She's Not a Bad Girl, Brenda Fassie: Past, Present and Future, A Canon for the Construction of Post-Colonial Feminist Consciousness

Name: Qhama Qwesha
Student Number: 1899133

A research report submitted in fulfilment of the partial requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in African Literature at the University of the Witwatersrand

Supervisor: Danai S Mupotsa (PhD)

July 2023

University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

School of Literature, Language and Media

SENATE PLAGIARISM POLICY
Declaration by Students

I Qhama Qwesha (Student number: 1899133) am a student registered for an MA in African Literature (Coursework and Research Report) in the year 2022. I hereby declare the following:

- I am aware that plagiarism (the use of someone else's work without their permission and/or without acknowledging the original source) is wrong.
- I confirm that ALL the work submitted for assessment for the above course is my own unaided work except where I have explicitly indicated otherwise.
- I have followed the required conventions in referencing the thoughts and ideas of others.
- I understand that the University of the Witwatersrand may take disciplinary action against me if there is a belief that this is not my own unaided work or that I have failed to acknowledge the source of the ideas or words in my writing.

Signature: ____Q.Qwesha_ Date: 19 July 2023

Acknowledgments

I would like to begin by thanking my parents, my dearest mother Qaqamba Mvikweni and my father Mziwonke Qwesha. Mama, you are a gift that keeps on giving, thank you for keeping me going – "agility" sana. Tata, thank you for always encouraging me to be the best. To my siblings, my best friends, Sisonke Qwesha, my eldest brother – oh captain my captain! You know it all. To my younger brothers, Sanele Qwesha and Linjalo Mvikweni, I love you with my whole heart.

I am grateful and forever indebted to my friends, Yanela Frans, Zenande Booi, Unathi Zilwa, Hellman Hlomuka , Sinqobile Makathini, Phumzile Gubanca, Hlomla Sigwela, Zintle Magagula, Ntando Phillips, Sanda Ntshobodwana, Mbali Makalima, Mbali Mbashaba, Aluta Goniwe and Ndalo Mqoqi. Your support and encouragement are something I will never take for granted; you have all held me up at every chance you got. Unathi, Yani, Zennie, Phumi and Snow, I could write a book – you guys are the epitome of sisterhood, everything I have come to know about love, I have learnt from my friendships with you.

To my supervisor, Dr Danai Mupotsa, thank you for not giving up on me and always pushing me to think bigger and more creatively – it has not been easy and at times I felt I was letting you down. You teach with care- thank you for giving me a chance and holding me across the finish line.

I also extend my deepest and most sincere gratitude to the WITS African Literature department for becoming a home away from home. I don't think I have ever experienced such warmth and pure brilliance; you are the best that this university has to offer. Thank you for allowing me to grow. Professor Grace Musila and Dr Khwezi Mkhize you are both patient and generous teachers, thank you for your support.

My classmates, Siwongiwe Makupula , Khumo Mochechane and Harvey Dimond– cheers my friends.

I would like to acknowledge the support of the EDIT: Equality in Democracy as Transformation Project (University of the Witwatersrand, Helsinki University and University of Addis Ababa) funded by the Academy of Finland (nr320863, 201-2022), this would not have been possible without your generosity. And to Gorata Chengeta, the reading groups were a highlight, thank you for your support.

To my late grandparents, I love and miss you both so very much. To my grandfather - the OG, Khulu, I wish you were here!

Qwesha 2023

Contents

Declaration	2
Acknowledgements	3
Dedication	6
Chapter One: An Introduction; Popular Imaginaries, Memory, and Public Intimacy as Meta-Narrative	7
Chapter Two: “Vuli’ndlela”, Welcoming Freedom	13
Chapter Three: Exploring the Past within the Present	25
Chapter Four: Reinscribing Freedom	32
Chapter Five: Our Girl in the Mirror	54
Bibliography	62

Thank you, Brenda

Chapter One: An Introduction; Popular Imaginaries, Memory, and Public Intimacy as Meta-Narrative

In this research report, I argue that Brenda Fassie is an important archive from which present day African woman learn to articulate feminist consciousness. I argue that Fassi's resurgence is an intervention in the present where her counter intuitive presence allows African women to re-define womanhood and sexuality. Looking at her biographical self and her relation to the nation, I probe into the ideas of cultural memory, intimate publics, and post feminism to deepen my observation(s) of the temporal framing she exists in.

The study of popular culture has been a critical mode to engage with social, cultural, political, and economic conditions and relations in the world. Often, popular culture has been theorized relating to the ways that these forms, texts and practices are reflective of everyday life. Various, scholars such as Dina Ligaga, Joyce Nyairo, James Ogude, Grace Musila, Bhekizizwe Peterson, Stephanie Newell and many others have theorized aspects of the connection between popular cultural literatures, imaginaries, or practices to the quotidian, and the ways through which we can extract some forms of meaning – be it political, economic, or social. In "Gender and Popular Imaginaries in Africa", Spencer et al write that "[a]lthough much of this scholarship has focused on different artistic genres, platforms and questions, there is broad consensus that popular cultural forms convene valuable platforms for working through questions of everyday life, as well as imaginative future mapping of desires and aspirations" (Spencer , Ligaga and Musila 2018, 3), and in the case of argument

of this research report – of intimate publics and their relationship to post-colonial meta-narrative.

Rationalising: 'A Resurgence'

Resurgence is a critical concept term in this study, conceptualised around the relationship between the popular, memory and temporal events as they structure historical narratives. Perspectives on South African popular culture observes a significant change during the transitory period to democracy. This has been recorded as a shift in popular art because of looming political changes when the cultural texts and practices shifted from contestations of freedom in the form of anti-apartheid literatures, which evolved into genres that took a less explicitly oppositional political form – what Njabulo Ndebele theorizes as the "Rediscovery of the Ordinary" Cultural shifts to this everyday took various shapes; youth cultures, consumption, and expressions of the intimate or private life in public (see Bystrom 2016; Bystrom and Nuttall 2013; Livermon 2012, 2014, 2020; Mupotsa 2015; Ndlovu 2013; Nuttall 2003, 2004, 2017; and Peterson 2003 for example).

The rationale of this research report builds on the resurgence and proliferation of Brenda Fassie's figure in 21st century South African public cultures, and more specifically, as a critical aspect of what has been defined as a feminine intimate public. The key aims of this project is the inquiry into; firstly, the ways Fassie operates through various figurations at present that partly reveal

how she operated in and through various social, cultural and political spaces in her life: that is, the use of her figuratively 'biographical' self. The second intention is to demonstrate how at both scales, she operates to shape the conditions, forms, relations, and boundaries by which she becomes a central archive for feminist consciousness in the contemporary. In summary, the two main questions are:

1. Why is Fassie's image resurfacing now?
2. What does her figure make possible for public and post feminisms?

It is from my own memories of childhood, when "Vul'indlela" played at family gatherings, weddings and we experienced joy, pleasure, and connection. To now read and interpret it as to clear a path and offer a cry; the resonance of these memories as they meet me in the present seems to be more poignant than I initially imagined. I think it is useful to look more deeply into the concept of memory and the act of remembering. Dominant definitions of the concept within psychosocial disciplines refer to memory as the process of acquiring, retaining for a later retrieval. According to the Durkheimian tradition of social thought, we can think of a collective sense of memory where each new generation is connected to the past. This collective memory is defined as "recollections of a shared past which are passed through ongoing processes of commemoration, official sanctioned rituals which remember a group through calling upon a common heritage, with a shared past as a central component" (Eyerman 2004, 160). Here, collective memory produces a narrative mobility that can travel through space and time to reunite individuals with the collective. It becomes a

temporal reference point that individuals within the collective can orient themselves. As Eyerman interestingly puts it "the past becomes present through symbolic interactions, through narrative and discourse, with memory itself being a product of being "called upon to legitimate identity, to construct and reconstruct it" (Antze and Lambek 1996 as cited in Eyerman 2004).

I locate Fassie as existing within the collective memory of South Africa, as partly evidenced by the use of" Vuli'ndlela"as the official ANC election campaign song in 1999. Ahead of the election as ANC presidential candidate, Thabo Mbeki was to tour the country mobilizing the ground for support in the election. the ANC requested that Fassie's Vul'indlela become the official party campaign song. Fassie was to accompany Thabo Mbeki around the country singing the hit song. At the meeting where this request was in discussion Fassie remarked:

> Only last year on 18 July I was all alone in my Imbali flat here in Berea. I had no food, I had no money, I had no one in my life except my son Bongani and Ludwe. I watched TV and saw Tata's [Mandela's] 80th birthday and wedding. I was not invited to the wedding after I had sung tribute songs for Tata in the struggle in the 80s and early 90s. Some of my songs were banned. I saw Stevie Wonder, Michael Jackson and Will Smith plus many others. Why don't you get them and ask for an election song and invite them to go and sing in campaign rallies? I'm not going there and am definitely not having my song used for your campaign. So kindly leave my office, go outside and ask for directions to Stevie, Michael or Will's offices. (Madondo, I'm Not Your Weekend Special : Portraits on the Life + Style & Politics of Brenda Fasie 2014, 183)

In this moment Fassie is aware of the state's opportunism, in that only a year before she was regarded as 'disposable'. Fassie's direct confrontation makes it clear that she is aware of this and her later concession to the proposal signals her ability to manoeuvre for her own benefit. In that, she reconciles with the fact

that she is not a real priority – knowing and understanding this position gives space for Fassie to better position herself for her own benefit. In the end "Vuli'indlela" became the ANC's official election campaign song and Fassie permanently inscribed herself into what can be considered as one of the most historic moments in South African history. It is impossible to remember the 1999 election without acknowledging the memory of Fassie as a co-author of that democratic moment. Fassie quite literally 'made way' and cemented herself into national consciousness and memory. Through the song, while negotiating freedom and victory for the ANC, she also negotiated and re-deposits herself into the historic meta-narrative.

