have a story about this. So, the municipality is named after Queen Whatever, I can't remember exactly, but you can google it. [PA: Aha? A municipality? Somewhere around here?]. Somewhere between the Eastern Cape and KZN [PA: Ok]. And then Jacob Zuma was delivering a speech there, and then he pronounced it the wrong way, referring to the vagina. So when you're referring to the vagina, you say ingquza. But then when you're referring to that municipality, you're supposed to say i-Ngquza. You hear the difference? Inquza, and i-Nquza. [PA: Yes]. And then he kept on saying it over and over again, "Ingquza Municipality" - again and again. And the people were so emb*arr*assed, "What is the president saying?" (laugh), "Ingquza Municipality" - again and again. And then he would continue saying "Ingquza Municipality" (laugh). [PA: He didn't know?]. It is on YouTube, you can find it. The spelling is i-n-g-q-u-z-a. [PA: Ok, thank you. You know, maybe he did know?] Yeah. The people from that municipality were so embarrassed, sjoe. [PA: Yes, I understand]. So, ja … [PA: Ok, so ingquza is what the doctor would say to a patient, when referring to her vagina]. (Interview with Londeka. 29.02.2016).

After this anecdote, I played with a few words which I found fitting to her parting words, "Black women are the most likely to be raped because we still matter least. And not because black men are

per se bad, or white men are per se bad. But more because we think black women cannot be raped. We still carry that burden." The poem is followed with a short excerpt by Aviwe, who has similar misgivings.

> AMUZAZUMA ZUMAMUZA
> To refuse the refuse
> You think that if I refuse
> you
> can turn me into refuse?
> AMUZ - ZUMA
> Refusing Zuma
> is not amused
> ABUSE AMUSE
> Amusing to abuse?
> Amusing to refuse?
> AMAMUZA – AMABUZA

> Also it could really help if we can hear maybe the President opening his speech with a line of something homosexual-friendly, like that two women in love is natural. That would really help if he could just speak up in public instead of paying his usual hollow lip service; but if he does give such a speech-opener, he will probably want to rape the woman himself (laugh). (Interview with Aviwe. 22.02.2016).

A recurring pattern is the participants' tendency to associate sexuality directly with violence in the interviews, illustrated here with two passages by Marsha and Faiza. Whereas Marsha speaks with hardly a break throughout most of the interview, she slows down; pausing when touching on imagined societal response to her sex reassignment surgery: A reflection of the dominant power relations and the hostility she has experienced in society as a transwoman.

> Ok, I do understand that it's not something that you do overnight. But now you sit back, and there's that penis that's there that really irritates your mind; that really irritates your mood. It changes everything. Because now, when you're at home, your safe space, you can go around naked, do whatever. But there will be this one thing that keeps on telling you that you're male. And now, you'll tuck it, like hide it, and wear your dress and do your make-up and everything. But the minute you step out of that door (pause) everybody who lives in that area is like, "What kind of chicken are you? Chicken strips, or just a piece of chicken?" My fear is the reaction of the whole surroundings. How safe is it going to be for me when I transition everything? The mind-sets of these boys [pause] they're going to want to taste, grab [pause] that is my fear [pause] is it going to be safe for me to be [pause] that person who I want to be? The woman who I am. How safe am I? Right now, yes, I would say maybe I'm safe but I'm not so sure. They will be violating my rights, violating me, you know, I will feel [pause] puzzled [pause). This is something I don't ever want to come across [pause]. In Cape Town a lot of trans have been killed, and if you go to Jo'burg, gays are stabbed. In Durban you'll find that gays are only attacked by their family members. I don't want to be the first transwoman from around here to come with a huge scandal like, "She was found lying down the river, the dam." Oh my god, please god, I don't want my partner and my friends to go through that. (Interview with Marsha. 19.02.2016).

Faiza's use of intrasentential code-switching between Afrikaans and English provides a semantic distinction in the following excerpt, where the English term 'rape' is used to express 'that which makes sore', and the Afrikaans *verkrag* expresses 'just something sexual'. Interesting here is that, while the standard Afrikaans term *verkrag* translates as 'to force sexual intercourse', the Afrikaans *krag* means 'energy/ vigour' - whereas the German *Krach* denotes noise. The conceptualisation of *verkrag* as 'something sexual' could hint at the recognition of (sexual) violence as a common-place phenomenon of the area, whereby the term 'rape' would then signify the

pain caused by sexual violation. Perhaps Faiza's choosing the term 'rape' suggests that for her 'rape' signifies pain.

> [PA: So, kan mevrou vir my sê, wat is die Afrikaanse woord vir 'rape'?] In onse platse Kaapse taal sê ons rape as ons wil meen that daai person is seergemaak. [PA: Hoekom sê mevrou rape en nie verkrag nie?] Die rede hoekom ons sê rape en nie verkrag nie is because ons praat kombuis Afrikaans, so ons praat 'n taal gemeng met Afrikaans en Engels [..] Die woord verkrag beteken net iets sexual. Dis rape mos wat seermaak. (Interview with Faiza. 13.10.2015). *See English translation in appendix C.*

Faiza challenges dominant power relations by stating that rape is a transgression of the other's will, and reiterating in both languages that "no is no, nee is nee." Her question of how one "handles something like that" (with emphasis, perhaps, as she states this in English) is interspersed with pauses, ending with the clear statement that rape is something which leaves a big scar in your heart.

> [PA: Wat beteken seermaak? Wat beteken rape vir mevrou?] Vir *my* is rape when hulle penetrate in jou mond of whether hulle jou force vir vaginal sex, or whatever the case may be, it's rape as jy nie wil nie because no is no. As ek vir jou sê, "Nee, ek wil nie seks hê nie", moet jy verstaan. Even though every situation is different, no is no, nee is nee. Dit bly nee. Jy kan nie 'nee' vat vir 'n 'miskien', of vir 'n 'maybe' nie. Dis nee. En wanneer eene vir jou penetrate in jou mond, ek glo dis exactly the, I think it's even worse [pause] Ek kan dit nie imagine nie [pause] So, ek meen, ek het nou nooit eene my onlaat penetrate nie, but vir my is dit, good lord [pause] You know? How do I handle something like that? So, ja, dis rape. Dit los 'n groot scar in jou heart. (Interview with Faiza cont.). *See English translation in appendix D.*

4.2. HERE TO LISTEN

"I think we forget things if we have no-one to tell them to," announces Saajan Fernandes in 'The Lunchbox' (Batra 2013). Even if we do not know the exact context of this statement, we do know that Fernandes wishes to tell his audience something, so as not to forget. If we continue listening to his story, we soon notice how the society of which he forms a part expects a certain way of telling. He does not tell his story in isolation, in other words; so that in telling he will remember - no matter which way he chooses to tell. But how will his audience hear what he says, and how will they remember? Did Mrs Konile in Krog et al (2009) tell her story during the Truth Commission so as not to forget?

The origin of the maxim, "silence is the *kosmos* of women" cited in Carson (1995) goes back to 'Ajax', one of Sophocles' tragedies. It forms part of the monologue related by Tecmessa, Ajax's lover, after the warrior has killed the cattle and herdsmen of the Greek army in a fit of (irrational?) rage. Tecmessa relates that, having asked him where he is going, he responds with "[w]oman, silence graces woman."[49] In this monologue, she asks his friends - unsuccessfully, as he soon after commits suicide - to come and help him: "[p]rostrate in such miserable fortune, tasting no food, no drink, the man sits idly where he has fallen in the middle of the iron-slain cattle."[50] What could the purpose of Tecmessa's performance, of her sharing this story, be? The expression that silence graces women, or that it is the good order of women is later appropriated by Aristotle in his 'Politics' 1.1260a[51], seemingly to provide evidence for his misogynistic

[49] http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Soph.%20Aj.%20293&lang=original, accessed 10 Jan.2016. The wording differs depending on the translated version.

[50] ibid.

[51] http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:abo:tlg,0086,035:1:1260a, accessed 10. Jan. 2016.

worldview; and while Aristotle's convictions may be a depiction of the status quo of his time, they remain embedded within patriarchal contemporary culture which shuts out and bars the mouths of women through not listening.

> "[F]or the soul by nature contains a part that rules and a part that is ruled, to which we assign different virtues, that is, the virtue of the rational and that of the irrational. […] the free rules the slave, the male the female, and the man the child in a different way. And all possess the various parts of the soul, but possess them in different ways; for the slave has not got the deliberative part at all, and the female has it, but without full authority […] the temperance of a woman and that of a man are not the same, nor their courage and justice, as Socrates thought, but the one is the courage of command, and the other that of subordination, and the case is similar with the other virtues."

Carson's reading referred to in the introduction makes use of the maxim to discuss vocal quality and vocal use in her examination of how patriarchal culture defines those with a lower vocal pitch as virtuous and rational; whereas high-pitched, shrill sounds mean an unrestrained lack of self-control. "Both mouths [where vocal/ sexual activity takes place] provide access to a hollow cavity which is guarded by lips that are best kept closed." (1995: 131).

How do these various readings relate to the wake - both the vigil and the trail - of sexual violence? Following the argument that "pain has the ability to destroy language […] which is why sufferers revert back to pre-linguistic states of crying, whimpering, inarticulate screeching" (Motsemme 2004: 913) and relating this argument to the testimonies of sexual violence, my findings show that while knowledge of pain is indeed hard to represent in speech - of which silence forms a crucial part - it is possible. The challenges largely faced, however, have been made manifest in the plausibility

and the credibility of the interview participants' stories, and in the reactions of their families and the wider environment.

As commented on in Chapter Two, I have found Bennett's account very helpful in this regard, in her analysis of how the pain caused by rape is represented, "[w]hether it is an 'unfortunate accident' or […] the temporary annihilation of the semiotic process through which a woman may make sense of her Self." (Bennett 1997: 98-99). She examines the 'plausibility' of a story and its relation to the 'credibility' of the teller in oral narratives of rape. Plausibility is the hearer's willingness to make sense of the story, so that a "story's success depends on […] the relation between the familiarity of a scenario and the hearer's readiness." (ibid. 100). The perpetrator's being found guilty is more probable if the story equates with the expectations of the hearer; for instance, that the kind neighbour cannot be a rapist. The teller, however, cannot rest assured of being given credibility by her listeners. Bennett addresses the paradox that in order to be seen as a 'victim' she cannot be seen as being complicit in the crime, so that her position as a victim of rape risks her credibility, and her integrity as a woman.

The victim positions the narrator "in direct confrontation with stereotypes about gender and sexuality whose implications may eviscerate both her 'credibility' as an innocent sufferer of a crime and her pragmatic right to authority over her experience." (ibid. 101). On the other hand, 'credibility' is related to the story-teller's identity, and so by telling she proves her continued social existence.

Bearing this in mind when considering the content but also the form of the interviews, I have noticed a pattern in the responses; namely that when speaking of the sexual abuse of someone else, the narration was more animated. This was the response I had expected, and thus found relatively easy to engage with, regardless of the 'plausibility' of the story. Whereas the personal accounts of rape proceeded on the whole more slowly and were interspersed

with long silent pauses. Although these slower-paced, generally quieter responses were not entirely unexpected, what did surprise me was my perception of the silent pauses which were noisier to me than their 'loud' counterparts. Engaging with them thus felt strange at first; and it has been these silences, these refusals, these apparent gaps in meaning, which I have found myself questioning.

I have come to the conclusion that, in renouncing, in disowning sexual violation, silent pauses can be highly agentive.[52] Still further thought has led me to a grasping, and to an appreciation of silence in that it seems to make sense when confronted with the non-sense of rape. Silent pauses can be an expression of authority over one's performance; meaningful in that they show up the noise of the violence. Enforcing sex is an antagonistic act: does it not expect an outraged response, a loud response? "Rape is not a moment but a language" as Gqola (2015) asserts. Choosing to be silent, then, assumes a suitable way of negating the very sense of the violation within the spatial and temporal moment it has taken place. On the other hand, silence can, and is, used advantageously in a broader political sense as a strategy of resistance and as a call for creating critical awareness within society. Silence can serve to disclaim the transgression. It is instrumental as a means of maintaining one's integrity, in making one's Self less vulnerable.

A counter-hegemonic adoption of silence is however discredited, it seems, inasmuch as we accept the masculine symbolic order, and in association disregard women's mouths. My observations, both visual and aural, while conducting the interviews, have revealed to me that our *in*attention to, and even contempt of silence resembles our contempt of women's noisy speaking up against hegemonic practices. It seems that *the way* one tells is of no consequence if there is no one listening.

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[52] See Bennett (2010), where the idea of agentive 'vibrant matter' is drawn from Spinozist thought.

In my selection of the interview passages which follow in the next section, my aim is to demonstrate how the narrator is listening to herself, as well as how I have listened to the narrator, while indicating where I perceive some of these acts of listening to be effective. The contributions come first from two participants who speak of homophobic rape. These contributions are followed by passages from two mothers whose children, a girl and then a boy, were sexually abused by a cousin respectively by a neighbour's teenage son. Following this, three participants speak of their own experience of rape. The first of these contributions is from a participant who was raped by her grandson; this is followed by a participant speaking of being raped by an unknown man. The last contribution speaks of rape by an uncle respectively by a group of men. I have indicated all silent pauses lasting from five seconds to twenty seconds with [pause]. Those pauses which lasted between twenty seconds and up to two minutes are indicated with [long pause]. I have included relatively long passages so as to allow the interview participants' voices to come to light.

4.2.1. LISTENING TO TWO FRIENDS

This section presents passages from the interviews which I conducted with Londeka and Aviwe. The first passages are spoken by Londeka, whose contribution is followed by Aviwe.

> What I've learned in life is: Never live your life to impress anyone, number one. But at the same time, you must be careful of places that you go to. Don't go around in the township as a lesbian, don't go around in the street. Because not all people are as accepting as that one guy who is like a brother or a friend to you. You will just walk out the house and then you are putting yourself straight into the

danger zone, you know? So sometimes lesbians expose themselves to those things because they want to walk freely, but at the same time you know that you are like a springbok in a place where lions are roving for your blood. I'm not sure which month was it, I think it was over August/ September 2015. I went to court, just to listen to cases - because I also write court stories and submit them to various newspapers. So I went early in the morning, at 9am. […] At 2pm, another case was brought in. It was a corrective rape incident from 2013. She was raped by five guys, and this thing happened in the corner of the street. So, this woman was raped by five guys but one guy was watching. He was walking past, and then he stood, and watched. And did nothing.

[pause]

When it was time for her to come and testify before court, I asked the prosecutor, "Can I please come in?" and he said, "No, you are part of the media, and you are just like everybody else, why should I let you stay?" And I said, "No, can you talk to her and explain that I'm also a lesbian. I want to sit in. I won't mention her name, I won't take pictures." And then they spoke and she agreed. Oh, before that, the prosecutor asked her if she's gonna be comfortable sitting inside, or if she wants to sit in the next room; what's this thing, the overhead projector would be showing while she talks. And then she said, "No, I want to face these people who did this thing to me." So imagine from 2013 to 2015

[pause]

it is two years in between since she has seen those men.

[pause]

> For the first time, she came and testified before court, "I can still recognise this face, I can recognise that face. This one had dreadlocks then, his hair is cut now. I still remember these eyes. I still remember these lips."
>
> [long pause]
>
> She was found lying on the street by the neighbours. So one woman heard the noise and the screams, and then she shouted, "What is happening?" And then these guys ran, and hid until they noticed that the electricity is off again, and then they went there and dragged her to another spot where it was quiet and it was some sort of a bush. And then they raped her, thinking that they had already stoned her to death. And then in the morning she was found by someone who was just walking to work. And that woman who was at the window could recognise one face, and one thing led to the other.
>
> [pause]
>
> I'm friends with her even now, because you know I asked the prosecutor to let me come in. So during the break I introduced myself, and I told her that I meet a lot of people through my work, and if she needs more counselling and whatsoever. That's why I invited Candace [Sterley]. At least her family is very supportive. She lives with her aunt and her siblings. She's working, she's managing. It's only that she has these blackouts; dangerous for her with her job at the car factory assembly line. (Interview with Londeka. 28.02.2016).