In 1983, Brenda & The Big Dudes' debut song "Weekend Special", a simple tale of complicated romantic affair. Following the release of this hit song, Brenda Fassie became a successful platinum selling pop star. In this same period, Vinolia 'VMash' Mashego 1988 debut the album *The Hunger*, with hit songs "Set Me Free" and "It's in the Liquor" which catapulted her into a career as an award-winning TV presenter for the SABC youth television program *Jam Alley* (Mojapelo 2008, 108). In line with this proliferation of popular music and youth cultures in the 1980s, by 1990, the Kwaito genre emerged. The genre was described as "an urban syncretic form that draws on an eclectic range of local and international sources, the most important ones being South African 'bubblegum', rap, reggae, ragga, rhythm and blues, as well as European and American house-music" (Peterson 2003, 198). This genre was led by various artists namely, Boom Shaka, Malaika, Mshoza, Zola 7, Mandoza and many more.

After years of political 'toyi-toyi' the sound and dance represented young people's sense of relief with the end of apartheid (Peterson 2003). I outline these to mark out the different kinds of ways that these popular expressions took place within and in response to the political moment where along with the 'ordinary', 'the popular', 'youth cultures' and intimacy were cumulatively assembled as genres of the time of democratic transition.

These new forms of popular music were emblematic for an opening up of symbolic, social, and political space, and yet they were also on the receiving end of disapproval and criticism, described as 'provocative'; 'vulgar', and 'erratic'. For instance, VMash was fired by Jam Alley producers for her 'erratic' behaviour and 'negative' lifestyle (Mojapelo 2008). In another instance, the band Boom Shaka was met with public disapproval from President Mandela for the "vulgarity of their dance moves" (Owen 2013). Despite the ways that artists and genres emerged, during this period they were met with suspicion, and often a derisive attitude, read in ways as 'unrespectable'. However, Fassie, while embodying many of the same provocations (arguably even more) that were disapproved and criticized, still negotiated a way of inhabiting official spaces and symbolic power. Along with her ability to trouble notions of respectability through her performance, music, visibility, and even after her passing has managed to sustain critical symbolic power as it relates to popular culture in South Africa. This is also marked in renewed interest in a circulation and interrogation of her image in the present.

Chapter Two: Vul'indlela, Welcoming Freedom

Vul'indlela which translates to "Make way" or "clear the path" a call that Fassie made in 1997 through the release of *Memeza,* an album whose success came as kind of vindication as she had made multiple [unsuccessful] attempts to get back into her previous glory since the passing of her lover Poppy Sihlahla in 1995 leading to one of her longest drug spells. Later as recounted in Wainaina (2011) she would say of the album "I'd been shouting and shouting, and no one wanted to hear me". In One Day I Will Write About This Place , Binyavanga Wainaina laments "when I sing this song, *vul'indlela,* I want to cry" (Wainaina, 2011, p. 176), that left a part of me in contemplation of how this call to 'make way' has travelled across time and found itself in recent years as an echo to the figure of black woman/femme that had previously fallen out of grace, where it not only makes way for Fassie but also possibilities for women that resemble her terrain of disruption and troubling of official notions. Fassie passed almost twenty years ago, and yet her presence, her immediacy continues to haunt the meta-narrative, and the national unconsciousness.

Vul'ndlela' – "make way"; "clear the path" is in some way a melancholic relation to time and this is what I want to relate to a feminist consciousness, as invoked in the title of this research report. The ruptures of time, embodied in the

use of iconographic and indexical signifiers that operationalize women into the meta-narrative of the post-colonial nation and its modernity, one which is also visible in how public and popular feminisms, and post-feminist sensibilities also circulate within the intimate publics that coincide with it; signal the ways that Brenda Fassie 'comes up', and by which we might read her resurgence in the present. There are a few critical terms or concepts that anchor this report: I read the presence, visibility and circulation of Fassie's image as operating on two scales – the iconographic and the indexical. Iconography related to images or symbols associated with a figure and indexical relating to expression whose meaning is dependent on the context which it is used; the meta narrative of the nation as the overarching account of events in South Africa's history. Lastly, I consider post -feminism as theorized by Rosalind Gill as a "sensibility characterized by a number of elements ; a taking for granted of feminist ideas alongside a fierce repudiation of feminism, an emphasis upon choice, freedom and individual empowerment, a pre-occupation with the body and sexuality as the locus of femininity : a reassertion of natural sexual difference grounded in heteronormative ideas about gender complementarity ; the importance placed upon self-surveillance and monitoring as modes of power and a thorough going commitment to ideas of self-transformation, that is a make-over paradigm" (Gill 346). A sensibility that has led to a high circulation of new politics of a newer feminist age.

In her 2016 article titled "A Peculiar Place for a Feminist? The New South African Woman, *True Love* magazine and Lebo(gang) Mashile", Pumla Gqola

introduces the figure of "the New South African woman (NSAW)", who she describes as "a departure from hegemonic apartheid femininities and an attempt to imagine the kind of agentic existence women might aspire to in a free country" (Gqola 2016, 120). Gqola further tells us that "the NSAW exists in ambivalent relationship to historical femininities: simultaneously challenging and reinscribing them" (Gqola 122).

My interest in this research report is in part to consider the NSAW as one facet of Fassie's current re-circulation. This new figure of 'woman' whose relationship to a range of temporal relations to multiple femininities remains ambivalent while "simultaneously challenging and reinscribing them" (Gqola 2016, 122). Siphokazi Tau's reading of Fassie's figure gives one lens into elaborating on Gqola's observation. Tau notes a homological relation between Fassie and gqom artist Busiswa Gqulu (Tau 2021). Gqom, is described as a raw, dark, hypnotic electronic music genre that emerged out of KwaZulu-Natal in the 2010s, and as a dance form includes women fashioning erotic and provocative dress styles in their music videos (Tau 2021). Tau argues that Gqulu has a "homological" relation to Fassie, specifically as it relates to black women's inhabitation of performance space. This relation, made up of audio-visual form and references between the two, where Fassie's interventions on identities of black femininities influence Gqulu's music (Tau 2021). Gqulu's music videos operating as windows through which narratives of femininity can appear (Tau 2021, 27) – a performance drawn from Fassie's ability to hold contesting ideas and ideals within various post-apartheid publics.

For example, in 2014, then MTV VJ, Nomuzi 'NoMoozlie' Mabena began her professional music career signed to rapper KO's *Cashtime Life Records*, she made musical references to Brenda Fassie, going as far as calling herself 'the New Age Brenda Fassie'. Expectedly, NoMoozlie was met with backlash from many South Africans, who consider Fassie as an icon that no one can compare themselves to. In an interview about why she's re-figured herself with reference to Fassie, NoMoozlie offered that "[c]oming into the hip-hop scene it was still very fresh for females to be that confident and I was rolling around with the squad of the coolest and biggest rappers and sometimes it would get so intimidating, and I'd just be like 'I don't think I have a place here'. And then I would just be like, 'what would Brenda Fassie do?'" (Solanga 2017). NoMoozlie's reference to Fassie extends the surface of Fassie's presence beyond her significance as a musician, rather it extends to Fassie's embodiment of visibility and transgression.

NoMoozlie's re-configuration of her own public image aimed to capture the agency in Fassie's capacity to 'roll' with the big boys that dominated the South African hip hop scene. In consideration of this observation, this research report uses Brenda Fassie as a case, to consider the circulations of transgressive forms of femininity and expression. I offer Fassie's figurative operation here through the concept of 'Fassie's image', as a way to account for the figurative ways she's appeared in work engaging the archive of her work, as well as the

ways that this figurative position expresses or articulates feminist expressions that appear in more recent circulations of her image

By coming up, I note the resurgence of the biographical form and its inscription with feminist sensibilities post-2015, that perhaps in some distinction to the time-event of 1994 where the audience of black women's biographical writing was folded into women's resistance to their displacement from citizenship and the nation, (see Boswell 2016, 2020; Lewis 19996 for example); or where the nation itself might for some readers have not been indicated as the audience (Nuttal 1994); what Musila (2016) notes that the audience, and spatial geography of this writing in this present reflects an immediacy and recognition within a black intimate public. This is the old and new, or difference and repetition implicated in the cry as freedom.

Time-Image: Meta-Narrative and Event

The meta-narrative of 1994 was mediated through Mandela's image, which was transformed within the first moment of rupture that I signal. In using the term "time-image", I refer to the transition that is narratively articulated where the image of Mandela who operates as a sign of the movement from political struggle to the iconic sign of the rainbow nation itself in Timothy Wright's (2019) terms. This is also a period where black women's images are being mobilized for the nationalist agenda through the appeal to the 'private' and the inner happenings of the 'home'. Here, families are depicted as having healed from the past and are now unified for the advancement of the new nation.

This is something in line with Ndlovu's (2013) discussion on how television became a tool to 'fix families' signalling the exercise of the interiorization of control where there is less significance on the 'nation' but more on familial and interpersonal relationships within its social units.

In Nicole Fleetwood's (2015) distinction between the index and icon, the sign of the icon occupies the fullest possibilities of the nation, it can be symbolic of its landscape even, a trope of racial justice and aspiration; as opposed to the index, which as a symbol- references those impacted by the event of that history, who are so numerous, even when a specific image of that person, for example, Hector Peterson as symbolic of student struggle – is just a case symbolic of that generalized condition, or intuition of that history. It is this distinction that makes it easier to gravitate to the image of the icon. The icon, in this way, is part of how the event operates as a genre to engage with historical experience, what Berlant (2008) describes as 'flattening' time, dispersing the trauma, or the unthinkable that rests between old and new conjured around the event as the method that historical transitions operate within the meta-narrative. The events of 1994 or 2015, as heightened, visceral events are flattened in the time-image as a means to read history as it is embedded in the present.