The story which Londeka relates above is a familiar one, and much discussed in contemporary South Africa. It is 'plausible', firstly because it equates with expectations that women are raped for being openly lesbian, and secondly because the rape is connected to strangers and to violent physical abuse. Londeka

confirms these personal as well as societal expectations by introducing her narrative with a warning: "Don't go around in the township as a lesbian, don't go around in the street." You make yourself complicit, you invite danger, in that you walk around freely. Londeka positions herself not only as a journalist who will cover a story but also as someone who wishes to give support on a personal level: "I'm friends with her even now […] that's why I invited Candace." As a lesbian herself, she is affected by this and other similar stories, taking precautions in her movement.

Keeping the statistics in mind, this case is striking in that it went to court, and that the perpetrators were found guilty, partly because of the witness who was willing to testify. Londeka's use of silent pauses suggests marking the effect for both the narrator and the addressee. "He watched and did nothing." "So imagine, from 2013-2015." "I still remember those eyes […] those lips." Note the narrator's use of "he watched and did nothing." This observation is preceded by "she was raped by five guys": a scenario which typically provokes outrage and the listener's readiness to accept the act as a crime. In pausing, then, after mentioning that "he watched and did noting", Londeka could be listening to her words which imply that she finds the act of "watching and doing nothing" equally transgressive.

Within the corpus of literature available on trauma and narration, magic realism - a genre of narrative fiction in which the boundaries of reality and magic are blurred - could be one helpful approach to the narrative described by Londeka. Methods such as this prove useful in allowing the reader access to the happenings without the speaker actually describing the atrocities. I prefer the succinct words of Xaba (2008) at this point; in doing so, I specifically choose the voice of a black woman whose poem here depicts the beauty in women's love. The poem is followed by Londeka's documentation of the case study.

She was here
long before Mrs Ples
She stands as tall and steady as
the mountains of uKhahlamba
She is as standard as
the numerous hills of any valley
She bathed in the Limpopo, swam in the uMfolozi,
played childhood games along the banks of the uMhlathuze
She strolled the shores of seas before they were
given names by the arrivers who never left
She breathes belonging, sings
tunes of the seasons,
loves other women
She is
a native

Xaba (2008: 22)

FIGURE 7. © Dlamini. *At Work, 2015*[53]

[53] Londeka Dlamini. Newspaper article and photo courtesy of the journalist herself.

This judgment when a woman gets raped and they say, "But she was wearing a mini skirt; she was asking for it"? I hate that. Ok, now there is this one woman friend I knew that, up until she was raped and killed, she had never been lucky.

[pause]

She lived in Mthatha, she also died in Mthatha; she was a lesbian woman that would go to this club, it's always packed with men. And she goes to that club. Now before she was murdered which they said was a case of corrective rape; before that happened, she told me about the other time.

[pause]

She was walking out of that club alone. And they didn't know that it's a woman, for starters, they thought they were following a man. But now the things that she was wearing, they're all too expensive and nice. So they wanted to strip off the clothes of this supposed guy, and then just leave the guy there. So, they're taking off the clothes, off the shoes, whatever. And then when they got to the vest, "No man, this is a woman." Then the one just said, "Come on, let's do her."

[pause]

So can you see that there was nothing that really like, triggered them to rape her, I mean when they followed her, they didn't know that it's a woman - because she always dresses like a man until she was killed. So if you're going to blame the skirt, you know what I mean? Now, the intention was just to take off the clothes and go sell them. But now they figured out as they're stripping her off, "No, that's a woman. Let's rape her just because it's a woman." (Interview with Aviwe. 22.02.2016).

This story consists of different layers. On one level, it is a story of the daily violence of a country in which people are attacked and robbed. Aviwe's argument, however, underlines the absurdity of identifying victims of violence as complicit. She repeats why her friend cannot be blamed for the crime, neither because she was lesbian nor even on account of her being a woman out at night. "There was nothing that really like, triggered them to rape her." This is not an account of a homophobic crime, as could have been expected (only later is she then actually murdered for being lesbian) but rather a denunciation of the pervasive violence due to a lack of accountability, mirrored both in other interviews I conducted and in the literature. "And what is it about our society that makes it possible to rape with such impunity?" (Gqola 2015: 3). As in Londeka's account, Aviwe's silent pauses seem to be markers of emphasis, as well as a means of helping the listener to follow the story. Her pauses could also come as a result of the fact that she is personally affected, not only as she is speaking about a friend but because she is lesbian herself.

On a wider scale, whose lives count as lives, and what makes for a grievable life (Butler 2010) is the topic of Muholi's exhibition 'Mo(u)rning'.[54] A collection which, similarly to Lacy's 'Three Weeks in May' mentioned in Chapter Two, documents the lives and loves of black queer South Africans. The exhibition marks activists taking flowers to the site where a woman's body was discovered after being raped and murdered, allowing mourning to take place in the exhibition space. I am reminded of du Toit who "make[s] sense of rape by locating it […] within the patriarchal symbolic order of western understanding [where] women, the feminine and the female are not only devalued […] but they are also rendered invisible." (du Toit 2009: 3). Regarding

[54] Muholi, Zanele, http://www.rememberoursisterseverywhere.com/photo/mourning, accessed 13 Jan. 2017.

vulnerability and having the chance to grieve in this public space becomes even more pertinent.

What follows is a selection of loudly emphatic responses of protest, without further comment from my side on purpose, to the lack of space given to women's voices, and in response to homophobic rape. The contributions come from Aviwe, Zama and Londeka.

> Being in a rural area, you know there's a Constitution, but you don't know what is in it. Because here we have a chief who rules the way he likes. Here, a woman has to wear a skirt, a dress, that's it [pause]. This thing with the Traditional Court Bill, now if you will have a case of rape by someone from your community, someone from your family, being discussed here by the chief. Who will encourage peace? The rural areas with the chiefs, they attend these cases in a kraal where the woman is not allowed to go inside. Now we have to have a spokesperson on your behalf as a woman. And that person have to be a man. A man. When you see any men around you as an animal because of the trauma that the man who raped you put you through. But now you have to humble yourself and tell your story to a man who's going to represent you inside there. Because you are not allowed to go in. How practical is that? [pause]. Even worse now with a lesbian woman who will be raped. The man in the rural area who doesn't know anything about homosexuality, must now listen to you and be able to represent you. In that kraal. How practical is that? So, if I'm not allowed to speak for myself, who is going to be my voice? A man's? Really? Are you being serious? People they are not coming out because of the ill-treatment that you get. Cases are prolonged, and then you'll be asked, "Tell us your story." That's traumatic on its own. It was not a special event like your Valentines dinner with your loved-one. It's a rape. But your case will take years. You even forgot the details. You want to release it in your mind. You want to erase it. But now because the case is not moving forward, whenever the court date comes, you have to report. It's not an

easy thing [pause]. So those are the challenges that we are facing. (Interview with Zama. 19.02.2016).

Corrective rape, it's not gone, and I think it's always gonna be existing. Because if you notice the government, when they talk during rallies or during their state nation address, in everything they say, they support the community. But then go to an event like Gay Pride, or another LGBTI festival, you will never find any government officials coming to support. You know, I mean, we're not gonna bite Mr Zuma. (Interview with Londeka. 28.02.2016).

I think there should be a new strategy because we've tried the Pride marches, where there'll be like, where there'll be speeches and educational material. We do try to have the workshops and all of that. I think for me, it is really more [pause]. If we can target the villages, the townships, if we can go to the schools and have the platform to address the people, the kids. We say we want people to support us but those people don't even have the resources to know what it's all about, being homosexual. And we can't really expect them to respect us because they don't know us. We're all in these cities but we don't go out, we don't reach out to them. If there can be some funding that concentrates on that. If we can target the townships and the villages, that means we can also be head-on with the traditional leaders of the communities like that. It will help a bit if we can just reach out to those places. (Interview with Aviwe. 22.02.2016).

Those guys were given twenty years sentence each. What's the justice there? What's the justice there? And when she testified, she also mentioned that they dragged her in the streets. And they played a slide show of pictures in court. When I saw those pictures, I couldn't tell if that was a face, or what parts of the body. Because everything was swollen. She says after that, she's suffering. She'd be sitting and watching TV, and then when maybe her mom

comes, “Oh, what did so-and-so say?” She’d be like, “Huh?” So she explained that sometimes she has those blank spaces. And plus, she works for some motor company, where they make car tyres. So, she was almost struck by a machine. One of her colleagues at work also came and testified that, “If I wasn’t watching, she would be dead by now” - because they were sitting opposite each other. “And then I saw that the machine is coming down, she’s not pressing what she is supposed to be pressing, she’s just sitting there like in a daze, and the machine is making noise” this guy said: “I shouted, until I said no, maybe I need to run and press this machine to make it not continue.” That’s how bad it is, for those guys to just get twenty years. (Interview with Londeka. 28.02.2016).

This is the answer that I haven’t got from anyone. If a woman is always being blamed for what she wears [pause]; when a six-month old baby is raped - what is the reason? When an old woman who lives alone in her hut, wears loooong dresses and all those underskirts, what was the purpose of that woman being raped? If there’s always an excuse for these, then what about those? No-one answers that. What is the reason? [long pause]. Look now, because there has recently been a high rate of old old old women, grandmothers, being raped in the rural villages, now that got the government’s attention now, but they don’t know how to respond, and I’m thinking, “Really? You always have an answer but now you have no answer?” Because actually the mind of a rapist is just, I mean they’re all the same. They don’t need a reason to do it, they just do it. I don’t know, because I’ve never been in that situation, but I don’t see how I can blame myself for being raped. (Interview with Aviwe. 22.02.2016).

4.2.2. LISTENING TO TWO MOTHERS

It's not the first time we meet. On holiday in December we go home, that's where we meet, at my father's house. But the first time he came to my house, I asked my daughter to sleep in my room. Then my husband say on the second day, "Why this child is sleeping on the floor?" Now I said, "No, let her sleep here [with us]. Because now this other child is using her bed." How can I sleep peacefully [otherwise], knowing that this other child is more mature than my child? Then my child asks me one day, "Mommy, can I go home early, because *bhuti* mos is there. He will look after me." I say, "Ok, go." Then I will tell my sister's child, this boy staying with us, "Please just watch over her, she mustn't play far, she must play here." It never occurred to me [pause]. You know, when your child is growing, you build a fence; you make yourself a fence to put your child inside. You make sure to protect your child from any harm. And the first thing you think will hurt your child, you think a neighbour, a stranger, someone you don't know. You never say it will be someone in your, someone that is my brother's or my sister's child.

Then my daughter now started to change. She failed in June, [her exams] same year. She was eleven at that time. I knew she was struggling, but I make an effort. I used to sit with her when she was studying. She didn't have a phone at that time because I don't want any distraction towards the studies. But she failed. And I couldn't understand why. Now, one day, I've got a phone call at school. Then the teacher says to me, "Mama, I think you must come to school." Then I knew. Something was wrong. Then, the teacher says, "Mama, we have this problem with your daughter, Boniswa. We've been patient, but now we think it's time for you to know." Now they're telling me stories, she's disrupted the classroom, she doesn't want to listen to anybody; she's hitting other children. At that time when

they were telling these stories, I tell myself, "No, that is not my child." When I got home, I called them all now. My husband, my big daughter, my nephew, and her. Then I say, just before supper time, I say, "You know? My heart is so sore today. I was at school. So I want you to tell us all, why you're like that." Now I said, "Boniswa, I said to the teacher I'm gonna ask you why you're behaving like this. And I'm not gonna go to the school to apologise for you. You do the wrong things at the school, you're gonna fix it." Then we eat, we pray, we sleep. It was the afternoon when we came back from school, now she says to me, "You know, mama, sometimes the children will pick a fight with me. And then I will ignore them. But sometimes I can just feel that I can hit him [Khanyiswa hits her own hands loudly, with emphasis] so that the blood will come." Then it shocked me. Because now, you hit a child, or another person, but you don't wish for the blood to come. Then I ask her now, "Why a person must bleed when you hit?" "No, it's because I'm cross inside". Now I ask her, "What makes you cross inside?" Now she didn't say anything. (Interview with Khanyiswa. 29.02.2016).

Khanyiswa has reconstructed her detailed narrative in such a way that, in telling, it is vividly reenacted in the listener's mind. She positions herself as an attentive, mother who not only listens to her child but who actively calls the family together, and who has reflected at length on the sexual abuse of her daughter and on its aftermath, seen in "I make an effort" "Then I knew something was wrong" "No, that is not my child." She repeatedly hints at the abuse in her account, beginning with her first sentence, "It's not the first time we meet" i.e. he is not a stranger, we know each other. She underlines the lengths she has gone to in preventing harm coming to her child, as if she anticipated harm, "How can I sleep peacefully?" and "you make yourself a fence" but you don't expect that harm to come from your sister's child. She indicates how she keeps daily life running, "Then we eat, we pray, we sleep."

Faiza's account, which follows, is similar in its seeking credibility from the listener. She explains that she wasn't at home, as her mother was ill, but that she made the effort to ask the neighbour's son to take care of her son. She positions herself as an observant mother and community worker. She states, also, that she would "never have sex in front of the children, and that's why I knew there's abuse going around." Noticeable is that neither Khanyiswa nor Faiza pause for long while speaking.

> Nou my derde oudste kind, hy's nou sestien, maar ek praat van die tyd as hy drie jare oud was; my ma was 'n bietjie siek, ek het vir my ma gekyk, nou kom ek miskien te laat, as hy skool toe gaan, nou dryw hy met public transport […]. Nou phone ek vir my neighbour en ek sê vir my neighbour, "Wil jy nie gou op my seuntjie kyk nie?" En dan eendag spiel die kleintjie onder die komberse met die poppe, maar ek is nie by die huis nie, ek is in 'n meeting daardie dag. En my meisie-kind sien hoe my kleintjie speel onder die komberse, en sy kyk wat hy maak, en sy haal die komberse op en hy lê bo op die pop en hy is besig met die pop, maar hy's drie jaar oud. En sy kyk vir hom aan en sy sê, "Wat doen jy met die pop?" en hy sê, "I'm having sex with the pop." En sy sê, "Seks? Ek weet nie van seks nie en ek is twintig jaar oud, wat doen jy?" En sy skrik en sy phone my dadelik, "Mami moet nou gou huis toe kom in die kooi hierso." En omdat ek 'n gemeenskapwerker is, toe weet ek dat eene het iets met hom gedoen, because ek ken myself en ek ken my man, ons sal dit nie doen, ons sal nooit seks hê voor onse kinders nie of even 'n sound maak dat hulle gaan wag word en hulle slaap hier ook teenaan ons. Toe weet ek hier is some abuse that's going around […] en hy sê, "No mommy, I'm gonna tell you." (*Interview with Faiza. 13.10.2016*). *See English translation in appendix E.*

> "[L]et your breath move into sound/ I don't care if you scream/ it'll help you hold your ground/ Darling, with your anger/ move your body into beat/ I don't care if you are crazy/ it'll help you find your

feet/ And darling/ if you're frightened of the change you want to make/ and you think you're going under/ make a sound for goodness sake/ cause that's what music is/ it helps you hold your ground/ That's what music is/ it's loving/ sound." (Campbell 2016).

Khanyiswa's narrative continues to unravel, with the finest details still imprinted in her mind. She recalls not only the date but also the weather, and that she was tired from work.

> On Saturday morning, I went to work. It was the 25th of August. It was a windy day. Then I went to work. I left her money. When I came in the afternoon, I was so tired, I was sitting on the bed. So when I opened the drawer, I saw a handwriting, a letter. I took the letter. I opened the letter. I was on the bed at that time. Then, the first thing that came to me when I opened the letter, "Ok, maybe she's apologising to me [for misbehaving at school]." I read the letter. Thrice. But I couldn't understand. I read and read the letter but I don't understand what she was saying. [After calling the family into the room] I ask "Can you tell us, what happened on that day?" Now Boniswa says it was on [the] Wednesday in May. And then she came from the school. And when she came in, he was gone out the room, so she started to undress herself. So, she was wearing only this small children's bra, and then she took off her skirt. He didn't say anything to her. He just push her on the bed. Now she thought he was playing. He come up to her, and then she push him again. And she didn't say anything. Then he unzip the pants. As he's trying to force himself, there's a knock on the door. As a result, he didn't penetrate her completely, but it left a rip in the vulva. He stopped because of the knock. But, you understand, it had already happened in the mind. (Interview with Khanyiswa cont.).

Here the disbelief Khanyiswa felt on reading her daughter's letter is accentuated, reading and reading, and not understanding,

after which she calls the family together, so confronting the issue. Khanyiswa also voices the challenge of subjective truth regarding sexual violation, where the physical injury only hints at the wound beneath (Bennett 1997).

> So díe tyd wanneer ek die neighbour gephone het, da los die neighbour vir haar seun, met my seun. En toe vertel my seun vir my en vir die social worker nou die hele story, en hy sê toe dat die neighbour se seun - hy is baie ouer as hom - as ek nou gephone het en gesê ek is 'n bietjie laat, ek is nou op my way, daar sê hy vir my seun, "Ek koop nou gou vir jou chips en chocolates and sweets and whatever while jy nou speel." Dann kom hy terug en trek sy broek af, dan druk hy sy penis binne in sy mond, in die klonkie. en op 'n paar occasions het hy nou getry hom van agteraf te gebruik. [pause] Toe raak my seun nou aggressive want hy weet hy is gerape word. En hy begin nou nie vir ons luister nie, en hy begin 'n totally ander attitude hê met ons. Ek het vir hom verstaan maar ek wou vir hom doodtjouk, van nie control hê van hom nie. (Interview with Faiza cont.) *See English translation in appendix F.*

Faiza's account depicts how she directly involved a professional social worker to listen to her son's story. She indicates having reflected on the implications of sexual abuse, saying how her son became aggressive once he 'knew' he had been raped, i.e. once the abuse has been exposed, she is suggesting, this can lead to being able to address the traumatic experience. Faiza acknowledges the burden she felt and then continues by adamantly renouncing any form of self-blame.

> Nou het ek nie geworry wat die neighbours gat sê of whatever nie. Ek meen nou, jy gee vir jou kind, jy trust jou neighbour, "Kyk na my kind. Jy betaal jou neighbour en alles, en dan laat your neighbour

haar kind sulke dinge doen. Dis verkeerd. En nou moet jy stil bly? Vir hoekom moet jy stil bly? Bang en skaam vir wat? Dit word worse [as jy stil bly]. En hy doen dit aan meer kinders en meerere kinders because jy bly stil [pause]. So ek voel sterk dat, in cases soos daai, especially soos daai where my kind is concerned, kry help vir hulle [pause]. En die kinders is skaam because die ouers is skaam. Nou as die ouers openlik gat praat en openlik gaan wees, dan gaan die kinders nie skaam wees nie [pause] because dan eers kan die kinders bewus word en dan vra hulle, "Hoekom is ek gerape?" Maar vandag - dit gaan net miskien vir 'n paar weeke of maande. Môre is 'n different story in die pad, en different neighbours se stories, en hulle vergeet al klaar vir jou story wat gewees het, so hoekom moet jy skaam wees dat jy gerape is? Jy was gerape. Finish en klaar [pause]. En ek kan nie vir 'n beter kind vandag; hy gaan leer vir 'n imam. Ek meen, nou kyk, as ons ouers dit nie gewees het nie wat uitgespring is en iets gedoen het nie, dan wat is uit hom geword? Gangster? Drugs? Wyn? [pause]. You know? So, we, ons het help gekry vir hom, en hy het verder geleer om ander mense te help en ander kinders te help wat dieselfde abuse cases deurmaak. (Interview with Faiza cont.) *See English translation in appendix G.*

Faiza speaks of the tendency to judge one's own past actions in contexts that were not possible to change then, by the standards of the present, and that this is unhelpful. Both of the above-mentioned cases involve minors, meaning that these are cases of statutory rape in which the child cannot be seen as complicit. A particularly salient aspect about these two accounts that I would like to highlight is that these accounts are from mothers who have actively taken charge and participated in the proceedings, by listening to their children, and by reacting in their ongoing support. They have believed their children, filed reports, and taken the cases to court, insisting that the wider environment respond.

> So, after Boniswa tell everything now, then I say to [my nephew], "You know, you broke my heart. You really hurt me. Because now, I really trusted you. I thought you will protect Boniswa, do anything for her. I thought you are the last person who will hurt her. And my daughter ask me, "Mama, do you believe me?" And I say, "Yes, my child, I believe you." It came now, all those mishaps, it all makes sense at that moment. So, my daughter says, "Mama, we can't hide this." And I say, "I know that. I know that." So, I have to talk to him. I [was the one who] took him to the police myself. It was me, my daughter and him. You can imagine, walking in the road, knowing exactly where you're going. Your mind is playing, your mind is everywhere. Then, we first went to KwaZakhele police station […].

What becomes clear further on in their narratives are the societal challenges, and how self-blame is self-regulated and resisted. Khanyiswa in particular struggles with blame extending from her extended family and the community. Both mothers' reactions are salient, in that on the one hand they are conscious of belonging to their community and the constraints implied with this belonging - captured in, e.g. Motsemme (2004) where it is the women who are expected to forgive, and to recreate harmony; to preserve and restore the balance within the family home, and in the wider community, especially in the face of violence. Yet on the other hand, they are highly critical of their respective communities' apathy regarding gendered violence. Their narratives also reveal their pride in having refused to accept any blame directed at them, and in having been attentive to their children's needs. The following excerpt, moreover, illustrates a point referred to in the methodology chapter (Lewin 1995), namely the cultural 'gap' between the interview participants (in this case Khanyiswa) and myself, e.g. in "my culture" "in the black society" or "in the black community."

You know, when something happens in the location, in in in a black society, when you heard someone was raped, you don't focus much on that, how does that person feel. You just, "Sjoe! Oh shame, that woman was raped?" And then you come to think, "Oh, I've got a daughter also". The first thing you tell your daughter is, "Don't go, don't go late outside". That's the first thing you tell your daughter. "Don't go late outside. Please, don't go in that man's house, because that man stays alone." You know? Those certain things that we know. That we just know, that we feel is a trap for your daughter's life. But now it knocks you on your forehead. You know, sometimes I feel so [pause] ashamed. I feel so embarrassed about my culture. Because we grew up, most of the things we keep in the cupboard. Not to talk openly, né? It's only when, when it happens to you, then you focus on the situation. Then you want to learn more. Then you, you, you really *really* take time to understand the situation. Then you feel more interested, guilty at the same time. So, it's the things that make you feel ashamed of your culture [pause] you feel ashamed but are not taking responsibility about the person's pain. You feel guilty, but are not helping that person. That shouldn't be the way it happens. I must be involved. Even if nothing happens to my daughter, I must be involved. I must take charge. I must help that person. But it doesn't go that way. It really doesn't go that way. Even if it happened to you, you're going to be alone, fixing that problem. Sometimes your family will just sit; not even help you.

He was sentenced eighteen years [in 2013] and […] he agrees to everything. My child didn't have to go to court, he just did take responsibility for what he done. Now there are things that Boniswa didn't have to go through, like to stand up in court, to be asked, to be doubted. She never have to went through such things. So, I'm grateful for that. Because now, he saves me that trauma, you see? Although this happened, he also need my support, for him to see

what he done wrong. I must support him, I must show him love. I can't hate him. Even if I want to hate him, but I can't really find myself hating him. Because now, I don't have the *voice* to hate him. He's the child that I asked god to come stay with me. So, although I was hurt, I can't find myself really really hating, or saying I hate him. I find that it is my duty to support him. For him to see how much deep is the scar he made. And when I visit in the prison, I say to him, "*Bhuti*, I'm taking a step to forgive you, I'm asking god to give you the mind. Just to open your eyes to see how deep you hurt Boniswa. To you it must be physical, you'll tell yourself that. But emotionally you scar her […].

Now, what I try to do, by visiting him, is to encourage him to find a link that will connect to us, so that he can find peace. One day he's going to be released. I want him to be able to be able to go to my mother's house, I don't him want to be separated. Because he will be done with his sentence, it will be finished. I want him to be embraced in the family again. He done something wrong to Boniswa and for her to forgive, we must support him, and so we also support Boniswa. (Interview with Khanyiswa. 29.02.2016).

En ek sê vir die social worker, "Wat maak ek nou in die case?" Ek wil nie 'n saak maak nie, ek wil nie dat die kind moet tronk toe gaan nie, want in die tronk gebeur gevaarlike dinge, en hy is homself nou nog 'n kind. Maar dis nou my kind wat hy opgemors het [pause]. Toe sê vir hom, "As ek weer gaan hoor jy het vir 'n kind gevat, gaan ek vir jou slap." Maar in any case, ons laat roep toe vir die ma, die ma wil nie kom nie. Eventually sê ek vir haar, "Ek wil hê jou seun kry 'n social worker en jy moet sien my kind kry help." En sy sê, "Nee, ek gaan dit Maandag uitsort by die social workers." [pause]. Ons het gewag 'n hele week. En my man gaan alweer vir die neighbour, "Het jy die social workers uitgesort?" En sy sê, "Ja, jy moenie vir jou

dikslim hou nie. Because my seun het dit nie gedoen nie. En ek het nie tyd vir social workers nie." En hy sê, "Ok, as daai die case is, gaan ek police stasie toe. Dan moet jou kind tronk toe gaan mos. Daai is die ienigste way wat ons kan help kry. Want as ons dit nie report nie gaan hy nie help kan kry nie." En my man gaan af police stasie toe en ek gaan toe saam, en my man lay a charge against the boy.

En die saak het aangegaan sieker vir 'n jaar of twee because die kind is a minor. En toe roep die judge ons en die magistraat, en toe sê hulle the boy ís guilty, but luckily het hy my kind nie agteraf gepenetrate nie [pause]. Luckily? How can it be luckily? Hy het my kind in die mond geuse, en van agteraf getry mos. Even if he didn't penetrate agteraf. Hy het mos getry. Hy het sy brains opgemors man. Because kyk, toe doen hy dit met my kleintjie, verstaan? So, hy's klaar gemors nou. So, jy kan nie vir my sê 'luckily'. En toe explode ek met die judge en met die magistraat. So sê ek, "Hoe the heaven kan jy vir my sê 'luckily'?"

Julle het beter my kind help kry, sê ek vir haar [pause]. Hy moet help kry. Toe sê ek hierdie boy moet ook help kry because obviously het dit ook met hom gebeur. Dis mos 'n process of going from generation to generation [pause]. En toe sê sy, ok, ek maak sense, en sy skryf vir my 'n brief uit, en sy sê nou moet hy tronk toe gaan [pause]. Hy was viertien jaar oud. En toe sê ek vir die judge ek wil nie hy moet tronk toe gaan nie, want ek gaan nie lyk iemand moet my kind in die tronk sit nie. Hy need help. Toe skryf die judge 'n brief uit aan die social worker wat in die hof gewerk het, en hulle vat toe vir hom dat hy help moet kry. (Interview with Faiza. 13.10.2015). *See English translation in appendix H.*

4.2.3. LISTENING TO THREE PERSONAL ACCOUNTS

> I was raped by my grandson. The younger son. He's born in 1985. He's related in the manner [pause] he's the son of my husband's son, yes, like that. So this boy came to the house using a window. And then I thought maybe it's one of my sons because I've got sons of my own. But unfortunately they were not at home that day. And then this grandson, this boy came by the window, and then he opened the window, and then he took me, he took me [pause] he forced me. I refused him but he was stronger. He is much younger, he is my grandchild. And he pinned me to the floor. And then he sexually assaulted me from the behind. And then now he was, while he was busy doing this, he was busy saying sort of disgusting words like, "I've been wanting you for so long [pause] it's been a long time since I've been wanting to get to you." [pause]. And he's saying, "Finally I've got you." Some words like that [pause]. And then he heard someone coming, and afterwards he ran to his house. (Interview with Nomsindo. 29.02.2916).

Nomsindo clearly positions herself as a grandmother who is raped by her grandson; pausing nonetheless before emphasising that they are not directly related but through marriage, suggestive of the act being less immoral. Her pause between "he took me, he forced me" could be reflexive in that she wishes to express her powerlessness in that moment, repeating that, "I refused him but he was stronger, he is younger. Her repetition may also serve as a justification, calling to mind that we need to be conscious of our self-regulating discursive operations of power (Foucault 1975). There are many pauses in her further account of the rape itself, where Nomsindo draws attention to her grandson's "disgusting words", so implying that the words accentuated the violent act.

> I had to report the boy to the police for my peace of mind, and he was arrested. He's been sentenced for fifteen years [pause]. But prison is not enough of a punishment; they have a nice time there. Prison is not as it used to be before; it's like now, when you are in prison, you are at home, you feel at home [pause]. Maybe it would be better if a person who rapes someone else will be hanged, or at least sentenced to life [pause]. The way they do things here in the city is better than what is happening in the rural areas. What is done here in the city is that a person will be beaten to death. When I went to court, I saw this boy who raped me, eating biscuits. And when the court proceedings continued, he would raise his hand. Was that done long ago? The justice was better before. Unlike nowadays, because back then you were afraid of the police. You were even embarrassed to show your face when you have done something in front of the people during the court proceedings. When I try to leave the court room, I will be stopped so that I will be forced to listen again to what he is saying. When he passes these cheeky remarks [in court], I don't feel well [pause]. The fifteen years are going to end, he will finish his sentence. What will happen to him after that? Won't he kill me when he's out? I don't ever want to see his face again, not even from afar. I have got that thing [pointing to the heart]. That anger to not want to forgive someone. Yes. (Interview with Nomsindo cont. 29.02.2016).

"Prison is not enough of a punishment; prison is a place where you feel at home." In light of her further account that she feels as if her home is her prison, and that the pain is like a prisoner underneath her skin, this is an arresting statement. She "had to report the boy for my peace of mind" and he was convicted. She listened to her own needs, and she was listened to by the court; yet she stresses that this is not enough of a punishment. That for her, justice has not been served. She expresses the trauma of having to experience "the boy" and his "cheeky remarks" in court again, as well as her fear of what he will do when his sentence is

completed. Nomsindo is claiming her right to question, and to condemn something which has, and continues to threaten her basic freedoms. Her refusal to pardon her grandson is a reflected act. Like Mrs Konile at the Truth Commission, she chooses to say no.

> Ever since that day, I am not able to be having that, that self-confidence, or that self-esteem. Sometimes I feel angry at myself, and I do not want to sleep in that room, the same room, and I don't want even to look at the window. So when I look through the window, I look at the home of this boy's family, my husband's family. Now I don't want to sleep in that room anymore. I am living in the same room, inside these memories. The snakes in the bush, I see them. The snake its skin is going but this pain it is like a prisoner underneath my skin. I will not forgive this boy for what he has done. (Interview with Nomsindo cont.).

Having barely paused at all in the preceding excerpt, Nomsindo frequently makes use of pauses in her further account. She feels betrayed by the lack of family support and resents their ostracising her. Her use of pauses seems to underline her anger at not being treated respectfully, and having been deceived by people she expects to provide her with support. Her reference to the uncle who comes to her *kraal* (animal pen) without consulting her could be an expression of re-traumatisation, where her private space has been invaded again. Nomsindo actively challenges the power relations, asserting her need for a new place she can call home.