The image, along with other genres articulate this time-image of this rupture, for instance, the biography. This meta-narrative stemming from these moments of political rupture is the emergence and now re-emergence of the biography as a popular form in post-apartheid South Africa which in of itself was embedded in democracy's entanglement with public intimacies. According to

Jacobs and Bank (2019) “some 800 biographies or autobiographies have been published in English in the 28 years since the liberalisation of apartheid and freeing of Nelson Mandela in February 1990” (165). The most dominant of the genre being political biography which refers to the lives of those “directly involved in politics” i.e. Nelson Mandela, Winnie Madikizela Mandela, Mamphele Ramphele – all individuals whose life stories could not quite be told during the apartheid years. In the time of transition, the biography became a medium of both inspiration and public affirmation where the expressions of the self /private and public/collective narratives intersected causing what Bystrom and Nuttall describe as “intimate exposure” which is a “set of diverse acts that involve revealing inner aspects and places of the self and self-making; these may be acts of self-exposure or exposure of the private lives of others” (Bystrom and Nuttall 2013, 310)

Given the censorship of the apartheid architecture, this exposure signified new ways of living together. Part of this being in line with Ndebele’s “rediscovery of the ordinary” where art was no longer limited to the binary of good versus evil or black versus white but rather approached complexities that represented the complex societies that they came from and the depth of its individuals. Now, this move toward the ‘ordinary’ opened space for intimate details to make up artistic production where intimate details provided a deeper sense of truth where artists were not simply writing or singing about types of people but about the people themselves. The biography then offers an insight into the interior self. An ‘intimate public sphere’, in Berlant’s (2008) terms, is a

space that mediates the personal to the general, stating that "what makes a public sphere intimate is an expectation that the consumers of its particular stuff already share a worldview and emotional knowledge that they have derived from a broadly common historical experience" (vii), and it is "a porous, affective sense of identification among strangers that promise a certain experience of belonging and provides a complex of consolation, confirmation, discipline, and discussion about how to live as an *x*" (Berlant 2008, viii). The biography, as I offer in the chapters that follow, is something that mediates such a public at various scales of recognition, but also allowing an intimacy or a knowness – for instance that we come to 'know' Fassie and other figures through meta-narratives that use biographical techniques to set them into the time-image, or event.

In this report I establish two temporal markers, I consider 1994 and 2020s as the two temporal markers for the interplay and assumptions between event, time and the meta-narrative. Between the two moments exists a context oriented around the re-emergence of struggle, particularly the collective struggle and the ruptures within the failures of democracy. Leading to the event of 1994, an important strategy for oppressed people engaged in the struggle for national liberation was the mobilization around the collective struggle – one that awakened a unified consciousness amongst the population. To achieve

democracy the social movement was banded together in a collective struggle for the fall of Apartheid and the end of racial segregation.

In the present, the explosion of student movement protests at South African universities under #RhodesMustFall which demanded the removal of the statue of British colonist Cecil John Rhodes erected at the centre of the University of Cape Town campus and #FeesMustFall which began as a call against a ten percent increment on student fees and opposition to the outsourcing of service workers at the University of the Witwatersrand during 2015 -16 (Gillespie and Naidoo 2019). The followed social actions around gender based violence and femicide under #AmINext #MeToo #TimesUp in 2018-21 , these moments represent what Motimele (2019) refers to as the "ruptures of neoliberal time" - moments that reflected the fissures of democracy within the contemporary not very different from the past thus signalling the re-emergence of the collective struggle within political time – that is although the meta-narrative had changed - the assumed progression of political time since 1994 had not. In the present these moments produced public activisms and public-post feminisms which I will return to later.

Old and New: temporal ruptures

'Old and New', I borrow from Prishani Naidoo's (2015) description of how difference and repetition shape the form and practice of post-apartheid politics, as related to the idioms of those characteristic of anti-apartheid struggles; and relatedly, the notion of freedom itself. In the main, while asking what is 'new', Naidoo's invocation of repetition puts in question the very idea of newness, in ways that connect to how history and memory are narrated with the assumption of change, but further, with the implicit assumption that historical events (or non-events) are ruptures in time that revise the very conditions of freedom itself. In his considerations of the role of popular forms, consumption, space and presence in the 1990s, Xavier Livermon (2019) describes that marker of time with another binary, "a chaotic time, and a time of great hope" (Livermon 2019, 407). Moving forward to the present, my present as a student, a 'new' rupture of time signals the kind of continuities observed by Naidoo, disappointments in this anticipated freedom expressed by Moshibudi Motimele (2019) as one demanding space for emancipatory political imagination. Motimele references the continuities and rupture of time signalled by student movements in South Africa in 2015, where 'rupture' indicates something similarly doubled as difference and repetition. The struggles affiliated to student-worker struggles form a part of various other ecologies of struggle in South Africa, and an emergent public feminist consciousness (see Ndlelu, Dlakavu and Boswell 2017; and Shange 2016 for example). These non-dichotomous ruptures in time, while signalled in my observation of a resurgence of Fassie's image, reveal the

marginal status of the unthinkable, even while the progress of these periods is marked through the visibility of women in publics within the broader meta-narrative.

This meta-narrative that circulates official and unofficial archives operate in relation to a feminine intimate public sphere. The notion of an intimate public as developed by Lauren Berlant to refer to "a porous affective scene of identification among strangers that promise a certain experience of belonging and provides a complex of consolation, confirmation, discipline and discussion about how to live" (Berlant 2008, viii). The objects, or attachments Berlant might observe within it include magazines, and other consumptive objects, as well as practices of body and femininities.

At one level of observation, this sense of the world as noted in Tau's usage, Fassie's homological use, or circulation is queer – and by queer, there are at least two implications of that reference. The first reference operates at the level of the use of, or circulation of her biographical self as a queer person. Tau offers another level or use of this reference beyond the implication of queer as an identitarian category, one that represents or is possessive of a 'self' that is the site from which one enunciates; it is the relationship to performance and space that is operatively queer. Embracing Fassie's circulation as archive, Zuko Zikalala introduces the notion of a black queer femme which confronts a cis-normative understanding of womanhood but also points to the use of, and engagement with the queer meta-narrative within femme and what he refers to as the "black queer femme erotic archive", a collective of black women that inhabited a more

subversive and ungovernable roles in the South African public (Zikalala 2019, 61). These are women that do not quite fit into Gqola's NSAW that delineates a more regulated post-apartheid femininity. However, still retaining Gqola's figure of the "NSAW" alongside Tau's theory of "homology" to further open up Fassie's capacity to foreground notions of the new woman and post-feminist sensibilities in that because Fassie already complicates notions of gender prior to the modern age – she is continuously referenced in present articulations of the self. Thus, her image/figure operating as a kind of interplay between people perception, performance, fabulation, memory work and institutions.

Chapter Three: Exploring the Past within the Present

In *Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment*, David Scott proposes that we provide critical reflection on post-coloniality and radically refashion the ways in which we narrate the relationship between the past to the present and future (2004). Similarly, Trouillot's notion of the 'unthinkable' and 'non-event' highlight the need for critical inquiry when reading the colonial past to our post-colonial present. In this chapter, I argue that event and time have been constructed within the meta-narrative of modernity where public intimacy has been defined through hetero-familial terms and kinship. Trouillot refers to 'modernity' as a "murky term that belongs to a family of words we may label 'North Atlantic' universals" (221) which he explains as "particulars that have gained a degree of universality, chunks of human history that have become historical standards. Words such as 'development', 'progress', 'democracy' and indeed the 'West' are exemplary members of that family which contracts or expands according to contexts and interlocutors" (220).

Building from Keguro Macharia's (2013) perceptive discussion of how the queer figure circulates as center of anti-homosexual and homophobic post-colonial African modernity. We understand the postcolonial nation's preoccupation with establishing its modernity through the cis-heteronormative nuclear family form to invent themselves. As Fanon writes "The family structure and the national structure are closely connected" (cited in Macharia 2019, 47).

Here, Fanon points us to the relationship between the notion of national identity beyond state formation but the nation as material – an invention, aspiration that Europeans invent, as Anderson (1983) tells us is an "imagined community". As an extension of coloniality, Sylvia Wynter tells us that as a result of the *over*representation of the human, and its impressions of time, genres of the human are produced through the sociogenic principle developed by Fanon, and are foundational to family and nation, as well as time. These are useful in thinking about the domestic genealogy that has constructed post coloniality and in turn given birth to the modern subject.

This idea is inherently tied to the nuclear family structure – the earliest records of the existence of nations have all predicated on an affinity to kinship in the family trope of: Father, Mother and Child. McClintock explains that "the nation is frequently figured through the iconography of familial and domestic space" (McClintock 1993, 63). In this way nations became symbolically figured as domestic genealogies and as such carry this attachment to kinship as a dominant trope. This use of modernity as noted by Ligaga (2017), as the meta-narrative relies on a moral narrative. Explicitly engaging with this narrative format as it appears within popular genres in Africa, Ligaga notes that within the circulation of these post-colonial genres, further extended by digitised forms, "narratives of everyday life are elevated to heightened and hyperbolic drama, making reference to pure and polar concepts of darkness and light, salvation and damnation," (226), and within this it is easy to identify a familiar narrative as it relates to how femininity is represented – as a contested territory where

modernity is 'corrupting', and the post-colonial nation relies on women's occupation of the time-space of tradition.