> The other thing is that the family [pause] the family on both sides [pause] doesn't support me, it's like I am on my own in this matter. That does not sit well with me [long pause] because I did not ask him for what happened to me. *They* must be the ones who are supporting me now [pause]. So during December there was a family gathering. And they didn't even tell me [pause] they only sent a child [long pause]. And one of the uncles from my husband's side will go to my

kraal; he will go to the kraal without consulting me. And he will go to my kraal to look for his goats without asking for my permission. So I don't feel well, I don't feel good, and it makes me very sad that it is my own family that doesn't support me [long pause]. So I think it can help if I have a new place of my own, where I can say, "No, this is my place, this is my home." (Interview with Nomsindo cont.).

Refuse is a dirty word
You refuse me
Sparks
Outrage inside
Me I
am wreathing
I am furious I
will show you
I am stronger I
will show you
You are mine
You are refuse is dirt

"There was nothing to provoke it." These are the words Lulama chooses to begin with, when relating her experience of violent assault by a passerby in the road. A poignant statement which implies that I claim no complicity in this crime. I am innocent. She conveys her powerlessness in the instance; her inability in having been able to alter the circumstances, similarly to Nomsindo's account above. Here, however, she stresses having directly confronted the perpetrator, asking "[w]hy? Because I'm not your woman." In other words, I find it morally wrong what you are demanding. Lulama's account is spoken quietly and slowly, and it is interspersed with frequent long silent pauses which last up to two minutes. Note that her pauses are concentrated around her account of the attack, and of the scene of attack itself. She seems

to be choosing her words; in choosing what she wishes to tell and what not, she is maintaining command over her narrative. Her use of pauses here could be a site for reconstructing herself.

> There was nothing to provoke it. My sister's husband had died, and I was coming from their house, and then I was walking up the road, and then this man comes up at me from a shebeen [pause] and he trips me and takes me away and beats me, saying "We're going to sleep together." And he beat me so hard around the eyes that I still have trouble seeing, still have trouble with my eyes. He was saying he will sleep with me and I was saying, "Why? Because I'm not your woman" [long pause]. After he attack me, he [long pause] undress me [pause] he drag me [long pause] to a shack where he said he wanted to kill me but [pause] I [pause] escape [pause]. He fall asleep and I escaped and go home [pause] and I could hardly see, he beat me up so much [pause]. In the end they called the police and take me to the hospital and they started a court case but it didn't continue. It kept having delays [pause] and then he lied about it. They believed the man, even though I said, "I mean, look what he has done to me". So even now, I have to go to the clinic [pause] for my eyes [pause]. This happened about a year ago but still [pause] there are times where I can't see. So I think I should go to the doctor and not just to the clinic [pause]. They went with his story [pause] I wanted to fight the case but I do not recall the detective's name [long pause]. I also know that the man go away, he has left town [pause]. It is very difficult [pause]. I also struggle to make ends meet since my husband died, trying to get a foster grant for the children, which I can't access [pause]. I don't really speak to them, but my children do know [pause] I got away with my life. The place where he kept me was so [long pause] there were shovels lying around and children's shoes and all this stuff [pause] so I don't know if he had done this to children, or what. So I feel thankful that I managed to escape [pause]. There are supposed to

be social workers somewhere [pause]. No, I did not get any support. (Interview with Lulama. 23.02.2016).

Lulama voices her agency, in that "I managed to escape. I went home." When the perpetrator was found not culpable, she protested. She has thus actively challenged the status quo, and yet at the same time seems to have resigned herself to the situation. "It is very difficult; I also struggle to make ends meet." No longer expecting any change seems to have become her strategy to manage her circumstances. She returns to the scene of attack, exposing its horror and, perhaps as way of consolation, says that she is "thankful that I managed to escape." It is at this point that Lulama alludes to the fact that she is speaking with me because she has been told to by the person who introduced us, Mama Simons. After clarifying that the interview is voluntary, and thanking her for what she has shared with me, I draw the interview to a close. "A word does not rot unless it is carried in the mouth for too long, under the tongue." This excerpt from Yvonne Vera's *Under the Tongue* (1996: 110) later comes to surface, making visible one particular strategy which has been used to explore the various manifestations of orality in written form. In her novel, Vera oralises her protagonist's thoughts instead of her words, so that she is able to relate her story of incest. Were Lulama to oralise her own thoughts, to put her thoughts into written form and then to publish her own story, might the discourse move on?

He Left Her Dead

Last night
He came back from the mines, retrenched. Bringing a trail of poverty - Worms.
Last night in our village. There was a quarrel next door. The man demanded a piece of meat

He came back home with cans of beer, drunk: 'All these years I worked for nothing!'
The man cried. The woman had told him the truth: 'Of all these children, only this one is yours, papa!
The others are mine! Yours are in the mines.'
He chased her so madly, he had the energy of a warrior. He hit her with a size 6 pot
She fell down and fainted. He had all the strength of a warrior. He hit her with fists and a stick
He kicked her like a football. He broke her ribs with a size 6 pot
Fire was blazing in his mouth
Last night my neighbour was rushed to Elim Hospital.
The police only came in the morning.
(Bila 2007: 11).

The last narrative presented in this study comes from Nonyameko. I have chosen to include this relatively long contribution, as I find a more condensed version would damage her narrative. My aim is thus to allow the narrator's voice itself to emerge in this process. Having introduced herself as someone who lives on the street, she continues to explain the reason for her homelessness, evocative of a passage cited in Motsemme (2004: 924) that "[w]hen the boundaries of home have been forcibly transgressed, the relatively ordered and predictable world is shattered."

> We went out to the street, all of us. Some of them they are doing some murders, they murder people and they get caught […] they staying here in the street too. But on the time they asking me, "Why am I here on the street?" I told them why I'm here on the street, "Because I was been abused by my uncle." (Interview with Nonyameko. 22.02.2016).

In telling the others on the street in the narrative, Nonyameko is simultaneously telling the person she is addressing in the

moment. She frames her narrative by positioning herself as someone who was a child at the time of abuse; reflecting on the occurrences of the past in her current position as the narrator, and at the same time showing self-reflexivity. She responds to the meaning and the identity of the 'I' who is doing the narrating; she is listening to herself speaking. "My mom, she knew everything of that, everything. Because she was the one, she was sleeping with the brother." An assertion which shows her awareness of her mother's transgression, reiterated further on in "she's choosing me I must go there." Her mother passes her daughter on because "she get tired about sleep with this brother."

> My mom, she knew everything of that, everything. Because she was the *one*, she was sleeping with my uncle, with the brother. Now she get tired about sleep with this brother. And now, her brother came to her and ask her, "Can I have your daughter?" And my uncle said to her, "You will have everything, but I want Nonyameko to *mos* come and stay with me in my house, because I don't have a child there, and it's only me, I'm going to work every day, now I'm coming back, now I'm getting tired, no-one can make for me a coffee, all this stuff. And she is big now, she is eleven years now."

"I'm doing my homework because I have to finish it" and "I sleep, because I fell asleep." Nonyameko underlines that she is behaving as usual: she goes to school, does her homework, she washes her clothes. It is her uncle who behaves in an unusual way. He knocks on the door, and he comes into the room without her consent. In emphasising this point, she is suggesting further intrusive behavior to come.

> And my mom, she's choosing me I must go there. I went there to stay with him [pause]. When I stay with him there, he started; when I'm doing my homework in my room [pause] he started knocking on

> my room and I ask him, "What do you want?" and he say, "No, I'm just coming and check on you, are you ok". And I said, "No I'm ok, I'm doing my homework." I just have to finish it, and now we should suppose to have something to eat [pause]. Because the time when I was coming home, I was coming back from school, I didn't want to eat that time, I was want to finish my homework and then I can do all that things, I have to wash my T-shirt and my socks, and [pause]. After that he always come to my room and knock and I just opening, I open the door and he cames in [pause]. And after that when he cames in, he [pause] he just, he just ask me, "Nonyameko, don't say anything about the thing I'm gonna say to you." I ask him, "What kind of thing you gonna say to me?" and he say, "No, it doesn't matter, you will see what I'm gonna do". And uh, I didn't know what he's gonna do, but I was waiting for him to show me what he's gonna do. But [pause] oh, I went to bed and I sleep, because I fell asleep.

She gives a factual, unembellished account of being raped, pausing at the point where he "just put his thing in me." Nonyameko stresses her asking, "What are you doing?" "And I try to scream" but that her uncle tries to hide his actions from her with a blanket, covering her face with a pillow which prevents her from screaming; and so drawing attention to the fact that it took place against her will.

> After that, he came to my room. After that, he just open his pants [pause] he's taking his belt off [pause], after that when he's taking his belt off, he just pulled his pants off [long pause] and he take, he take a blanket, I mustn't see what he's doing, what he's gonna do to me and after that I ask him, "What you are doing?" and he said, "I'm not doing anything. Just shut up and listen, and wait what I'm gonna do to you." And I just try to scream, I couldn't scream because he was having a pillow on my face, and after that he pull my, he pull my panty off, and he just put his thing in me and uh [long pause].

Nonyameko reflects on how her uncle tried to coerce her into silence by threatening her, and how she went to tell her mother regardless. How she is not listened to by her mother; how she is denied any form of hearing. Her narrative speaks of an eleven-year-old who demands action from her mother, "I ask my mom what do you gonna do about this thing?" but that the reaction is one of further denial; upon which Nonyameko goes to report the case at the police station but the police are bribed by the uncle and do not file a report. She does not allow this to silence her, she relates, as she continues by telling the family what is happening, "I tell my family about that and they refuse." She relates how her wider family, too, turns a blind eye to her, even when she becomes pregnant by her uncle, "It's him, my uncle's got permission." When no-one listens, no-one responds to her protest, she runs away.

> I try to go to tell my mom about that and my mom, she avoid me and she said, "No, he will not gonna do something like that", and uh, he said to me if I did, if I tell everyone about what happened to me, he will kill me. And I shut my mouth. But then I did went to my mom and I did told my mom about this. And my mom, she refuse all of that [pause] and uh, when my uncle came to my mom and my uncle give my mom money and [pause]. I saw them, they give each other something, it look like money, and they took from each other. And I ask my mom, "What do you, what do you gonna do about this thing?" But she just said to me, "Nonyameko, shut your mouth or I will smack you." And I just sit down, I just stay there by my uncle's house, and my uncle keep on doing the same thing, keep on doing the same thing to me [pause] and I've tried to go to the, to the police and my uncle went to bribe the police, and when I put the statement, and the police they will write the statement and my uncle is gonna come. Or one of the police is gonna come to my uncle and say, "Nonyameko, she is there, she went to put the charges on you". And he just gonna say to them, "Just take that, that case number and burn it, or do

> something about that". They not doing all the police stuff, because they been get something, some money from him [pause]. And I tell my family about that and they refuse, they say he will never do something like that to me [pause]. And I falling pregnant when I was fourteen years old. I [pause], after that, when I falling pregnant, I tell my friend who did this and then, uh, my uncle said no, this is not his child, I must have to go out to check who makes me pregnant, the guy who makes me pregnant. I told the people it's him. And uh [pause] it's *why* this man, he's doing all that. My uncle's got permission, that he must have to do such things to me. And I run away from my home because of them [long pause].

The next part of Nonyameko's narrative follows after she pauses for nearly two minutes. Her pause implies that she is allowing that which she has already narrated to be grasped; as if to impress on the listener that she is drawing an end to one chapter, before moving on to the next part of her narration. While relating the subsequent passage, she pauses more frequently, allowing silences for up to two minutes to pass. Whereas in the preceding account Nonyameko appears more removed from the situation she narrates, here she is visibly re-living the moment of attack by a group of men who raped her when she was fourteen and while she was pregnant. She is still clearly traumatised by the assault, "They kick me, I was bleeding, I was falling down; there was lots of blood on me." Yet, "I was trying to walk but I couldn't, but [pause] at that time [pause] I was walking and falling down, and then trying to walk again." She constructs herself as resilient, as highly agentive, throughout the narrative; seeing herself as someone who does what she can in order to make her way regardless. She "got money for the sex" because "I must have to go buy for myself something to eat." A matter-of-fact statement which underlines what I understand to be her pragmatic sense and her strength.

Yes. I ran away, I went to stay in King William's Town, outside the post office. I was staying with the guys there [pause] some of the guys are here still now, some of the guys they died [pause]. I was the only girl, to ten guys there. It was only me the girl. And I sleep there. We just take the boxes, we just put them there, and we just get the plastic, and we just sleep. And when we go out, we go to take something to eat, we standing there by Spar, we get something [pause] something to eat there [pause] and uh, we ran from King William's Town to East London. When we ran to East London, I was two months pregnant by that time. And I was [pause] I was [pause] I was want to, to [long pause] I went to the toilet, because there was no loo there, where we can go. I just go to the bushes [long pause]. There was three guys by the time I was getting in the bush, I didn't saw them. And those guys, when they saw me, they just said to me, "Do you have something?" and they search me, and I say, "No I don't have anything on me", and after that I said, "Please help me, I'm a girl, please don't do a bad thing to me", and they said it doesn't matter that [long pause].

And those guys, they raped me, all of them. And one of them, one of the guys kick me on my stomach. I was bleeding, they saw I was bleeding on that man. After that, when I was bleeding, I couldn't walk, I tried to [pause] to scream for help, to get someone who can help me. I didn't have anyone who could help me, but I was trying to walk but I couldn't, but [pause] at that time [pause] I was walking, I was falling down, I was walking and falling down, and then trying to walk again. One of the guys saw me by the time when I was lying there and there was lots of blood on me, and I ask him can he help me, and he said, "About what?" I say, "No, can't you *see*, I'm bleeding? I am pregnant and the guys they hit me on my stomach". The guy called the ambulance [pause]. Then I was in the hospital [pause].

I don't know what happened after that, I was in hospital but I came to hear about the nurses saying I've lost my, my child [long pause]. After

> that [pause], I stay here on the street in East London [pause] trying to, trying to have a sex with other people because I don't have money, I don't have food [long pause] in that time [pause] and [pause] I got some of those people, they have money and I got money for the sex, and then when I'm finished to do that job, I got money, I must have to go buy for myself then something to eat [pause].

Nonyameko's account consistently highlights how she addresses the community in which she lives, yet how those she speaks with avoid her, how they turn their backs on her. Her stories, plausible as they are, are not listened to. Still, she shows little indication of internalised blame for the multiple violations in her life, adamantly stating, "I said it's because of my uncle, because he's raping me." It is only when she reflects on the implications of her current situation with respect to her future, that she stops speaking, and refuses to continue.

> And, I tried to go back home again, my uncle was doing the *same* thing to me [pause], he's keep on raping me, he's keep on raping me [pause] but my mom, she doesn't say anything about that [long pause]. And one day [pause] I just go out to tell one of my friends. My friend told one of the teachers, and the teacher said to me, "Oh Nonyameko, why are you like this?" I said it's *because* of my uncle, because he's raping me." But my teacher do nothing. Now I can't do anything because of him. I can't study at school; I couldn't concentrate at school [pause] because of what happened to me in my life. And [pause] I've been found out I am HIV positive [pause] until now, I'm HIV positive. I can't go back home [pause]. They said I can go back home [pause] maybe, maybe things will be change. But there's nothing can change anymore. Because [pause] because I'm trying to [long pause] I not accept it [long pause].

Chapter 5

GATVOL NOISE RE-VISITED

An exploration of noisy silence. An exploration of silent noise. Where do the narratives of these interlocuters and of others take us, so that the discourse can indeed move on, as advocated by Gqola (2015)? I would suggest that the narratives have taken us into the realm of listening to refusal: "I not accept it" are the final words of the discussion chapter; or could one safely say that the concluding words are [long pause]?