1994 marked the commencement of 'freedom', as the apartheid government relinquished power to the African National Congress – the 'new' South Africa emerged. A part of this emergence of a new South African society was what Brenna Munro referred to as the "founding family romance" in the form of soon-to-be-first-black-president Nelson Mandela and anti-apartheid political activist Winnie Madikizela-Mandela. Their marriage as Munro explains coincided with the apex of a form of black urban South African public culture known as "Sophiatown Renaissance", in reference to a lively township in which black owned proper, racial boundaries were crossed and sexual mores were often more bohemian than respectable" (Munro 2014, 93), further they became "a visible celebration of black African glamour and desirability, and enacted a model of companionate heterosexual marriage that signified as both respectable and modern" (Munro 2014, 94). Within this constructed narrative, intimacy in the form of the family became "that which works around time, as the foundation on which temporality itself rests" (Macharia 2013,279). As such this traditional intimate public became a signifier of democracy but still retained a historically gendered space where men and women play distinct roles.

Desiree Lewis's (1996) reading of Winnie Madikizela-Mandela as 'signifier' reveals this, as despite her iconographic status, as signifier she also occupies the non-singularity relegated to black womanhood as index. Grace Musila supports this view, writing that the:

> symbolic labour that Madikizela-Mandela's life contributes to nation-building is consistent with the appropriation of women's bodies as symbols, emptied of their immediate corporeal experiences and textualized as metaphoric shorthand comments on putatively more urgent issues of sociopolitical import (2020, 604).

Madikizela- Mandela spent her time campaigning for the release of her husband and the other ANC political prisoners that were imprisoned by the National Party. As Musila aptly puts "this move was largely successful precisely because the Nelson and Winnie romance had been perceived as a national allegory of anti-apartheid freedom, freezing them into familial metaphors with gendered roles that made Madikizela-Mandela the mother of the nation" (Musila 2020, 7). In this role Winnie Mandela served as what Mamphela Ramphele refers to as the "political widow"[1] , the ultimate embodiment of "honorary male status" (Yates and Gqola 1998). Winnie Mandela symbolized the embodiment of the loss and pain of Mandela's imprisonment; she became the focus of attention "as both subject and object of mourning rituals" (Ramphele 1996). Her strategic portrayal as "Mother of the Nation" epitomized the dutiful wife whose sole goal was to service her household for the benefit of the nation.

However, when Madikizela-Mandela began forging her own political identity that transgressed the limits of "motherhood", beginning with her promotion of more violent forms of protest in opposition of the ANC's reconciliation rhetoric. That coupled with her association with the Mandela

[1] Also see Yates, Kimberley, Pumla Gqola and Mamphela Ramphele. "This little bit of madness: Mamphela Ramphele on being black and transgressive" Agenda 14.37(1998):90-95

United Football Club (MUFC) and implication in the 1988 murder of 14-year-old Moeketsi "Stompie: Seipei caused what Hassim as a "disjuncture between the imaginary mother of the nation as a nurturing figure, and the ways in which Madikizela-Mandela herself acted as a disciplining force [that] destabilized maternalist imagery and reconstituted forms of violent masculinity" (Hassim 2015,57).

Winnie Mandela's troubling of the space of 'mother' made her illegible and had her ousted from the national order as an unruly abhorrent mother. Yuval-Davis on women in the nation, writes: "Their exclusion was part and parcel of the construction of the entitlement of men to democratic participation which conferred citizen status upon individuals as such, but upon men in their capacity as members and representatives of the family" (Davis 1993, 625).

And as it is in Fassie's case, black South African women have creatively and agentically used this and other forms of self-writing to reconceptualize these tools, precisely because the meta-narrative and hetero-genealogical modernity of the post-colonial nation occlude the development of feminist consciousness. The 'self', 'self-making', and 'self-fashioning' are terms relegated to these publics in the event of transition (Nuttall 2003, 2004; Spencer 2009, 2019 for example); and yet this self, along with embracing the signifier of being 'known', and useable in flattening the events of history, can also offer critique of heteropatriarchal post-colonial modernity. Whereas I initially read Fassie's presence in the context of silence, the argument pursued in this report contends

with this agency in the terms of the capacities offered within conditions of marginality, which in Musila's (2018) evocation of bell hooks' use of it, refers to a consciousness that re-animates political legacies supportive of the meta-narrative, renewing their vocabularies in exposing their contradictions, strategic usefulness, and performing experiments in representing figures of the self, space and time that re-code them.

As I analyze black women's role in the moment of transition and post-apartheid South Africa, – I think of Brenda Fassie's figure as she circulates in different temporalities, that along with event and time – Fassie emerges in performance as a particular kind of gendered and queer figure, an affective extension that troubles concepts of femininity. Fassie emerges at the intersection of private and the public. In this, Fassie ruptures the limited understandings of black women's publicness and progressive time. Here, I hold onto to Macharia's theorization of *frottage* as a conceptual strategy that foregrounds an intense longing for intimacy that departs from genealogical models. Macharia writes "Instead of searching for kinship, I privilege conceptual and affective proximity: the rubbing produced by and as blackness, which assembles into one frame multiple histories and geographies" (Macharia 2019, 17). As I will develop more in the following chapter, I argue that Fassie makes this kind of future possible through the centering of this exact public pursuit of pleasure apparent in frottage – her obliteration of the wall between private and public is in her attachment and preoccupation with the erotic.

Chapter Four: Reinscribing Freedom

Mandela and Fassie: Mother(s) of no nation?

Fassie emerges at a moment in time when both national consciousness and identity were being carved as a unitary entity, where critical to this was the choice to enact a modern identity which as shown in the discussion of Winnie Mandela, black women's iconographic status was deeply embedded in a complex familial relationship to the national imaginary. Fassie's own practices and circulations of femininity were in clear contrast with respectability and the pre-determined genealogical imperative. Also, on the rise were youth in popular culture, where Fassie herself was transitioning from bubblegum to kwaito as generation- y began taking over the scene. In engaging an iconographic reading of Fassie, I investigate her figure as it appears through time in accordance with the world, she makes possible. In embracing the trope of 'mother' that required a nurturing relationship to the nation.

In *On Racial Icons: Blackness and the Public Imagination,* Fleetwood begins by tracing the origin of the icon in a long and complex history of early Christianity and ties to sacredness. Fleetwood offers that:

> At moments, the icon connotes its commonsense usage: a notable public person who represents a set of attributes, traits or talents valued by a given society. In popular culture, the icon refers to a celebrity with staying power. In arenas of politics and civil society, the icon tends to refer to a charismatic leader, a dedicated advocate, or a fearless trailblazer. In visual theory, the icon is an image, like a photographic representation, imbued with significant social and symbolic meaning, so much so that it needs little explication for the cultural reader to decode it. The icon in contemporary cultures carries multiple meanings. (7).

Brenda Nokuzola Fassie was the poster child for the genre of music known as "bubblegum" which preceded the age of kwaito and to some extent can be considered as blueprint for Kwaito. This brand of township pop music known as "bubblegum" very closely resembled the contemporaneous bubblegum music in Europe and the USA (Steingo 2008). Bubblegum music was a form of pop music with distinctive mixes of vocals, electronic keyboards and synthesizers – music that sought to appeal to a younger generation of urbanized South Africans in the 1980s. Bubblegum music developed in and dominated the South African eighties with hit songs such as "Weekend Special" and Yvonne Chaka Chaka's "Thank you Mr DJ". This happened as a product of the shifting political landscape through which popular culture also began developing. Thokozani Mhlambi writes:

> This new urban genre developed in the late 1980s, an Afro-dance pop, mainly influenced by mbaqanga and African American popular styles. Bubblegum music marked a shift or a cultural turn in the content and form of South African music. This genre developed because of promising developments in the fight against apartheid as well as the introduction of television in 1976, which allowed for the promotion of music across all ethnic groups. It represented a move towards music that was more urban than traditional (Mhlambi 2004, 119)

This new township pop-music was often dismissed as shallow amid the political storm that South Africa was experiencing in the eighties (Coplan 2005). It was perceived that bubblegum music had no real substance beyond tales of sex and lust. Soon after this, Fassie challenged this perception with the release of her hit album *Too Late for Mama* with the hit songs "Black President" and "Good Black Woman" – the songs which became a part of a pantheon of anti-apartheid songs in the country, saw a changed demeanor in Fassie. For a moment, within this

performance she was no longer just a pop singer but a political activist using her artistry for the advancement of the national project and the future of her own son. In the song "Black President", Fassie details the arrest and long-term imprisonment of Mandela and other political activists and their plight in Robben Island in 1963:

The year 1963
The people's president
Was taken away by security men
All dressed in a uniform
The brutality, brutality
Oh no, my, my black president
Him and his comrades
Were sentenced to isolation
For many painful years
For many painful years
Many painful years
Of hard labour

Fassie continues to highlight the brutality that existed in apartheid prisons and the physical labour the prisoners were subjected to:

They broke rocks
But the spirit was never broken
Never broken
Oh no, my, my black president

Fassie looked optimistically into the future, singing for the celebration of official Mandela's release from prison,

Now in 1990
The people's president
Came out from jail
Raised up his hand and said
"Viva, viva, my people"

In this song Fassie challenges the establishment and offers hope to her audience, as she would later add in an interview: "I am within the struggle because I am black but let politicians do the political work, let me sing political songs" (Fassie 1993). Although she makes it clear that she is not a politician she acknowledges that she has a role to play in the struggle as a black person living in South Africa. In the song "Good Black Woman", Fassie again takes on a familial identity – locating herself within the conscripts of acceptable black femininity:

Early on Monday morning
Police arrest my brother.
For working for a black community
Monday afternoon
Went to see my brother
Policeman treated me like a donkey
I say to policeman
You've got a bad attitude
Oh no
Am no criminal
Am a good black woman

Evoking these songs, Tau writes that "[t]hrough her music, Fassie demonstrates how various identities of black femininity are available to her" (Tau 2021, 25) , Fassie in both these songs, signifies that she is able to occupy the role in support of the national project that just like other figurative mothers of the nation such as Charlotte Maxeke, Lillian Ngoyi or Winnie Madikizela-Mandela and she can be a 'good black woman' that deserves humanity from the apartheid police. Fassie also reveals the capacity to occupy two contesting identities – where she manipulates and bends her femininity to negotiate her resistance and safety. What follows is a discussion of her 'undeterminability' and what I regard as a

'queering' of space, event and time moving from mother nation /good black woman to girlfriend of the nation.

Engaging with how women, configured as mothers of the nation in a related status to the time-image, Fassie invokes this image of the mother, and the wife, reshaping herself in a related but more ambiguous status. Notably, Nomzamo Winifred Zanyiwe Madikizela , most popular known as "Mother of the Nation" was an anti-apartheid political activist and wife to South Africa's first black President and leader of the ANC, Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela. In this role Winnie Mandela served as what Mamphela Ramphele refers to as the "political widow"-, the ultimate embodiment of "honorary male status" (Yates and Gqola 1998).

Winnie Mandela symbolized the embodiment of the loss and pain of Mandela's imprisonment; she became the focus of attention "as both subject and object of mourning rituals" (Ramphele 1996). Her strategic portrayal as "Mother of the Nation" meant that she held space for her husband, in some instances after visits, the ANC would host rallies and have her convey messages of 'hope' coming from Mandela in prison. As Musila aptly puts it "this move was largely successful precisely because the Nelson and Winnie romance had been perceived as a national allegory of anti-apartheid freedom, freezing them into familial metaphors with gendered roles that made Madikizela-Mandela the mother of the nation" (Musila 2020, 7). Winnie Mandela epitomized the dutiful wife whose sole goal was to service her household for the benefit of the nation.

However, as a result of numerous detentions and torture – Madikizela-Mandela began forging her own political identity that transgressed the limits of "motherhood" as she began promoting more violent forms of protest in opposition of the ANC's reconciliation and rhetoric. Her association with the Mandela United Football Club (MUFC) and implication in the 1988 murder of 14-year-old Moeketsi "Stompie: Seipei caused what Hassim as a "disjuncture between the imaginary mother of the nation as a nurturing figure, and the ways in which Madikizela-Mandela herself acted as a disciplining force [that] destabilized maternalistic imagery and reconstituted forms of violent masculinity" (Hassim, A life of refusal. Winnie Madikizela-Mandela and violence in South Africa 2015, 57). It was alleged that Winnie Mandela had ordered the assault and killing of Stompie whom along with 3 other boys she suspected as apartheid spies. She was later charged and sentenced to six years of imprisonment for kidnaping and accessory to assault. After appeal, the sentence was reduced to two-year suspended sentence and a fine of fifteen thousand rand. Winnie Mandela was forging her own identity (a violent one at that) that could not be absorbed into singular figure of her husband.

Winnie Mandela's troubling of the space of 'mother' made her illegible and had her ousted from the national order as unruly abhorrent mother - Yuval-Davis on women in the nation: writes: "Their [women] exclusion was part and parcel of the construction of the entitlement of men to democratic participation

which conferred citizen status upon individuals as such, but upon men in their capacity as members and representatives of the family" (Davis 1993, 625).

Winnie Mandela's position in the meta-narrative is useful in leading to a discussion of how Brenda Fassie troubles the notion of 'mothering the nation' but how in operating as the black femme – offers the queering of this position occupying both "mother" and "girlfriend" of the nation. I want us to read Fassie's fashioning against these two moulds not as antithetical to Winnie Mandela but rather as analogous.

"*Yhu Thixo nank'uWinnie"*

Hayi suka andingo Winnie

"I am the girlfriend of the nation"

Brenda Fassie's self-naming as 'Girlfriend of the Nation' disorganizes the national imagination and destabilizes official notions of national consciousness, allowing her to inscribe a kind of unofficial consciousness/ unconsciousness and memory. I argue that Fassie's articulates open secrets, in that she simply expresses what is already present in collective consciousness.

By claiming the status of a 'girlfriend' to the nation, Fassie marks an important strategy with regards to her relations with the nation:

1. She carries no 'formal recognition' which allows her room to disrupt and negotiate her femininity outside heteropatriarchal limitations;

2. This allows her to position herself in a mutually beneficial context, considering the opportunistic nature of the establishment.

The term 'girlfriend' usually refers to a female companion whom one typically has a romantic or sexual relationship with, perhaps aspiring to eventually occupy the status of the wife. The girlfriend often exists in distinct contrast to the wife, whose claim to kinship is affirmed through legal and cultural institutions. Many times, the girlfriend's calls upon kinship "challenges the sovereign power of exception that lies at the heart of the necropolitical state and is extended through its legal and cultural institutions" (Melamed 2021, 422). Although, the girlfriend exists outside the limitations of these formal social institutions, she neither radicalizes nor resists its normative positions (Melamed 2021, 424).

The song that launched her into stardom "Weekend Special" is useful in analysing Fassie's claim of the status of the 'girlfriend of the nation', a status that can be observed representationally, and performatively as fabulation, as it is the tale, the narration of a story of someone who only sees her lover on the weekends when they have time:

You don't come around
to see me in the week
You don't have the chance
to call me on the phone
but Friday night yes, I know
I know I must be ready for you
Just be waiting for you
I'm no weekend special
I'm no weekend special

Nicol Hammond, in part reliant on the referent of Fassie's biographical-figurative self, observes that "Fassie as the weekend special could be understood as uniquely liberated, sexually available sometimes but also self-sufficient" (Hammond 2015, 83). Fassie already presupposes her relation to intimate affairs as complicated where she holds a level of autonomy and uncontrollability. As a girlfriend, Fassie calls upon a form of kinship (as a girlfriend still exists in familial terms) but figures her primary role as antithetical to the conventional nurturer who is faithful to nationalist ideology and rather affords herself space to lack inhibitions - her struggles and appetite for alcohol, drug and sex are a testament of this. By casting herself in national familial terms, even in this multiple sense that opposes standard scripts of femininity [in relation to the nation], for instance the 'mother' – she disrupts the pre-determined national imaginings where women's contributions to the nation are exclusively maternal.

In turn, this destabilization gives space for the inscription of an 'unofficial' iconography to take place within the unconscious, where the intimate disorganization can become a form of aspiration for organization. Interestingly, because the national imagining in and of itself is rooted in an inherited modernity and political aspirations, Fassie is not necessarily doing anything 'new' but articulating an open secret that exists even if unofficially. Everybody knows about the girlfriend, the second wife, the second secret family that makes up for the insufficiencies of the "official family" all embedded in the political imaginary even if minute. Her articulation of this ungovernability becomes the very thing that resonates and signifies a general desire to name freedom in

alternative terms. In recasting herself in these terms, Fassie's circulation mediates this space of the known and unknown. Moreover, her ability to take on both identities of mother and girlfriends reveals the power that lies within queering.

Unburdening Representation: Fabulation, Form and Medium

In *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, Stuart Hall explores several different theories about how language is used to represent the world, drawing from three theories: the reflective; the intentional and the constructionist approach to representations (Hall, The Work of Representation 1997). Hall offers a simple definition of the usage of the term as "[r]epresentation means using language to say something meaningful about, or to represent, the world meaningfully to other people" (Hall, The Work of Representation 1997, 1), further adding that "this definition carries the important premise that things- objects, people, events in the world do not have in themselves any fixed, final or true meaning. It is us – in society, within human cultures -who make things mean, who signify" (Hall, The Work of Representation 1997, 45).

In his 1997 lecture titled "Representation and the Media", Hall then posits that the word 're-presentation' gives the impression that something exits, and it is being 'presented' again. Thus, to subvert this notion he argues that representation "is the way in which meaning is given to the things depicted

through images and texts that stand for a subject matter" (Hall, Representation and the Media by Stuart Hall 1997). In essence, Hall argues that representation should not be considered as an *after* the event activity but rather as *part of the event* – not outside of it but within. Culture is the way we make sense of and give meaning to the world while language becomes the tool for us to externalize those meanings. As this process of meaning making takes place through language, signifying practices and shared conceptual maps – ideology and institutions of power seek to close off language and meaning, they seek to naturalize stereotypes, meanings of images and ultimately bury the process of representation. Kobena Mercer's 'burden of representation' unpacks the weight placed on the work of publicly visible black artists where they are seen as 'representatives' of the communities they come from , a part of this as Nyong'o argues is the need to unburden black representation in a process that involves "resituating the artist from community delegate in the bourgeois public sphere to activist intervening in a contested and agonistic social topography" (Nyong'o 2014, 73).

Following this invocation, in reading Fassie's visibility as a representation of black femme/femininity I do not attempt to police her artistic expression but rather I am signaling to her undeniable link to the community she comes from, even as per her own admission/appropriation. This provisional admission/appropriation is expressed in Fassie's praxis, for instance as 'girlfriend', along with her depiction and performance in the documentary *I Am Not a Bad Girl,* in another instance; that functions as an intervention to unburden

representation of black African women open through the embracing of the erotic within the pursuit of freedom. I will argue that Fassie's outspoken openness about sex and sexuality transgresses stereotypical ideas about black femininity and presents possibilities for the future as she re-emerges in reference.