As stated in the introduction, my aim in this study has been to contribute toward a fuller picture of how South Africans express their sexuality within post-apartheid. An additional motivation has been to add to the documentation of responses to sexual violence and in so doing, to challenge patriarchal discourses within South African society. My focus in this study has at the same time become an exploration of, and a questioning of, what exactly

listening entails. I have been particularly attentive to what *gatvol noise* sounds like. And yes, it seems that the noisy-silent voices who speak through the interviews which are presented, clearly illustrate that the 'unrestrained', alluded to in Carson (1995), are those who feel entitled to commit rape; and that the 'leaky containers', moreover, are the ears of those who are not listening. As listening is a bodily activity, and as neither noise nor silence are caught within the confinements of speech, I would like to conclude this paper by way of proposing an altogether attentive manner of listening: A listening to the pauses, to the supposed silences, to the refusals-to-speak in a way that is expected. I call for a listening to the ambiguities, to the contradictions, and to the surprises. This more hospitable approach to the act of listening not only serves to recognise and to reveal the non-sense of sexual violation but is also instrumental in acknowledging the apparent abstinence in some responses. Hard to miss in the narratives of the mothers, namely those of Faiza and Khanyiswa, we see notable instances of hospitable listening to gatvol of un*sound* coming to the fore amongst the other narratives as well. It is thus not only the voices of these narratives which come across loud and clear but also the attentive ears of those who *have* paid attention. This is especially pertinent with respect to sexual violence in the sense that black women, seen for example in Londeka's narrative above, are oftentimes not considered as subjects who have a voice and as subjects who are listened to: "Black women are the most likely to be raped because […] we think black women cannot be raped."

What is yet to be done remains a soundless page with more noise to come.

There is no such thing as silence

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Appendix

1. KEY

The following transcription conventions are followed in the interviews:

[pause]	Silent pause from five seconds up to twenty seconds
[long pause]	Silent pause from twenty seconds up to two minutes
[…]	Material from original transcription omitted
[text]	Explanatory material; added words to make grammatical sense
Text	Italics are used both to mark words/phrases emphasized by the participant; and also to mark words in other languages
[PA]	Penelope Allsobrook

2. ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF CONTRIBUTIONS IN THE STUDY FROM FAIZA

INTRODUCTION FROM METHODOLOGY CHAPTER

My name is Faiza and I am a community leader here. I belong to a Khoi group. We are the first indigenous people of this land. I can't say, though, that this is our land because it is God's land at the end of the day. And God didn't only make the brown people; he made brown, white and black people. I was born in the Cape, in District Six. My parents lived there, my grandmother lived there. Until the government through us out there. My granny owned many houses. Now they have all died and left no papers of ownership. Now they say we can make land claims with the new restoration, but how? Where to get these papers if you don't have any? You know you lived there and you know those were your gran's houses but you have no papers.

A.

They learn about sex at school. They learn about STIs and AIDS, and that sort of thing, but it is on a certain level. But now some parents feel offended because especially in the slum, our belief says, and our Qur'an says that you can't have sex before marriage. So, many parents feel it is an offensive thing to learn about things like that at school. Because they feel that you are giving the go-ahead to have sex. But I feel that it is not the case that you say go have sex but rather that you are warning them, and you prepare them for what is happening out there.

B.

[PA: Do mothers and fathers speak about sex with their children? Is it common?] About sex? No. But I, for example, speak openly with my children about sex. When they come of age, I tell them about AIDS. My

youngest son who is now ten years old knows all about STIs. When we go walking together, I tell them not to have sex before they marry. But we know our children, we know the situation in our communities, so when I go to the clinic, I fetch condoms and leave them lying around in the house, and I mention that if anyone needs one they should just help themselves. And my teenage son who is now married, he said before that "Mommy is crazy; how can mommy bring me condoms? Mommy doesn't respect me." I said it is because I love you. I want you to respect yourself by protecting yourself. So you don't need to show me that you are using them but if you do, I will fetch more. And I bring boxes full, and they go fetch them because they want to protect themselves. I speak openly, even with the youth leader. I speak openly with him, and he says, "Wow, my mother would never speak like that with me." He blushes because he is shy because in our coloured communities, nobody speaks about sex. Not even married couples do; we can ask around, you will hear that no sex gets discussed around the table.

C.

[PA: So can you tell me what the Afrikaans term is for 'rape'?] In our Cape Town language we say rape if we mean that that person was hurt. [PA: Why do you say rape and not say verkrag?] The reason for this is that we speak kitchen Afrikaans, we speak a language mixed with Afrikaans and English. The word verkrag only means something sexual. It is rape that means to hurt.

D.

[PA: What does it mean to hurt? What is rape to you?] For me, rape is when they penetrate you in your mouth or whether they force you into vaginal sex, or whatever the case may be, it is rape if you don't want because no is no. If I say to you, "No, I don't want to have sex, you must understand. Even though every situation is different, no is no. It remains no. You can't misunderstand

no for a maybe. It is no. And when they penetrate you in your mouth, I think it is exactly the, I think it is even worse [pause] I can't imagine it [pause] So I mean, I have never let someone penetrate me against my will but for me it is, good lord, you know? [pause] How do I handle something like that? [pause] So yes, that is rape. It leaves a big scar in your heart.

E.

Now my third oldest child, he's sixteen now but I'm speaking about the time he was three; my mom was a little ill and I was taking care of her. Now as I thought I might come home late when coming home from school – he was travelling with public transport […] now I phoned my neighbour […] and I said to my neighbour, "Can you please go quick and look after my child?" […] And now one day my child was playing under the blankets with a doll but I wasn't at home that day, I was in a meeting that day. And my daughter sees how my small child is playing under the blankets, and she looks what he's doing, and she picks the blankets up, and he's lying on top of the doll and he is busy with the doll but he's three years old. And she looks at him and she says, "What are you doing with the doll?" and he says, "I'm having sex with the doll." And she says, "Sex? I don't know anything about sex and I am twenty years old, what are you doing?" And she gets a fright and phones me immediately, "Mommy must come home quickly." And because I am a community worker, I knew that someone had done something to him. Because I know me and my husband, we would never, we would never have sex in front of our children, or even make a sound to wake them, and they sleep right next to us here. Then I knew that there is some abuse going around […] and he says, "No mommy, I'm going to tell you."

F.

So at the time when I phoned the neighbour, she let her son go my son. And now my son tells me and the social worker the whole story, and he tells that the neighbour's son – he is much older than him – when I phoned

and said I'd be a little late, I am on my way, then he said to my son, "I am going quickly to fetch chips and chocolate and whatever while you play." Then he came back and pulled his pants off and then he pushed his penis in his mouth, in the boy [pause] and he tried a few times to abuse him from behind [pause]. Now my son, because he knows that he has been raped, now he begins to have a totally different attitude towards us. I understood his behaviour but now I wanted to choke him dead from not being able to control him.

G.

Now, I didn't worry about what the neighbours would say or whatever. I mean, you hand your child to your neighbour in trust, "Look after my child." You pay your neighbour and everything, and then your neighbour lets her child do these things. It's wrong. And now you must remain silent? Why must you stay silent? Afraid and ashamed of what? It gets worse [if you don't confront it]. And he will do it with more and more children [pause]. So I feel strongly that, in such cases, especially those where my child is concerned, get help for them [pause]. The children are ashamed because the parents are shamed. Now if the parents speak openly and are open, then the children will not be ashamed [pause] because only then will the children become aware, and then they ask, "Why was I raped?" But these days, the stories only last a few weeks. Tomorrow there will be a different story in the media, and different stories from neighbours, then they already forget your story. So why should you be ashamed that you were raped? You were raped. That's it - no more, no less [pause]. And I couldn't hope for a better child these days; he is studying to become an imam. I mean, now look, if we as parents hadn't been the ones to do something, what would have happened to him? Gangster? Drugs? Wine? [pause] You know? So we got help for him, and he was able to learn how to help other children who go through the same abuse.

H.

And I say to the social worker, "What are we going to do now with this case?" I don't want to report him, I don't want this child to go to jail, because I know that dangerous things happen in jail, and he is still a child himself. But now it is my child that he messed around with. [pause] Then I told him that if I ever hear that he has touched another child, I will hit him. But in any case, we call on the mother, but the mother doesn't want to come. Eventually I say to her, "I want your child to get help from a social worker." And she says, "No, I will sort it out on Monday with the social workers." [pause] We waited a whole week. And my husband goes to her again, asking her, "Have you sorted things out with the social workers?" And she says, "Yes, just don't be thinking you're smart. Because my son didn't do it. And I don't have time for social workers." And he says, "Ok, if it's like that, then I will go to the police. Then your child must go to jail. That is the only way we can get help for our child. Because if we don't report it, he will never get help." And my husband goes to the police station and I go with him, and my husband lays a charge against the boy. And the case must have gone on for about a year or two because the child is a minor. And now the judge calls us and the magistrate, and now they say that the boy is guilty, but that luckily the boy didn't penetrate my child from behind but only tried [pause]. Luckily? How can it be luckily? He abused my child in his mouth, and he tried to penetrate him from behind. Even if he didn't penetrate from behind, he tried [pause]. He messed up his brains now, man. Because look, he now he does it with my small boy, understand? So he is completely messed up now. So how can you say luckily to me? Now I exploded in front of the judge and the magistrate. So I said, "How the heaven can you say luckily? You had better find help for my child, I tell her [pause]. He must receive assistance. Now I say this boy must also receive help because this has obviously happened to him as well. It is a process of going from one generation to the next [pause]. And now she says ok, I make sense, and she writes a letter for me, and now he has to go to jail [pause]. He was fourteen years old. And now I tell the judge

I don't want him to go to jail because I wouldn't want someone else to put my son in jail. He needs help. Now the judge writes a letter to the social worker who works for the court, and now they fetch him so that he can find support.

3. SELECTED EXTRACTS FROM INTERVIEWS COMPILED ACCORDING TO TOPIC

3.1. RELIGION AND SEXUAL POLITICS

Sexual politics are closely intertwined with religion, seen for instance in South Africa in the Truth Commission's appropriation of religious symbols during the hearings where prayers were held before each hearing. A striking pattern in my interviews is the extent to which the predominantly Christian, and actively-practising participants simultaneously acknowledge and challenge traditional religious beliefs, especially with reference to homophobia.

> I know about [same-sex relationships] but I do not agree with it because the Bible does not. Beginning with Genesis: God created Adam and Eve, and said to them, "Go forth, increase and multiply and fill the earth". So from the man comes the seed and the seed needs the egg of the woman, and so if God required for people to build the earth and be prosperous, well, that cannot happen in same-sex relationships. And that is why it is written in Genesis 19 that Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed because the places was overrun by people who were in same-sex relationships. And God said, "I have found nobody who is righteous, you need to go, because of this thing that was happening".

These same-sex relationships are what our democracy and our government now allows but this is not what the Bible says is God's intention.[55]

Ok, me as a Christian and a regular church-goer, let me explain the thing about Sodom and Gomorrah to you. People don't read their Bible carefully. There were angels sent to Sodom and Gomorrah. So the people there, the gay and lesbian people who were there, God cursed them because they wanted to sleep with angels. God did not curse them just because they were dating each other as man to man or woman to woman; no, the only thing that made God angry and for him to burn Sodom and Gomorrah, it's because of the violence, that the inhabitants raped the foreigners. And that they wanted to sleep with angels. That's the only thing. So, where was I when those people wanted to sleep with angels? I've never attempted to sleep with an angel (laugh), and then when I go to church, people say that I'm a demon (laugh). You tell me Penelope, where was I? I was not there. My mother was not there. Even my great-grandmother was not there (laugh). All those people are long dead and buried now. None of us from the present-day LGBTI community was there, trying to sleep with angels.[56]

It is not is that I am against the rules - that the Church says you must marry before being sexually active. The problem is just that the current generation doesn't obey these rules. You will find that young teenage girls are getting pregnant before age, before they are mature, and that they are deserted by the fathers of their babies […]. The current generation doesn't want to use the condoms; even the other contraception, they don't want to go there, and for that the Church is also to blame. What I experienced is that when I went to give

[55] Interview with Pastor Bhekinkosi

[56] Interview with Londeka

birth to my child, I was twenty-five years old. But in the ward in the hospital, there was an eleven-year-old girl […]. But unfortunately the baby couldn't make it. The baby died; it was a premature child […]. You will find many young Xhosa girls getting pregnant at the age of eleven or twelve. A child of twelve, already pregnant. I find that these young ladies, like the one I was with, she was eleven years old when she went to deliver the baby, and she didn't even have her bus fare. And when I was asking, "Where is your family?" the girl confirmed that, "I'm in a relationship with a fourty-something year old guy". So the Church, it preaches no condoms, but that is nonsense because the condoms are lifesavers for these young girls.[57]

I'm a Christian, and I like to believe I'm a born-again. Look at the relationship between Mary and Martha, that relationship. Back then, it still appears a very holistic, innocent relationship that happened between two women, to the extent that one touches the other's tummy while she is pregnant, and then the baby moves. You see that bond? But if that relationship happens nowadays, one can be killed as a stabane, you see? So everything takes us back to our first point. It's the boxes that I have a problem with. Not seeing people as people, as human beings, you see? Surely we can live better when we are not confined to categories that do not work for us, or categories that are imposed on us, taking away our freedom.[58]

I'm a passionate Christian and I believe that Christians interpret things in the way that they want to. And they're very good at doing that. So I disagree with a lot of Christians. So if they think that they're better Christians than me, then that's ok. I think that Christians should be involved, because we're such influential people. If I as a Christian, if we can also be allowed these platforms to use our voices there.

[57] Interview with Kholiwe

[58] Interview with Zama

And I love one man which is Desmond Tutu, who says, "If god is homophobic, then I do not want to serve that god." He's really outspoken. So how nice is it if you can have Christians that actually don't judge. I mean as people, we can just be, they can let everyone be, and stop judging and all of that. There's a retired bishop here, I can't remember his name. We were in groups and when I am in a group I like to be comfortable and just come out straight away, even if it is not necessary. So, when I told them, everyone was fine and embraced it and were happy that I felt comfortable enough to share that. And the bishop said that, even though he is retired, he feels that it is his calling that he should return just to preach and open space for homosexuals in churches. He believes that he should do that, he should go into the other places and meet with all the elders of the church, all the people with influence, and speak with them. And I looked at him, and he quite an old man, and I think that if we can get more people that are brave like this. I believe that you are born with feelings, no-one can teach you how to feel. I was very serious in Church growing up, so even my pastor would call me BG, which stands for boy-girl. So my pastor and his wife would call me BG, so I grew up being called BG.

And I would say that [my mom] also knew. But you know how parents are, she's one of those people that, if she has something that is disturbing to her, she will rather go to her bedroom and then pray about it. I'm not sure but I assume that's what she did (laugh).

Now what do my ancestors say about me being homosexual? For me, it's got nothing to do with ancestors. And if the people fight it using Christianity, like this is evil, god will punish you and whatever; I mean they are actually fighting a battle bringing in the wrong tools. If you're telling me you think it's wrong, tell me your reasons apart from using all these other things that are like fancying it up (laugh). Why put god into it, why put nationality into it, why put race into it?