The biographical form has occupied the space of mediating the meta-narrative of the nation, and it critical as a form with regards to how Fassie's image has circulated. I direct my focus to Chris Austin's 1993 documentary *Brenda Fassie: Not A Bad Girl* as an example that produces a figure of Fassie that can move in and out of time. I preface this discussion by paying attention to the nuances that come with the documentary as a of narration. The documentary as a form can be traced to colonial ethnography which sought to capture images of colonial subjects in order to report back to European colonial administrators. The documentary was used to produce images of African people as primitive in order to legitimize their 'civilizing' through colonial subjugation. From its roots, the form served the purpose of canonizing representations of the colonies along with their subjects as backwards and uncivilized to satisfy pre-existing racist anthropological assumptions. Thus, it has been historically rooted in the claim of truth marked by this pathologizing difference.

Important to this consideration is the role and use of the biographical (produced by white males for European audiences) in relation to black women's presence – As Desiree Lewis discusses in "Black South African Women and Biography Under Apartheid"-, she offers some insights that "at face value, these projects are evidently 'progressive' and appear to make visible the lives of

subjects who have been historically silenced. At the same time, the projects obliquely reinforce dominant images and social hierarchies" (Lewis 2001, 164). Notwithstanding, it is still useful that the selection of black women as biographical subjects challenges the traditional conservatism of the genre which has conventionally endorse white male agency (Lewis 2001).

The interview as method used to draw direct personal accounts throughout the documentary mediates the tensions and offers more nuance. Although oral history method holds no claim to exclusivity, it is a uniquely valuable way of using human memory as a historical source. Marietjie; Oelofse and Derek Du Bruyn explain that "historical gaps of interest and importance can be filled by using oral history methods to provide an intimate view of the events described , in order to create records which otherwise would not have been available" further "the personal and anecdotal characteristics of recorded interviews can provide flesh for the sometimes arid bones of history" (Oelofse and Du Bruyn 2004, 157). Thus, my choice for the documentary despite its complicated history coupled with the interview because it can imbue more clarity and nuance that would not be possible in other mediums available in Fassie's available archive of work and given that this is one of the only published biographical footage of her I consider it important. I will supplement this discussion with a brief analysis of one of Fassie songs titled "I Am Not A Bad Girl" released in 1991 just two years shy of the documentary.

I'm [Not] A Bad Girl: Fassie and the Aesthetics of Refusal

By the early 90s, Brenda Fassie had begun her pursuit of a solo career while gaining an increasing stardom – her voice, attitude and personality were intoxicating, constantly energizing the media. During this time, Fassie's life would take a downward spiral with a chronic drug addiction which would result in her untimely death. With the media covering every aspect of her life which began to prove quite chaotic with reports of multiple temper tantrums, court cases and in most instances stories about her love for sex and vulgarity. It is in these moments that she was tagged as a 'bad girl', one regarded as the opposite of what good African women should be, she represents what Ligaga refers to as a 'good time girl' who is seen as the evils of city life, the jezebel. Chisomo Kalinga (2016) writes:

> In African culture, the question "Is she a good girl?" at face value is a polite inquiry; however, this question can also be thinly veiled code to ascertain the level of promiscuous behavior that a woman engages in. It reflects the conventional way that women are viewed within the troubling binary of either a 'respectable', 'honorable' African lady or a 'prostitute'.

This is the meta-narrative that Fassie existed in, thus I argue that the song asserting that she is not a bad girl can be read as a strategic confrontation and challenging of the stereotypes bestowed on black African woman by heteropatriarchal traditions and colonial constructs that are implicit in the national order. She opens the song with the following:

I try so hard
To please everybody
'Cause it's on my mind all the time

Hmmmmm
They don't understand me (Don't understand me)
They think I'm crazy (Crazy)
They don't understand me (Don't understand me)
Ohhhh they think I'm dizzy

This opening verse immediately indicates to the audience that this is a plea from a woman who is burdened by the expectations placed upon her. Fassie tells us that although she attempts to live according to society's standards – she is still misunderstood and shunned as a 'crazy woman, she continues:

She's not a bad girl baby
She's not a bad girl baby
You just had to understand
I'm nobody else
Just an ordinary girl
Baby be my judge (Be my judge)
And listen to what I say (Listen to what I say)
Look at what I'm doing (They don't understand me)
Oh just take me the way I am
Ohhh (baby baby)
(She's not a bad girl) Oh no

Here, Fassie makes the claim that despite her actions and the opinions people hold about the way she carries herself– she is not a bad girl. Fassie takes ownership of her body and advises society: the listener, audience, the intimate public, to look at her actions and accept her for who she is, an 'ordinary girl'. Fassie demands respect amid judgement, advocating for her right to respect despite societal views that regard her as 'bad'. However, note that she never refers to herself as a 'good girl' but simply pushes against the notion of being called a 'bad girl'. In doing this Fassie positions herself as neither good or bad but rather as existing in her own terms, where she cannot be contained by

tradition or state. In reaffirming that she is 'ordinary', she destabilizes binary logic that prescribes polarity for African womanhood, she implores that African women can have a space for self-definition, where who they are is regarded as just that, who they are. Fassie nudges for the re-thinking of the 'ordinary', and into the reality that if we look at African woman more intimately, we might discover that they can exist beyond the norm.

Brenda Fassie: Not a Bad Girl was filmed two years after the debut of the album *I Am Not a Bad Girl*. In translating Fassie's medium, form and performative action, director Chris Austin mobilizes an assemblage of the personal and performative as representing her, and how she lives life as South Africa's most popular singer. The documentary existed as the only one of its kind, which perhaps speaks to my own attachment to it. I watched this documentary as a younger person, and rewatching it as an adult carried a wholly different experience[2]. As a teen, I did not hold much thought except excitement to see Brenda Fassie perform in her natural habitat followed by the occasional cringe at her chaotic energy and at times crass language. Now, in my twenties I can recognize its raw, nuanced and intimate posture, now I am seeing MaBrrr's life in all its glory, the heavy, the light and the magical is eye-opening to the kind of space her performance and what it continues to enact in the contemporary.

[2] To my knowledge there has not been another (biographic) documentary film of Brenda Fassie since. The only other existing collection of videos is a 2006 compilation by the SABC archives.

I specifically note the scenes shot during the 1992 interview with *Vrye Weekblad's* Charl Blignaut that was later titled "In Bed with Brenda"[3]. This interview is shown in parts, spread out in about 30-40 minutes of the 76-minute documentary. Fassie welcomes Blignaut along with two of his colleagues to her home, where they settle on using her bedroom for the duration of her interview, hence the title "In Bed with Brenda". The decision to have the interview in the bedroom is an interesting and I suggest signals an important consideration. The bedroom is a very intimate and personal space, it is typically considered a place where one can go and escape the noise and chaos of the outside world. A space for relaxation, a haven of tranquility. The interview is personal, raw – MaBrrr is calm yet chaotic, at some moments she seems to be drifting away but manages to reel herself back into the moment. In the interview Fassie is unfiltered, she says what's on her mind, she is outspoken and does not shy away from discussing what society would consider 'taboo' for women to speak about so openly, for instance, in relation to sex and sexuality.

Reflective of the kind of outspokenness Fassie makes known, I offer two examples. When asked if she proposed to her ex-husband Nhlanhla Mbambo she responds:

> Yes. I paid lobola for him. Because I loved him. I was sick and tired of…In Bloemfontein I had a boyfriend, in Cape town I had a boyfriend…no. Then I thought no man, I'm going to be wrecked by the time I. And thanks AIDS

[3] I am referencing this interview as depicted in the documentary "Not a Bad Girl" and the Charl Blignaut's personal account in his chapter "In Bed with Brenda: A White Moffie Falls for a Black Vixen" in Bongani Madondo's *I'm Not Your Weekend Special* published in 2014.

> was not in South Africa yet. (Madondo, I'm Not Your Weekend Special : Portaits on the Life + Style & Politics of Brend Fassie 2014, 79).

Later when she is asked to describe the type of man she wants, she says:

> I want a man that can come out…come out as in, telling me what to do to him. And I promise the man I am not gonna tell anybody. The man must just tell me what I must do…And I don't say I am the best, but I think I can do if. I'm pretty hot" (Fassie 1993) she adds "Some men cry…because I sing, I sing when I make love. I sing for them, and one guy said to me "Oh, I wish the world could see that I'm fucking Brenda Fassie" and I said "wow man, I'll tell the world don't worry" … and he came 85 times. (Fassie 1993)[4]

Towards the end of the interview Blignaut asks, "Brenda, what do you for fun?", and she answers, "I drink Hansa." "What else?", she answers, "I fuck."

Ndebele avers, "the problem for society comes precisely at the point where, for Brenda Fassie, the wall between the private and the public totally collapse" adding that "this obliteration of the divide between the private and the public is at the bottom of her verbal ungovernability. It is a factor of the intention to be free, and if the act of tendering the state ungovernable is itself an act of freedom, then Brenda's voice enters the public arena as ungovernable, the ultimate expression of personal freedom" (Ndebele, Still Thinking of MaBrrr 2014). Fassie operating as black femme, challenges not just the binary but the very construction of 'us versus them' in this expression of freedom. That is, that operationalizing the biographical imperative, she inserts her status into the meta-narrative of black womanhood, plays with her figurative role within that status and mobilizes queerness as referent to her the usage of her biographical

[4] See Austin 1993, This is a direct quotation from Fassie during the Blignaut interview as shown in the "Not a Bad Girl" documentary, but it is not included in Blignaut's written account in *I'm Not Your Weekend Special*.

self, as well as her relation to the space-time of the nation and the mediums and form of her work.