It's not African? What is it then? Is it western? And if my ancestors, or the elders of my family believe that they need to perform a ritual to actually curse whatever demon that is inside of me, then that is their problem. They can slaughter as many cattle as they want, nothing is going to change.[59]

It's not that I want to change everything about religion; I just question some beliefs. I question why people believe what they believe; like some people say they will burn in hell if they do not do this and that. Often people believe things because they are afraid, afraid of the unknown. For me, it is better to listen to one's self. Your own voice inside you will tell you what is right or wrong for you, you must stay in touch with yourself. So, if I don't hurt anyone, then how can that be wrong what I do? So if I come out to my mother and she feels pain when I tell her, that's a different kind of pain; it is a pain where she is acknowledging the reality. But it's not the kind of pain where I want to hurt someone. But if I intentionally lie about being lesbian, and then my mother is hurt, then that is what is wrong.[60]

3.2. SPEAKING ABOUT SEXUALITY

Especially in Africa they have this perception that being gay is unAfrican. So with my films, I'm telling the stories in Zulu. In the past, with people doing documentaries, they were always in English, and the people that would watch these films were people who were open-minded, the academics, and I felt that was not powerful enough, it was not creating the impact that I wanted. It's not reaching the people that I want. So I thought, ok, let me be controversial, let

[59] Interview with Aviwe

[60] Interview with Mandisa and Noxolo

me use my mother-tongue, let me use Zulu, let me use these words that people are afraid to use. And I started shooting these films. Most of my stories are actually true stories, real-life stories of real, lived experiences. And in the past, they used to show these films only at strictly gay film festivals, and I thought, no this is not good, showing it only at a gay film festival because nearly only gay people are going to be there. So I've been submitting my films to mainstream film festivals, and that's when I started realising that, what I'm doing, we need more people to do it. Because debates start, and people start questioning, people who are uncomfortable about this thing because it's in their face now. They attend this festival, and there is a gay story line, and then they will sit, because number one it's in a language they understand better, and it's controversial. And afterwards when I have Q 'n A, there are people who insult me. But that's what I want, I want to have that debate. Yes, I get people talking.[61]

Masturbation? - In African culture is a strict taboo. They think there's something wrong with you. Even if everyone does it, they will never admit it. "No-no-no, that is sick; sleeping with your own hand. No-no-no-no." They don't do it. They will rather rape a young girl than do that. It's considered to be a sin. It's something dirty. You don't do it. You don't do it. People are like, "Eeugh, are you sick? Are you that desperate? There are young girls here." Especially here in the Eastern Cape, they don't wait until a girl is a certain age. Here, it's like if it's after the age of twelve, it is lunch; if it bleeds, it is right. And if you can see the breasts, that means it's ripe, you know? Even here, right here, here, it's considered normal, I'm talking about this place right here. There are thirty-something year olds, guys, who are seeing fourteen year olds, and they don't see anything wrong with that. Even their parents, they don't see anything wrong with that, they accept it. But it goes back to, to back in the day, because back in

[61] Interview with Mthoko

the day, girls used to marry at a very young age, thirteen/fourteen, and they used to marry old men. When the men used to go up to Jo'burg and work and work and make money, and then they'd come back and see these young girls, they'd speak to their parents, "Hey, I want that girl, here's the money." And then they would actually go and take the daughter. Ja, they'd be married off without the girl's consent. But now that has been abolished officially. It is illegal but still it happens.[62]

But at the moment, my [younger] daughter is doing great. You know, I'm becoming the counsellor in my house. Because I learn. The school books, the Life Sciences textbook, the pictures, they are not accurate mos, the female genitals, the vagina in the book looks like a child's puzzle with a piece missing, you know? So I learn how to explain it easier to her, because she's in that stage now, you know? So we talk openly about boyfriends, "Ok, I must just talk to her on this today." And then I will ask, "How do you know this?" And then she will tell me how she know, then we will discuss.[63]

[PA: What is the Xhosa term for lesbian?] It is *isitabane* – we say *stabane*. [PA: And what is transgender?] Transgender, we call them *italase*. No, that word is for intersex. I'm not sure, actually. [PA: The term for a man who loves other men is also *stabane*?] He is also *stabane*, or we use just imoffie. It is not such a nice word. But let me explain. If someone calls me *stabane*, I'm like, "You can call me *stabane*, fine". I mean, I don't really take offence to them. Because I'm thinking, if they say homosexual; I mean, I don't expect a woman from the village to relate to the term homosexual, but if I'm called a *stabane*, and she relates to that, then she's able to ask me questions, then that's what I want - to educate. That's what I'm about. So, if they relate to it in a negative

[62] Interview with Mandla

[63] Interview with Khanyiswa

way, I try to turn it around. You'd be surprised how many times I find myself in this conversation that I didn't really want to enter. Because I will hear someone saying something and I immediately get involved. And I make it a point that that person gets educated.[64]

3.3. CHALLENGING DISCRIMINATION

If I say "become lesbian", I guess it's a matter of how I am using words. So there's this expectation that you have to say it in front of others, so that everybody can know. But other people never come to me and say, "Listen, I think I'm straight."

My father passed away when I was little. My mother had a stroke when I was young. Ok, I think I have to start like this:

I am number eleven, I come after ten siblings. So by the time I was able to understand my sexuality, my mother was very old. So I never actually came up to my mom and my dad. But my sisters, not all of them but some of them, they just started to know because I started coming home with girls. And then they started speaking about it, so slowly, slowly.

It's expected that you talk about it because it's not seen as normal. So this is when you say you became a lesbian, when you spoke openly about it. So other people will be, "Ah, she slept with a woman, so that means she's lesbian". And after time you get used to how people treat you. For example, I was walking with this girl, and then there was this fence we had to jump over, and I jumped. She tried but she couldn't manage, she was thin, she was struggling. So I helped her,

[64] Interview with Aviwe

and she looked at me with puzzled eyes, saying 'No, I can do it'. But then she was struggling, so I offered a hand. I did it automatically because I see myself as stronger; as somehow more masculine than her. So there's this thing of stereotypes; we all fall into these stereotypes of how things should function, and that's where the violence happens, when we get stuck fast and become rigid in our stereotypes. So I guess that woman was thinking, "Oh, she thinks she's a man now, or what?" You know? These are purely assumptions (laugh).[65]

Ah, I would say no, [I don't face much discrimination]. But we differ as humans. Ah, I always say to a lot of my friends, I'm not better but I'm different to them. As much as when I'm sitting with my friends, in Zulu when you say "my man", you say *mfethu*, you know? So when I'm sitting with my friends, it is fine for them to call me *mfethu*, and I also say *mfethu* back. But when I'm on the street, I wouldn't ah, freak out because a guy says to me, "hey my sister". That's another issue that other lesbians also confuse. Because as much as uh, I'm dressed as a guy, but I'm my mother's daughter, I'm my brother's sister, I'm my niece's aunt, you know? I'm a girl.

So, sometimes other lesbians walk in the streets and another young guy says "sorry sister"; and even the guy, when he's sincere and kind, she will answer, "Hey, don't call me your sister". So it also depends on how open-minded, how sophisticated are you, for you to be able to deal with it.

As I say, my sexuality doesn't define me. I always attend the LGBTI events because I feel that through my writing, I can be a voice of the voiceless. When I write a story saying no to homophobia, I'm doing it for the others. It is not only to do with me. You'll find lesbians that um, when they go to places, the first thing that they want to

[65] Interview with Mandisa and Noxolo

be known for is, "Hey, I'm lesbian". Me, I'm just Londeka Dlamini. When I walk into a place looking for a job, I present what's on my CV, what qualifications I have. When I go out with people, I can sit with guys, girls, whether they are straight or whatever, pink or yellow, I go and mingle with people and learn new things from other people. As a result, I hang out with intelligent people. So, going back to your question of whether I face discrimination; I think it has also to do with the way I carry myself. I don't speak against people who have baggy jeans, but you'll never find me with my jeans on my knees, no way. I must always look good; when I'm wearing my shirt, or I'm just wearing my T-shirt, my shorts, I look good, you know? So other lesbians and gays, they tend to overdo things. Gays want to be girly more than girls, lesbians want to be male more than men, you know? Some lesbians were not born with a bold voice like mine. Ok maybe it's also because I smoke. But you find that some women, when they talk, they want to speak in a deep voice. That's shit (laugh). Of course we can see you're lesbian but stop coming up with a funny voice now, you know? No, be yourself. Be yourself. Be yourself.[66]

Penelope: Why are masculine/ feminine roles adopted in same-sex relationships?
Noxolo: Because of the stereotypes that we come from as well
Penelope: Because we grow up in a society with similar expectations?
Noxolo: Yes, and there are all the names, like the butch one, and the
Mandisa: The lipstick lady
Noxolo: Ag, it's just one of these things (laugh)
Mandisa: Ja, now I'm quiet for a moment. The truth hurts (laugh)
Noxolo: They are just names

Mandisa: But for me, dressing like the way I do, it's just like to emphasize, it's to say, "Don't even think about it. Don't say hi baby

[66] Interview with Londeka

to me, or something". So if you're a man, you can see straight away that's a lesbian, I mustn't go for her. I guess I'm just rebellious, I don't want to be treated like I am a flower. So I think that if I dress like this, men will leave me alone. They know I can walk by myself, I can lift a table, you know? I can open my own door. So it's sort of like that I rebel. I don't want to be treated like I'm fragile.[67]

I think it's the way we grew up, really, it's very dominating, and it's not easy to just get out of that, it's like a spell. You grow up, first, when you were a girl you had pink rompers. Mom brings toys, a tea set, a baby doll, you know? So it's something installed as you are growing up. And then we grow up around heterosexuals, you see how the father is being treated, and the behaviour of the mother. So when one is getting to understand his or her sexuality, it will be related to what is around me when I am growing up. I feel more comfortable if I behave the way my dad is being treated. It's so nice! You are getting entertained, ne? Then one identifies her sexuality. And then, the minute one identifies that, well, ok one will have those denial thoughts and whatever. But I see my father, I see myself being my father, so all the behaviours will be with that thought. Then I want to have a girlfriend who will behave like my mom. But right through having girlfriends, you always have your father or your brother as a role model in your mind. So, that's wjat everything leads to. But, as we have the workshops and the trainings, that makes us to touch base with the reality, and to understand our sexuality. Because one can say "Yes, I'm a lesbian" but, you have to understand sexuality. What is it exactly? You have to differentiate between the sexuality and the gender. The more we speak about it, the more people will become open, it's the more they able to take what they feel and think is right for them.[68]

[67] Interview with Mandisa and Noxolo

[68] Interview with Zama

Oh, that has never been done before in our culture. I mean a traditional wedding has never been done before. And I don't think that it can be done. It can't, it's impossible because of the clans and everything. It's impossible. They can only get married the white way, they can't do the traditional wedding. Ok, but back to the roles. The younger women with the cooking Then the small girls carry the plates, and so it goes. Each and everyone has their roles. And when it comes to the sangomas, I mean now the diviners, they have no sex, there are no males, no females, and everybody is treated equal. They wear the same skirt. There is no sex with the sangomas. Just like with the ancestors there is no sex, because the body rots and the soul carries on. So with the diviner there is no sex, they are just amagqirha. They dress the same, they look just the same.[69]

For instance, I don't see myself as being with a butch, and I'm not a butch, I'm a dyke, I call myself dyke, but I don't want to be with someone who is also a dyke. And I do not do too femme, I don't want the nails and the whatnot. That's not for me, that's like someone screaming, "Aaaahhh" (laugh). So it's not that I think that I'm a man and then the other one, she should be a woman. Because that would mean I'm not a woman who loves other women. I make that fact very clear, that I am a lesbian and love other women, and that shouldn't be confused. But I feel comfortable being dressed like this, and I don't feel comfortable being with another woman who dresses the same like me. For me, it is as simple as that. But there are some women, some couples here in SA, not really a lot, that are femme to femme, or dyke to dyke, and I think some people are still confused about it, I think they still need to be educated, even within the homosexual circles. Because they will be like, "I will nevernevernevernever sleep with a dyke or a butch".

[69] Interview with Mandla

So I'm not saying I will never have sex with them. But I don't want to be in a relationship with a dyke or a butch. So, and I will ask them, what happens when you undress, don't you both have breasts, a pussy; I know mos, that's what you're looking for (laugh). So I will never be so adamant. I think that's where they're confused now. They're taking the sexuality to a level of dress code, or whatnot. It's just stupid.

Because you can get women who sleep with other women without being categorised, or put in a particular box, you just sleep with a woman and you don't even identify as a lesbian; you're just a woman sleeping with another woman, getting pleasure.

For me, I think my excuse is that I grew up dressing like a man. I don't know who came up with the idea of saying, "Women's section here, and men's section there". Pink, blue; why? But someone came up with that. It didn't just fall out from the sky. Even back in the day, when you look at the men from the bible, they used to wear just these long robes, there was no pants. But someone decided to get clever now, and decided ok, I'm going to put my signature to this thing, this dress code.[70]

I'll tell you the truth, even within the LGBTI community, you'll find that there's often no support among each other. We have a support group in my area. I [co-founded] the Eastern Cape LGBTI group. We started having meetings in our flats, and then we started growing. We saw ok, had someone who was coming from Engcobo, of which is far from East London. Then I said ok, we need to try and organise our meetings. We approached clubs because you know where there's a gathering of five people or more, there's alcohol around, you see? So I said ok, we have places where we chill as friends and drink. How

[70] Interview with Aviwe

about talking to the owners? We know that certain places are busy from 6pm down the night, but around about 12pm it's quiet, they are cleaning. So what about getting that time slot and meet there? That's how the movement started in the Eastern Cape.

We started like that, and then we grew and grew, and now we've got about eight branches around the Eastern Cape. But unfortunately we don't have a structure, of which it's really a dent. Because there are people who come with very personal things which not only affects them but affects the whole family. So they need to reach someone all the time to talk to. But I can't be in more than one place. So, when we are talking, we find that because ok there comes a femme lesbian, she's wearing her mini-skirt, her skinny shirt. If this person comes back the following day and says "I was raped", we are the first people to say, "You attracted that rape towards you, the way you were dressing". Forgetting now, that this person is sharing this because she wants the support from us. Forgetting that she had a right to wear like the way she wanted. It's very hot outside. Why not wear something that will cool you off, you see?[71]

Xenophobia is the fear of the unknown. So one man can be aggressive because he's afraid of something he doesn't know. When they look at the butch woman, the approach, the presentation, all of it, I think it really provokes and dents their ego, because you are stepping in their own zone. At the same time, they will want to prove you wrong, that you are not one of us; you are a woman. I'm not saying there's a room or a line that says "don't jump on this side", but we behave more like men up until we remember that there's a vagina between our legs, sorry to use this language.