The genealogical imperative that underscores the national is rooted in colonial modernity and what Wynter refers to as the "*over*representation" of [the white] man whose basis brought in modernity. Macharia tells us that "*over*representations structure how the world is revealed to the normal, white child and direct how the black child experiences the world" and "extending beyond childhood, these o*ver*representations produced through the triad of phylogeny, psychoanalysis as ontogeny, and sociogeny – structure society, Europe, and the world Europe imagined and made: colonial modernity. As a result, these *over*presentations dictate how the world that Europe imagined and made is experienced by white men and black men" (Macharia 2019 ,51) Central to this coloniality has always been gender and sexuality, specifically the heterosexual gender arrangements of colonized women and men alongside the hyper sexualization of black women. Now with [black] men being at the center of South Africa's national imagination and state formation – women were pushed to the margins and relegated to maternal auxiliaries. Further in this marginalization was also the contested position of queer people within the violence(s) of colonial modernity.

To begin with, Brenda Fassie in being outspoken and open about sex and sexuality, she transgresses the conventional notion of black womanhood which embedded in the historic hyper sexualization and objectification, have been pushed to suppress any form of erotic or sensuality. In "Uses of the Erotic: The

Erotic as Power" Audre Lorde elucidates: "The erotic has often been misnamed by men and used against women. It has been made into the confused, the trivial, the psychotic, the plasticized sensation. For this reason, we have often turned away from the exploration and consideration of the erotic as a source of power and information, confusing it with its opposite, the pornographic" (Lorde 1984, 2). In her verbal ungovernability, telling us that she likes to "drink Hansa and fuck" for fun or the details of her sexual partner's orgasm, Fassie embraces the erotic and makes 'private' sentiments public. For Fassie the intimate is public, mediated by her public persona is only a continuation of her private performance as she exclaims "no way, I'm not going to start justifying my character. My character is my character so take me the way I am" (SABC Archives).

In her prowess she keeps the re-presentation of black women open, derailing notions of black women as innately promiscuous thus necessitating systematic societal control but rather she presents images of choice, control and autonomy, or as Gqola (2004) observes, Fassie "creates a space for an enactment that centers women not as objects of some gaze, but as synthesizers of their self-representation" (142).

As such, I argue that in Fassie's extermination of the spilt between public and private, she reveals that there is a way for minoritized people to be rendered inoperative – moving beyond the conventional but rather through articulations of public desire, where the public pursuit of pleasure enables freedom that goes beyond temporal boundaries of the nation or state. In line with Macharia, Fassie

makes real the abstract notion, the unthinkable notion of freedom and brings it intimately close, it is this very act that proves the most powerful.

Additionally, her insistence on figuring herself as a people's person, on multiple accounts in the documentary she randomly embarks to the township and hangs out with the locals – she is recognizable by her bright red Nissan 200SX Sports with her name on the number plate. In this quotidian, yet tangible practice of free movement, and in consideration of the histories of policing of black women's movements; Fassie transcribes a method which I believe is innate with her queering, where she requires us to look at each other horizontally and not place anyone on pedestals, she says: "I am not like other stars…that's why they like me. I live with them. I don't stay like other stars with bodyguards, I am my own bodyguard" (Fassie 1993).

Fassie shows us that it is possible to live in contestation without it being contradiction, that identity is an open negotiation. Additionally, the interview "In Bed with Brenda" and the "Not A Bad Girl" documentary offers a new public in and of itself, in that the fact its digital availability functions as a digital intimate public that allows Fassie to live in continued re-circulation offering her an "afterlife". What I am pointing towards is a possibility to expand Berlant's offering in relation to digitalized technologies and think about how this digitally available documentary can function as a digital after life that allows for Fassie to foreground for more open, inclusive and queerer intimate worldmaking where the 'excess' that Fassie presents in spoken and physical language can be read and used to advocate for the "publicization of broader publics and counter

publics with the capacity for less bounded forms of intimate care and pleasure "(Dobson et al , 6).

In that, her break of private and public extends itself through the digital in order to transform relations in 2023 doing the work of what Dobson et al argue towards "the politics of paying attention to the public, digital inscription of unpredictable relations, attachments, feelings and expressions of care that 'don't fit' the mould of heteronormative social reproduction and that potentially build queerer, amore public intimate worlds" (22). 'Not A Bad Girl' and specifically the 'In Bed with Brenda' signpost the possibility of this within the present age.

Chapter Five: Our Girl in the Mirror; Fassie and Memory

When responding to the question of why he chose to write about Brenda Fassie, Bongani Madondo offered the following remarks:

> The entire country is. That is why ten years later, everywhere you go, it's almost like people are celebrating or remembering the sinking of the ship of Mendi; or they're remembering that day in 1994 when black people were ushered into freedom. Everywhere you go, everyone's talking about Brenda Fassie…... Brenda, for me was our girl in the mirror. When South Africa looks at itself in the mirror, its through the prism of Brenda Fassie, she is the filter. And when you're looking at yourself in the mirror, Brenda Fassie looks back at you (Madondo, Brenda Fassie , Our Girl in the Mirror 2014)

As our girl in the mirror, Fassie circulates through the temporalities of South African life making visible new narratives and moments. Her visibility allows a temporal space in which we can have different perceptions of the world. By way of 'ukuvul'indlela', she makes way for African women to negotiate and celebrate a new freedom and identity that is now visible in the present. The kind of freedom that rebels against stereotypical limitations in pursuit of freedom and the room to express a variety of femininities without inhibition.

I began by establishing two temporal markers that I use as place holders to think through the relationship between event and time. Moving between the 'mother of the nation' and the 'girlfriend of the nation', is a gesture towards the operation of the black femme: that there is a play between the cis-gender and the queer at the backdrop of the already complicated historiography of women's

iconographic and indexical status. Writing in 2022/3, I am observing something within this re-emergence a connection between space – time – objects within the public most immediate to me and the resonance encapsulated still, within these figurative operations.

Moving from apartheid to post-apartheid South Africa, the iconographic status of women has experienced significant shifts. First emerging as custodians of national liberation and the new nation visa- vis "mother of the nation", "sisters of the revolution" and other gendered familial tropes. Second, in the moment of transition, the launch into democracy was imagined as a sight of freedom and unlimited mobility which Gqola describes so well as "the imagined future was an embodied collective self is to say imagined, corporeally performed, and envisaged through bodies. Apartheid legislation was unabashedly fixated on the regulation of bodies, with limiting movement, legalizing bodily contact, with measuring hair texture, with the regulation of labor, sexuality and reproduction, on the punishment of the body through beatings, shootings and poverty. In a democratic South Africa, the body had to be imagined anew: as free, mobile, flourishing exploratory" (Gqola 2016, 120). Following this, the rise of the age of kwaito – in which alike to the time women began to appear as agent, stylish and sexually unrestrained free models within public and popular spaces.

This moment is of course mediated by the moment of reconciliation, constitutional building and most significantly, the insurgence of violent masculinities in the form of increased gender-based violence held together by

inherently patriarchal institutions and what Gqola (2007) has referred to as the "cult of femininity". Implicit to this moment is the reality that women's exclusion from citizenship had carried over into post-apartheid South Africa. Granted the discourse of democratic South Africa positioned women as "empowered" in the public sphere, while they continue to face grave disempowerment in the private sphere:

> The discourses of gender in the South African public sphere are very conservative in the main: they speak of 'women's empowerment' in ways that are not transformative, and as a consequence, they exist very comfortably alongside overwhelming evidence that South African women are not empowered: the rape and other gender based violence statistics, the rampant sexual harassment at work and public spaces, the siege on Black lesbians and raging homophobia, the very public and relentless circulation of misogynist imagery, metaphors and language (Gqola 115).

She adds:

> A genuinely gender-progressive country is without the gender-based violence statistics that South Africa has, making South African women collectively a majority (at 52 percent) under siege. There simply are no two-ways about it. It certainly does not watch and participate in curative rapes against its most marginal: Black lesbians and/or poor women (Gqola 117)

These ruptures on women's lived experience become a cause for the mobilizing for transformative action – in the forms of protest to confront and reject status quo. It is in these moment or stages of political rupture, where Fassie's performance of transgression and defiance is used to suture events together in the now public -post feminisms. A simple way to think about it this is – moments of political ruptures often lead to mass mobilizations whether in the form of march, sit ins etc – in each, there is always a way that the past is called upon to

make sense of the present moment that they find themselves in. As this happens it becomes easier for a revision of history to take place in order to serve the political moment. Think about Winnie Mandela who in time of 1994 was ousted as "unruly and abhorrent mother" becomes re-figured in her previous glory in the present 20s, when she suddenly she becomes the "mother" the nation has been longing for, heralded by the youth in her mother party and opposition allowing her to re-enter the public as feminist figure. Moreover, how the names of Maxeke , Ngoyi or Sisulu can be co-opted for every political moment where women are in protest?

In a similar sense, reference to Fassie in her performance of defiance and transgression becomes the heroic figure called upon at different political moments, to stitch together the wounds of the past. In the act of putting Fassie's face on a t-shirt, placards or simply appropriating her visual aesthetic she circulates as both inspiration and aspiration. Fassie becomes the 'hero' of defiance and self-determination for post-colonial woman to retrieve to make their protest actions and political moments real, impactful but moreover to usher themselves into the sphere of public feminisms. 'Vuli'ndlela' becomes the anthem of freedom.