[71] Interview with Zama

Yes, we grew up in a society whereby women, they used to be indoors by the early hours of the night. But now, we are walking any time we want. The problem, it's not that we understand our Constitution that says we are free to do that; it's just that we do things excessively. For example, we think we can drink up until it's late, or that we can be smoking, walking in the street just because we're wearing these men's clothes. You know? Whereby you'll find that we are in a club, late at night, I'm drinking with these people, going to the loo, coming back, drink their beer, smoke their cigarettes, I don't have money, you know? That's behaviour that we need to control. I think we try too hard to be to be accepted, you see? Whereas these people are not yet comfortable with us around. One has to be able to determine, "Here, am I accepted, or am I tolerated?" I always see the environment that I'm growing up in. Because I'm not only representing myself as this lesbian person.[72]

3.4. (IN)VISIBILITY: BREAKING STEREOTYPES

I'm trying to enter a competition for gender equality in Sweden. Taking pictures is the way I tell my story, I love taking pictures, it's how I met Zanele [Muholi], my home girl. I grew up very quiet, so I thought my camera would be my mouth. I realised "Ok, I've wasted a lot of my years, because many things that happened, that I know if maybe if I'd said something, it was going to change. "Zama, say something, you are not ok. Talk. You are not ok, you are boiling now. Talk." And then I started talking, and people started listening to me; and then I saw my input being valuable and changing things, and I thought ok, I have to talk more now, so ja (laugh). I was very shy but ja, I grow into it. And then I saw ja, there is a change, there is an

[72] Interview with Zama

impact. Ja it's small but it's there. So I started talking, and then, here I am now, and I talk on behalf of many.[73]

Yes, there have been a lot of cases on TV, lesbians who have been raped and killed, stabbed with bottles and knives and what-what, you know? I go to this shebeen down the road. And it is dominated by men. But I go there with Noxolo. And all the men there know us because we've been going there for years now, just this particular place. And they're mostly married men, some not, but you hardly get boys under twenty-five or so, it's mostly older men up to seventy years or so. The younger guys are more homophobic. So if I become friends with one guy, then that guy knows the other guy, and he will say, "Hey Mandisa, I don't understand this thing of you being lesbian. I like you, but not other lesbians" (laugh). You see? And I'm sure it happens to other lesbians, where they get understood by their closest family members and friends, but not when it comes to other people. So it's like that. And you know, it's a competition as well; like if I go out with Noxolo, I have to slap a few others who stare at her too much (laugh). I'm kidding. I mean, if you come to this shebeen with your hot girl, it's like you've invaded their space, you took what is theirs. Men in general, since the beginning of the world, they feel superior to women. Maybe it's as a result of how our bodies are designed, I don't know, but they tend to think they need to run the world, make decisions for this-that-this. So if there is war, it is men who make it and go fight. So it seems that they see it as, "This is our world and we will rule it as we want to". So that is when the violence is coming.[74]

Ok. Now, I went back to home to fetch my daughter. We went to Dora [Nginza Hospital], there's a centre there, Thuthuzela [care centre]. And then from there, I asked this lady, "Is there any place that I can just find

[73] Interview with Zama

[74] Interview with Mandisa and Noxolo

a place just to just to talk. I need to find a person just to listen to me. I just take my daughter to that door, then I would sit there. And then you will find about six people, and then you will know, they are in the same situation that you are in. But we don't talk. We just sit there. So I ask this lady now, because I know now, I can feel also, I'm drained. I just need to confide in someone, how I feel exactly. Because now, in my house, I can't just crumble in front of my child. I must be strong. To my daughter I must be stronger. At work, I must focus on what I'm doing. At night it haunts me. I can't sleep. I couldn't even pray. For two months. Because now, I was feeling guilty, I was feeling ashamed. I ask god, "Where were you when this happened?" I feel guilty but I know I done everything to protect my child. Because that's my first reason I took my daughter to school there near my work. I want to work in peace. Knowing that after school she is by me. During the day, she's at school. After school, she's by me. That's the only reason. I didn't want her to wander in the location after school. So, I have so many questions, but I don't know who to ask. But I want answers. I used to talk to my child, for her to feel peace. But inside I was crumbling. And then one night there was a documentary on the TV, The Cutting Edge, on SABC 1. There was a story of an old lady who was raped in the Transkei. And she was relating the story on the TV. I was alone that night, and I was crying and crying at that night. And after that, I was praying. That was the first night, after all that months I didn't pray. It was the first night I pray. I ask god to give me strength. But I am just hoping that people will learn to speak with each other openly. Because even if in your community, you got a stigma, your child has a stigma, even the friends will say, "That child was raped, I forgot her name". She will remember what happened to the child, although she doesn't know her name. You see? I am hoping that I will erase that [that it's not such a stigma] I wish people will learn more, so that they can really talk openly about it. So that they know it's not your fault. You will find now a woman who will be in her 70s or 60s. She was scared her whole life. She buried this secret with her. She didn't find the courage to talk to anyone about it.

Then she will die with that secret. Just because she hide from that, she knows she will die with that secret. So at least I'm coping. I'm coping.[75]

Using what I learned from my studies at DUT [Durban University of Technology] and the programme at the Big Fish School of Digital Filmmaking, I shot this 16-minute documentary (Paving Forward). In South Africa, there's many very creative gay people who are scared and who form a collective, "We've got talent, why don't we use our work, our art" and that's what we're doing. Some people are doing film, some are doing theatre pieces, songs, cause we're part of the community, it's not like we're separate people. We are part of the community. And we're normal, that's what I want to stress, that the LGBTI community is part of society, even if we are all so different in our own ways.

My film ['Paving Forward'] was real, because that moment when we were shooting, we went to Nosipho's house, and she was the one who actually put pressure on me to record her and her family. When I was in the editing process, I thought this could be very bad if I bring this to people out there, I mean the family is all there, the faces are not blocked. But they all gave me permission. They said, "No, it's fine, do it, show it out there". Nosipho was fine from the start but I was worried about the kids, how would they feel, having their mother's face all over festivals and some of their faces all over. But they didn't mind as well. That's one thing I was criticised about, that scene, they thought that it was a bit selfish of the mother, Nosipho, exposing her family like that. Especially in that space, it was intimate. But then when I explained, they understood; it was her choice, and the children were fine with it. And before I showed it publicly, they first viewed it, and they were, "No, go ahead, it is fine". Now the daughter is close to the mother; they started learning and accepting the mother

[75] Interview with Khanyiswa

better. They accepted her. Even the son who walked out in the film, he moved back. So everything is fine. And those are the kind of stories that I want to bring out. Because who would have thought Nosipho's lesbian? She's in her fifties, and she doesn't have the stereotypes of being a lesbian. Because that's what they think, that to be lesbian you have to dress in a certain way. 'Paving Forward' looks also at the role political figures play in perpetuating homophobia and pays homage to the activists. From shooting this film I learnt that LGBTI people are still not free to live their lives without society being negative towards them.

FIGURE 8. Mthokozisi Lembethe (2012). *Paving Forward*[76]

[76] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8y3xsXlibSw, accessed: 07. Jan. 2017

What touched me was when I was in Canada, in Montreal, I was there at a film screening, and one guy from Jamaica came to me and wanted a copy of 'Paving Forward'. This guy was heterosexual, and he said no, he learned something he wasn't aware of, and he would like to have a copy of 'Paving Forward', he's going to take it to Jamaica, cause Jamaica is very homophobic, very homophobic, and he'll go there and show it to his friends and the people around him. I did give him a copy, and later he emailed me and told me that the story really touched them, it made a huge impact, he said, because it was such a personal story. And it's these little things for me, like at least it's reaching out to people, and that's what I want.

And there are a whole lot of untold stories out there. There are so many more stories to tell. We have a long road to travel still. I believe I have a social responsibility as a filmmaker to be the voice of the people and tell stories that will create a change in society.

But I must say, in South Africa we are very lucky, that's something that we are lucky about, compared to other African countries. We are very lucky here, because we can walk around the streets freely; even if some people pass insults, but the fact that you can walk around, be open. You can do films, we can have festivals; we can have gay marches. You go to Uganda, go to Zimbabwe. At least we've got that freedom. I won't say that everything's fine but we must acknowledge that freedom that at least we can do these things. When I was in Zimbabwe at a film festival, they had to hide; they couldn't advertise that this was an LGBTI event, because they told me that the last time they had an event, the police came into the hall and started beating everyone who attended. So now they don't advertise, they do everything in secret. So they invited me to go and share my experiences doing films, cause they've been inspired by what I've been doing, and they were screening my films there. And I went there. And so for me, reaching out is so important. Now some people have been

inspired and they are doing their own stories. There are many platforms, YouTube for example; you don't have to have big budgets. You can just do your story with a simple camera. Those are the stories that touch people the most.

The stereotypes; I'm trying to break those stereotypes. That's what it's all about. If we can just come together in the community, and not exclude ourselves from society. We've been hurt for so long, and I understand why people want their safe space. But it's also important to claim our space within society, we are part of society, we are not like separate aliens from somewhere. Because when I was young, still studying, we used to go to strictly gay clubs, strictly gay this and that; but then I started to think, "No, this is actually not helping; why don't you go to other clubs?" Some of my friends, you can just tell by their appearance that they are gay. So we will go to a club where there are heterosexual people around, and people will notice that that's a gay table. But what I like is that the more we do that, the more they start interacting with us, laughing; and some of them start opening up and asking, "We don't understand, what exactly is going on?" And then you can have a dialogue. That's where awareness and education comes about. Because if we put ourselves in our own corner, nothing will come of that. So that's the kind of thing I've been up to. And maybe all of this leads to nothing, and maybe all this crime, these hate crimes will stop. But it's worth trying. That's what I think.[77]

We can only say we are grateful that there is a Constitution that is very beautiful but who accesses those rights? So now, trying to get the rights that are listed, that are accessible to everyone and that are used; and they are very clear and transparent to everyone in SA. I think there is a path that we all need to take as activists. Rather than

[77] Interview with Mthoko

to say we need names to put us in, or to categorise us. I don't like to be a special case. I want to walk in the room and fit like a hand in a glove. If someone picks something from me, it should be my behaviour, my principles, the way I present myself. But not to be a special case like a white or a red whereas everyone is wearing black, I don't like that. Yes, I understand the path whereby we need to empower our society. But our society, the minute we always justify our behaviour, our sexuality, it's like we make ourselves special cases, than to go straight to what is the challenge that we are facing, as human beings, in South Africa among human beings? If someone kills a woman because the woman sleeps with another woman, then let's deal with that issue, rather than putting the category "It's a hate crime, it's because it's a lesbian." That's something else. But let's find the reason - how can we get support, justice for this person being attacked or being killed, as a human being, in South Africa, like any other human being. I think we need to focus our energy in that direction.

You'll go and talk about same-sex marriage, you go to Home Affairs office. And because of different approaches, you find that that people will say no they know nothing about it, it's because they are in the Cala area in the Eastern Cape, not a single couple they know of the same-sex people, let alone who comes in and requires the service. [As] activists, you are leading but the people that you are leading they are faaar behind. So we can put everything in place of which is surely the budget will be involved and what-not. It's like many a time you talk of the dental dams, finger domes, you'll go to the Dep. of Health, there are no finger domes here; there are no dental dams.

Ok, let's buy the femidoms, let's buy the finger domes, let's buy the dental dams, for prevention of STIs and HIV in this clinic. They all come, all the latex, they come with the expiry date. They get expired because no-one comes in and requires them.

You know, there is that gap, and it is very much ignored, and it's what really bothers me as an individual. So we still have a lot of things that we need to take care of. When I first implemented my services as an activist, I was bothered that many things are happening in big cities like Johannesburg. The likes of the amendments that were done on the Constitution that allows our freedom, it was not shared and it was not taken to the rural areas, that was my concern. But you were there to do that part. But unfortunately we couldn't go deep as much as we love to [The Constitution] is not owned by the people. And the rural areas, they are really ignored. The rural area people, they only see the government people when the elections are nearby.[78]

Thinking back, like thinking about it, there's always been like, there's always been that elderly woman whose always best friends with another elderly woman, and they actually stay together, you never see a man. Nobody speaks about it, but now that you think about it, they were actually a couple, back in the day. When I was growing up as a kid, I remember these two old women. I remember they were staying together, they had no kids. Unmarried but they lived together, and they weren't sisters, they weren't family. Now that I'm grown up, I know they were a couple. And even if the family knew about it, they would hide it. Even now, it's like, "Eeugh, you're embarrassing us". I mean, I can only speak about my own culture, the Xhosa culture. My own culture is based on morals. Respect and dignity. And you know your place in society. If something happens like your daughter becomes lesbian, you're going to try to beat it out of her. You don't understand what it is because nobody speaks about it.[79]

[78] Interview with Zama

[79] Interview with Mandla

Yes, I know for a fact that homosexuality has always been there. You hear stories from other people that actually are honest enough, when you sit around and drink with these women in the village, and they will tell you that, "Sjoe, I used to be close to this woman, and for some reason we would kiss, we didn't know why we were kissing." When I met them, I didn't know they were a couple, they were from a village in the Transkei, I think she was born in the late 1950s. And now the way I got to know her, I was friends with her children. So, when we got there, they were watching a movie, the mother and the children. So now, as we're sitting down, there's this old woman, I think even maybe my granny's age. She walks in with a saucer and a glass of wine, serving the mother, and I think, "Oh shame, this old woman, she must be the domestic worker here." And we continue with the movie. So, we go for a smoke outside, me and one of my friends, "Just out of curiosity, that old woman, does she work here? Why is she still out at this time? Why can't she get off? Why can't the children be serving their mother now?" My friend says, "What are you talking about? That's her partner." And I'm like, "No, surely not?"

This woman used to be a domestic worker for the husband and the wife, and it came to a point when she said to her husband that she will never fire this woman and she's going to be sleeping with me in bed and you can sleep in the other room. Old people mos, they always sit on top of their things, they always hide their things, they never tell outside.

It was accepted even within the husband's family because they didn't want to be that broken family, where there was divorce and all of that. That was like a must mos, in the village, you cannot divorce and all of that; even if your husband is cheating, you must just sit there. So now it was the other way around. And the husband couldn't leave the woman because of that, it would be like news in the village. And some people actually knew about it and they still accepted it, those

people are still together even now. And that man never left his wife. So you see, even in the rural villages of the Eastern Cape.[80]

Mandisa: You know, there's a story that I was told a few times by older women. The older women, they say that before, when men used to go and fight and hunt and whatnot; you know they used to marry four or five wives, and when they were away for these couple of months, the women, the wives would start sleeping together.

Noxolo: Of course, I think there have always been same-sex relations. The old people sometimes tell us that when we ask them. But these relationships were hidden. They are simply more visible now.[81]

3.5. FINDING SUPPORT

I guess it's the strong that need to go ahead and for me that's what I've decided, I'm going to live my life the way I feel is good for me. Along the way, if I get insulted, and I do get insults, even from family, but I'm not going to be depressed and crying all the time. Whether they like it or not, this is how I am and I am not asking for people to accept me, I am not asking, "Please accept me." No. I'm just living my life. It's either accept it or don't.[82]

But now, there comes a church also in your life. So, growing up, going to church, it came to me, "Ok, let me just read up on what was said in church today. And by doing that, you grow spiritually. It makes you, it gives you peace inside. It makes you oversee most of the things that

[80] Interview with Aviwe

[81] Interview with Mandisa and Noxolo

[82] Interview with Mthoko

went wrong in your life. I will say now, as god is your pillar, you can go through everything. You let go of your anger; it doesn't matter whether you are angry at your parents, you are angry at your environment that you grew up in. But you being close to god makes you enough. Makes you not to want to ask questions. That's the way, that's how I grew up. It gives me strength every day. I'm thankful that god is there. I find myself easily to pray, and I ask god for things, and I know for sure what kind of things I must ask god to give me. Because now, there are certain things to keep in mind when you pray. There are things you must be patient with. But I ask god every day to give me grace. I ask god every day to give me bravery. I ask god to give me faith. I ask god to give me a voice, an eye to see, and the strength to help other people that went through hardship. And then you find your strength also in god. Because if you believe in prayer, god will just clear your mind. Then you'll see the things with another eye. You see the situation now change. I tell myself, "Today could be worse, but I know tomorrow won't be the same, and the day after that won't be like yesterday."[83]

I was always asking god to help me. To give me strength for my son. I didn't want to show [my son] my tears; that I'm in pain. Even people at my church, they used to say to me, "Hey, you know how to pray." Because the pain, all the pains were coming from a thing which is very very difficult for a human being. Thank god for helping me to be strong. I'm thanking god for saving me, for saving my life. And my son's life.[84]

[W]hen the incident happened, I came here, and I got help here. Here I got some sort of, healing, you see? From speaking with the social workers and psychologists here [Rape Crisis].[85]

[83] Interview with Khanyiswa

[84] Interview with Nonyaniso

[85] Interview with Nomsindo

So it's where I found this place [Rape Crisis], through this lady in court. Then this lady say to me, "You know, mama? There's a number I'm gonna give you. You must phone this person. It's a place where you can just say whatever you feel." I'm very thankful for that, I'm very thankful for that. That whenever I want to talk, I phone here. Sometimes it will be a missed call but then [someone] will phone back. "Is there something I can help you with?" Then I will say, "Ja, I need to come here". I don't mind with whom I talk here. It makes me feel peace inside, I can sleep at night. It's really boosts me. I don't know how will I cope if I didn't come here. Because now, it's not just sitting and talk. After you talk, they will tell you now how to handle this, how to do this, how to go about this. The first day I came here, they embraced me. I used to cry! You can see mos now it's better. It's not as if I don't feel hurt. But I'm strong enough to stand up to tell the story that I went through, through this place. And now when Boniswa went for her sessions, sometimes she'll come home calm. Sometimes she'll come home more frustrated. And I couldn't understand. I will ask her now, "What did you say there?" And she says, "I just tell that lady how I feel." "Can't you tell me too?" "Mommy, sometimes I don't really know how to tell you exactly. But when I'm there, that mama really understands me." And I want to understand her too. Because now, there's a school work, there's a chores at home that she must do. And I want her also to be in church, I want her also to participate in church, you see? So, I really want to understand her. But I couldn't until I came here myself. Because I would ask, "How can I reach [my child]? How to, what questions must I ask her? Or what must I say to her, to see her from her side?" They will support me, they will take me stage by stage. They even help me now, how to read her, just to see, ok today she is happy, today she withdraw. Because she used to have nightmares. I used to let the light on the whole night. She used to wet the bed. Because now, it's not something where we can just apply a lotion, then it's fixed. It's emotional, it is inside, and you

can't tell yourself, "Don't think that." So, I never stop coming here; I found peace. Here, I found myself.[86]

I'm thanking this Rape Crisis, it helped me a lot. It helped me a lot. Nowadays, at home, if I hear someone is hurt, I'm like, "Come sit here", and I listen to them. I don't want to stop coming here, I don't want to stop. Even my son, when I said I'm coming here this morning, he says, 'Oh, I miss that woman, I also want to go there'. (laugh) I say, 'Ok, when I get a chance, I will take you there', because they provide a good service. Sjoe.[87]

The sex change [sex reassignment surgery] which I started in 2016; I'm the first one that I know of who is starting this procedure. At some point, I had to sit down and think about the changes that are coming through in my life. So now, I am going to a psychologist. And I said to myself, whatever changes that are going to come, I have to overcome them, because I'm a very strong woman, I am a very very strong woman. I have realised that when there were serious issues [in the past] that would usually tear people down, I mean, I was like, "Ja? Get over it now and move on." And then I did. I was like, "Just like that? God, I'm so brave". It's that huge strength I have, to continue being that person that I wanted to be, that I am.[88]

Actually my son got mentally disturbed from the problems in my marriage. I couldn't sleep, I was up and down the whole night; I didn't know where he is at night. He would come home, disturbed. I had to call the ambulance. Remember I've got these painful things that are happening in my marriage, you see? I was in tears, I had no shoulder to cry on. The person whose shoulder I should cry on at home, was

[86] Interview with Khanyiswa

[87] Interview with Nonyaniso

[88] Interview with Marsha

the one who was also killing me emotionally. It was very painful. But I am very very strong. I am very stong. Sjoe, I am very strong. I'm taking my son now to the physiotherapist at another hospital, at Provincial. I was sleeping in chairs in the hospital the whole night. Five days in hospital, sleeping there. I was changing him, buying new nappies, putting nappies on him. The hospital doesn't always have the nappies. Imagine. I don't work then, I have borrow money from people. You see? And my husband, when he went away from the house, I have to go and ask for maintenance. And he refused to give me maintenance. It was very painful, sjoe, it was very very painful. Sjoe, it was very painful. I'm trying to heal now because I know I am strong.[89]

3.6. WHERE DOES THE VIOLENCE COME FROM?

Back in the day, my mom walked miles and wasn't afraid to sleep anywhere, she says wasn't afraid of being attacked. My mother and other young girls used to walk around with bare breasts and men didn't attack them. They didn't dare. Now? There's a break-down of values and social decorum, no self-control, and also not enough control from the authorities, I mean accountability. There are so many people unemployed, the father drunk, no space, frustrated, no social control or values. My guess is that there was much less rape going on back in the day. And if it did happen the *makhulus*, the old women, would take off their tops, bare their breasts - which is usually taboo for older women - and go to the house of the man who had assaulted the woman. And they would wail obscenities at his house, banging their sticks on the roof, and his family would be shamed. He would then have to marry her. I

[89] Interview with Nonyaniso

don't know, maybe this also served a cathartic function, it eased the tension in the village.[90]

Speaking about the social standing of women in her youth as opposed to nowadays, Mama Simons and Londeka give their reasons for the change.

My grandmother was so happy because I as the first-born, was a girl. Because if you have a girl, you have the whole nation. Everything comes from the girl. You might have a boy but without the girl? There must be a girl. Especially in South Africa, because here, girls get married, and the home (laugh) gets lobola.[91] More than the male section, the girls are very very important. They are a treasure. Also they are very strong. They can maintain anything, whether you are married and your husband pass away, the lady will survive. Whether he leaves you with small children, you will look after those forever. But the father cannot do it. Even during that time of apartheid. The women did everything, they would look after the household, when father comes home after six or twelve months, he will find the mother, the money he used to send home, she bought a goat, a sheep, a cow, a pig, towards the livestock. Whilst, when it comes to the ploughing time, the fields depend on the mother, who is going to see the seeds are being grown there, planted, and also she will keep on watering and doing the whole work. So the mother, the wife, she will go out and make bricks out of mud. When the father comes, he will see he went away having one hut, he comes back having a flat. So women are very strong. Women are very strong. They are the backbone of the nation. Without them, nothing can happen.

[90] In conversation with Sizwe between interviews with participants

[91] A form of bride price, paid in cattle or cash, paid to the bride's family

I am very happy to be a woman. I came now some time ago to the period of pension. If you can go in and out here, looking for pensioners, you can find mothers the most active. The fathers, they don't know what to do. They will just visit the shebeen for drinking the beer. Drink all that money for the pension. But the mothers will never do that. She will look for something to do for the community, or also for the family.

I don't want to say the men have low reasoning but their thinking or reasoning is almost average, or below average. Also, they generate laziness. They are very lazy. They are lazy to talk, they are lazy to share. Whilst women do everything. Women are not lazy to talk, they are not lazy to share. Because they have that sympathy. The fathers, they might be strong, but we as women overcome them when it comes to thinking and reasoning. Even the understanding, it will take men much time to understand. If you bring something and say, "How about doing this and this and this, and this way and this way?" They will take long, they will take a longer time to understand that this would be a success at the end. Whilst the ladies, the women, we are already there and done it.

But it's gone the other way. The girls of today, our daughters, they are being overpowered by these boys. Gradually, the female side is losing in the balance. Why? The older days were very very disciplined. We were very disciplined. From age ten to seventeen, as a girl, we wouldn't eat the meat of a goat or a chicken. Eggs, you were not allowed.

So if women ate goat meat, or chicken or eggs, then they would be more sexually active; their sexual appetite would be awakened. Now, when [the girls] reach the teenage years, they are already 'spoilt'. How we see that time [in the past], we see it in the sense of a time of darkness, the Dark Ages. But I see it differently. The restraint on things was a good thing. So apart from the eggs, when a girl had her period, she wasn't

allowed to go anywhere near the *kraal* which is where the men are. She also wasn't allowed to take goat or cow's milk, or amasi. Because while we didn't have a deep explanation as to why, we knew that there was an effect on your body, on how things balance out. So the time of being a young woman, you got time just to sit, and reflect, and, well, in a sense be in a sort of secluded sort of fasting.

Yes, it's where it started to change, with the coming of the people from Europe. It's where the light changed. Now that organic farming is coming back again, what's funny is that the stuff that we had stopped eating, what we started to call weeds and had stopped eating, now that you're using manure, it's springing up again. So now you pick these 'weeds' up with your spinach, so there seems to be a balance that's coming back. And if there can be more discipline, then that imbalance between girls and boys can also be restored.[92]

Um, I think it is lack of understanding, and also the way people are lacking humanity as well. Because really, when you hear such stories, how can a person continue to force himself on you, when you hear that person is crying and screaming but you still continue to do whatever you are doing. So really, it's the lack of humanity within human beings. Also, this thing of homophobia, as I was saying to you it's also a lack of knowledge. And this thing of corrective rape and other corrective incidents come from people saying "Let's go back to the roots. Women used to be like this, men used to be like this." But then they don't understand that I didn't choose to be lesbian. I didn't have the chance to create myself; if I had, I'd be looking like Beyoncé. So, [people] want to take things into their own hands, and they don't want to try and reach out. And people don't understand that our sexuality doesn't define us. I'm maybe lesbian, I'm maybe gay, maybe straight, or whatever. But we are also

[92] Interview with Mama Simons

human. There's more. Behind this lesbian that you see lies a giver, lies a lover, lies a graduate like any graduate here in South Africa, and here lies somebody's child.[93]

No, for me, if anybody is violent in a relationship, it is not okay.

I mean, also, if you're saying that what she did, or what the other person did is wrong, how many things can you beaten up for, for what you are doing that are wrong? So somehow they're always thinking that they can justify the situation, that "I did it because of this". And it is going back to the story that it's more normal for a man to beat a woman, you used to say, "No, it's supposed to be like that". But if the situation were to be reversed, and you will find that a woman is beating up a man, "No. What kind of a woman does that? No, no, no". And we black people even say there's *muti*[94] involved, this woman maybe has bewitched this man. Why, how, can a woman beat a man? Or someone becomes sympathetic, "Oh no man, that's terrible, how can a woman beat a man?" But if it's a woman, no-one gets to be sympathetic about it, you see?

I think it goes back to that notion that it should be like that, a woman should obey a man. Which actually makes me fail to understand. If, especially us black people, we grew up knowing that a woman should, we are raised like that, to believe that which has always been; sorry, I'm going to use the word because you are recording me (laugh) I would curse now. We are actually raised to believe that a woman obeys a man, when a woman serves a man food, you have to kneel down. It's crazy, but you see that is what we think is normal.[95]

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[93] Interview with Londeka

[94] Traditional medicine

[95] Interview with Aviwe

Another thing, the churches. You see, the religious laws also play another role in the mindsets of people.

When you go to church, they say you mustn't wear your pants, you must wear a skirt because you are a girl. And another thing, you must wear a *doek* when you have reached your adult stage. You must cover your head. For what, you know?

And you'll find them say things like, "God created men and women, so that they may procreate, and that the women may give birth and whatawhatawhata". But go back to the same people who say that. They forget that the bible says no child before marriage. So when it suits them, they make babies and multiply. The hypocrisy. You know in Durban, there's a gay church. The pastor is lesbian. If we don't create homes for ourselves, we're going to end up nowhere. Because when you go to the other churches, like the Methodist churches and whatever, if you're gonna walk in there with your trousers it's gonna be like there's no god. People start pointing fingers and forgetting that last week they were preaching and saying, "Come as you are."[96]

Ok. The reason why the government allows same-sex relationships is because they are not believers, they are not men of faith. Because if they were, they would stand by the word of god. And also, not only that; it's the word of god that they try to change. And like Judas Iscariot, these men have been corrupted and then, you know, wealth positions have been made available, so you will find that even people like Desmond Tutu have gone astray. As a minister, it is my job to speak what I feels is the truth. Because even if it is not popular, and even if people will not agree, the truth must be the way that it is. God says in Matthew 28, "Go out and make disciples of all nations", but that there are certain men who, when in positions of power, they

[96] Interview with Londeka

change what the bible says to suit what they believe is right. And I believe that god is not happy with that.

In the Book of Samuel, there are parables in there, paralleling how the apartheid government had to bow like the Israelites had to. If you know your bible, you'll know that the Israelites had to bow to the statue, and they refused to, and then god came and broke through. People make themselves available to satan, to be used by satan to do these things. Because the bible says nowhere that that is ever ok. And then people really allow themselves to fall down and let their lusts take over, so that they selfishly do what they want to other people. The bible says that a man should have but one wife. Then also, the government has failed because it is not at all for righteousness or for faith. And then there is evidence even from the president himself who has many wives. And I don't see how you can love many women. Otherwise you are into really robbing them, you know? There's no way you can maintain legitimate relationships without setting the wives off against each other and being a crook yourself. And also the government should consult with the men of god.

If people have sex before marriage, then they are able to play with each other; then it is like, "Oh, I've tasted you and you and you and I need to taste another one". But if people only sleep with each other once they are married, then they will stay and commit. God cannot do anything because believers themselves are not doing anything, and so god cannot bring change to the nation because we are in different directions. What is needed is for believers not to necessarily be in one place, or in one church, but to be of one spirit, in truth, and admitting their own sins, and then god will hear. And again, the government also needs to turn back to the ways of god.[97]

[97] Interview with Pastor Bhekinkosi

It's not apartheid. It's not apartheid. It's what is with the person. It's what they decide to do. Nowadays we've got freedom, and everyone is free to do everything. So it's maybe that they think they have the right to everything now, you see? During apartheid, it was not like this. But since the people have got their freedom, they think they have a right to everything, and now they think they can do whatever they want to do. And even if they are in prison, they live comfortably; they get everything that they want, unlike in the apartheid times.[98]

Mandisa: Maybe let's cut the stereotypes first. Like that South Africa is the only country that is violent. Maybe we lead in terms of violence when it comes to statistics. But I don't want to think about it like that. When I think of the violence here, I want to ask why is it like that? But now picture this: Your father has been working for a man who has been calling him 'boy', and then he goes home, where he is the leader of the family as the man, and then how do you think he's going to react at home, because like he's going to want to want to show that manhood in himself like, "I'm a man". And then maybe the violence starts, you know, because he needs to prove that he's a man. Even women are violent too when they come from those kind of households where there is a lot of abuse from the father, the drunken uncles and all that. And from the woman it is passed onto her kids so it's like, you know with violence, it's not easy to shake off the person that you have become. So if you have known all your life that it is normal to hit a woman, you have grown up like that, learned from others, then it is not easy to change that behaviour in yourself. And now one feminist will come and say, "No, you cannot hit a woman because of this and this and this." Feminists are women too, so why should a man listen to them if he anyway doesn't respect women?

[98] Interview with Nomsindo

So if there is a problem in the relationship, and you try to talk about it, articulating yourself is hard. No matter what kind of a relationship it is, whether it is mother to daughter, or anything. If you come to a point where you are being asked a question you cannot answer, maybe because you are embarrassed to speak about it. No matter if it is with your wife or your aunty or your child. Then you turn into fighting, because you don't have that ability to defend yourself, or to have a healthy conversation.

I come from a family like that, you know? A very abusive family. I try not to fight all the time myself but it is damn hard (laugh).

Noxolo: I think that's where education comes in, learning to be open-minded.

Mandisa: And that doesn't mean education which goes on to tertiary level, studying textbooks and then you think that's education. I'm talking about just reading in general, and discussing with others, and observing your surroundings, being an active member in your community, making an effort to learn how to resist violence, learning from positive role models who have been through similar journeys and made it through. [PA:] I'm just thinking, since 1996 there is a new Constitution which includes same-sex marriages of people who can also adopt children, for example; the Equality Bill, and other laws which protect the citizens. And yet if you ask people on the street, they often don't know about what is written in the Constitution; or if they do, many don't seem to support it. I hear people speak who have different values, "No, beating my wife is ok", "Bring back the death penalty", and so on. And I'm wondering about this seeming gap.

Mandisa: You know I'm going to twist it to the other side. If I take a can of coke, and I write: do not drink this coke, it is bad for you. How many people are going to stop drinking it? Nobody. Because

they have been drinking it ever since they were young, and it tastes good. So this Constitution, for example in the rural areas, how many people do you think have read the booklet there? We care about what affects us directly. So I myself was thinking they should legalise gay marriages, and then they did. And now I'm fine. Yes, there are many other problems. But do I care about others' struggle of getting four-roomed houses? No. Maybe because I'm not an ANC activist or whatever. So we concentrate on those things that suit our interests. For me, the real problem is the widespread lack of equal education in South Africa. To understand, I have to read first. And that will help me to be articulate in what I want.[99]

[99] Interview with Mandisa and Noxolo

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