In this present decade, the intersections of the range of possible femininities marking the emergence of the trope of New South African Woman (NSAW) whose presence was in response to the political conditions of transition and departure from hegemonic gender constructions. Experiencing a kind of

"intersectional triple violence" per Gqola, where women were limited by white supremacy, patriarchy and class oppression: "this intersectional triple violence very clearly limited women's life choices and movements and undervalued them through institutional silencing, policing and legal minorization." (Gqola 2016, 120)

As already alluded to , I consider the NSAW in part as one facet of Fassie's current re-circulation and connected to Gill's theorization of post feminism which she considers as "a critical analytical term that refers to empirical regularities or patterns in contemporary cultural life which include the emphasis on individualism, choice and agency as dominant mode of accounting" (Gill 2016). Although not exactly theorized around the same time, they both venture into a consideration of a popular feminism that circulates in an economy of visibility tied to what Banet Weiser (2018) ascertains authorized a popularity of feminism, one that is tied to media visibility, circulation and affective embrace (Banet-Weiser et al).

Fassie's re-emergence is also visible within this landscape, where women's iconographic status is depicted in popular terms e.g., girl power, girl boss, the slay queen etc. The 'girl boss' is characterized as a successful businesswoman in a male dominated industry that largely operates on the meritocratic mantra that "she gets what she wants because she works for it" (Robinson 2023, 1). She exists within this contentious moment that McRobbie (2004) refers to as the 'double entanglement' where "moments of empowerment

seem to be given to women 'as a kind of substitute for' (McRobbie as quoted by Gill, 2011) real feminist movement and progression in the neoliberal era" (Robinson, 2). The 'slay queen', a term of endearment and affirmation popularized the LGBTQIA+ community: slay, queen (Okech 2021, 13).

However, in the mainstream the term has been co-opted for hetero-patriarchal discourses around morality and women's sexuality causing women to push back against imposed assumptions and reclaim the term for self-determination. Here, the discourse defining aspirational womanhood is anchored on centering the self/body/individual. In these moments Fassie is called upon in a sense seemingly unrelated to her but which actively uses strands of Fassie's performance for popular mobilizations where she mediates the intimate conditions of the popular. The 'girl boss' and 'slay queen' are both insistent on freedom to express the heterogeneity of their femininity. Thus, what Fassie presents to the contemporary is an example of the possibilities that exist for African femininities. Now, with the progression and the ruptures of neoliberal time these new femininities have the space and allowance to co-construct their own identities from Fassie as precursor.

From the lens of the discursive formulations within popular feminism, defined thematically as contemporary practices and conditions that are accessible to a broad public, from organizing marches to hashtag activism to commodities (Banet-Weiser et al 9), Fassie's performance becomes a readily made intervention that can be invoked. As the NSAW, the girl boss, the slay queen emerge their assertion for freedom becomes exactly the kind of insistence

that Fassie implored to become free and rebellious despite the rigid constructions of African womanhood that existed during her time. Her confrontation of sexist and patriarchal voices that often sought to delegitimize and vilify her becomes aspiration and inspiration for the present.

So, what can we make of this? That Fassie's constant recapitulation is because she makes possible the kind of womanhood that allows women to not merely transgress but to "reinvent" – that is to figure themselves anew in the different social and political moments that they find themselves in as exemplified in NoMoozlie's evocation of her image as "new age Brenda Fassie" and by asking "what would Brenda Fassie do?" as she navigated her way through a male dominated career space.

In studying a cross generational artist like Brenda Fassie, I suggest that there is an intergenerational temporal connection between the moment the moment of democracy that ushered in freedom and the later emerging cracks of the same democracy. Implicit to both these moments is the women's iconography related to the nation embedded within the genealogical imperative that constructs the nation in hetero-familial terms. By examining her ability to occupy both the wayward and docile narratives of femininity through the figures of 'mother' and girlfriend -in embracing the intimate beyond the normative but rather into a deeper embrace of the political power of the erotic, Fassie has

allowed us to observe her performance of transgression and queering as enabling an articulation of new kinds of femininity that influence the post-colonial African woman/femme subject.

Bibliography

Video | Film

Brenda Fassie : Not A Bad Girl. Vimeo Video. Directed by Chris Austin. Performed by Brenda Fassie; 1993; Vimeo Video

Representation and the Media by Stuart Hall. Youtube . Directed by Sut Jhally. Performed by Stuart Hall. Youtube 30 Nov 2021, Video 47:54. https://youtu.be/84depWskwu0

Discography.

Brenda & The Big Dudes. 1983. "Weekend Special" Tack 1 on *Weekend Special.* CCP/EMI Records. Compact Disc

Brenda & The Big Dudes. "Weekend Special". Genuis Lyrics. 15 January ,2023. https://genius.com/Brenda-and-the-big-dudes-weekend-special-lyrics

Brenda Fassie. 1989. "Good Black Woman" Track 5 on *Too Late For Mama.* CCP/EMI Records. Compact Disc

Brenda Fassie. "Good Black Woman". Musixmatch Lyrics. 23 February 2023. https://www.musixmatch.com/lyrics/Brenda-Fassie/Good-Black-Woman

Brenda Fassie. 1990. "Black President" Track 6 on *Black President*. CCP Records. Compact Disc

Brenda Fassie. "Black President". Genuis Lyrics. 23 February 2023. https://genius.com/Brenda-fassie-black-president-lyrics

Brenda Fassie 1991. "I Am Not A Bad Girl' Track 1 on *I Am Not A Bad Girl.* CCP / EMI Music. Compact Disc

Brenda Fassie. 1991. "I Am Not A Bad Girl" Paroles Musique. 26 February 2023. https://www.paroles-musique.com/eng/Brenda-Fassie-I-Am-Not-A-Bad-Girl-lyrics,p1083328

Brenda Fassie. 1997. "Vuli'indlela" Track 5 on *Memeza*. CCP Records. Compact Disc

Brenda Fassie. 1997. "Vuli'indlela". Genuis Lyrics. 25 February ,2023. https://genius.com/Brenda-fassie-vul-indlela-lyrics

Texts

Banet-Weiser, Sarah, Rosalind Gill, and Catherine Rottenberg. "Postfeminism, popular feminism and neoliberal feminism? Sarah Banet-Weiser, Rosalind Gill and Catherine Rottenberg in conversation." *Feminist theory* 21. 1 (2020): 3-24.

Berlant, Lauren, and Elizabeth Freeman. "Queer nationality." *boundary 2* 19.1 (1992): 149-180.

Berlant, Lauren. "The queen of America goes to Washington City." *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City*. Duke University Press, 1997.

Berlant, Lauren. "Intimacy: A special issue." *Critical inquiry* 24.2 (1998): 281-288.

Berlant, Lauren. "On the case." *Critical Inquiry* 33.4 (2007): 663-672.

Berlant, Lauren. "Intuitionists: History and the affective event." *American Literary History* 20.4 (2008): 845-860.

Berlant, Lauren. 2008. *The Female Complaint : The Unfinished Business of Sentimentality in American Culture.* Duke University Press.

Berlant, Lauren, and Jay Prosser. "Life writing and intimate publics: A conversation with Lauren Berlant." *Biography* (2011): 180-187

Boswell, Barbara. "Rewriting apartheid South Africa: race and space in Miriam Tlali and Lauretta Ngcobo's novels." *Gender, Place & Culture* 23.9 (2016): 1329-1342.

Boswell, Barbara. "Overcoming the 'daily bludgeoning by apartheid': black South African women writers, agency, and space." *African identities* 15.4 (2017): 414-427.

Boswell, Barbara. *And wrote my story anyway: Black South African women's novels as feminism*. Wits University Press, 2020.

Brown, Jayna, and Tavia Nyong'o. "Recall and response: black women performers & the mapping of memory." *Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory* 16.1 (2006): 3-5.

Bystrom, Kerry, and Sarah Nuttall. "Introduction: Private lives and public cultures in South Africa." *Cultural Studies* 27.3 (2013): 307-332.

Bystrom, Kerry. 2013. "Johannesburg Interiors." *Cultural Studies* (2013): 33-356.

Bystrom, Kerry. *Democracy at Home in South Africa: Family Fictions and Transitional Culture*. Springer, 2016.

Chengeta, Gorata. "Re-imagining How We Want to Be Touched." *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 34.2 (2022): 225-228.

Coplan, David B."God rock Africa : Thoughts on politics in popular black performance in South Africa." *African Studies* (2005):9-27.

Davis, Nira Yuval "Gender and nation." *Ethnic and Racial Studies 6. 4* (1993):622-632.

Densmore, Shamiya. 2021. *History of Wilberforce University : Charlotte Maxeke.* April 08. Accessed March 12, 2023. https://wilberforcepayne.libguides.com/c.php?g=763792&p=5478039.

Dobson, Amy Shields, Nicholas Carah, and Brady Robards. "Digital intimate publics and social media: Towards theorising public lives on private platforms." Digital intimate publics and social media (2018): 3-27.

Du Preez Bezdrob, Anne Marie. *Winnie Mandela: A Life. Cape Town*: Zebra,2003

Eyerman, Ron. 2004. "The Past in the Present : Culture and the Transmission of Memory." *Acta Sociologica* 159-169.

Fleetwood, Nicole R. "Troubling vision." *Troubling Vision*. University of Chicago Press, 2011.

Fleetwood, Nicole R. *On racial icons: Blackness and the public imagination*. Rutgers University Press, 2015.

French, Marry Anne. *"The Resurrected Winnie Mandel*a"30 April 1994. Accessed April 02, 2022.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/lifestyle/1994/04/30/the-resurrected-winnie-mandela/69010af8-2657-4846-a60b-1a595f5089d1

Gilbey, Emma. The Lady: The Life and Times of Winnie Mandela. Cape Town: Vintage, 1994

Gill, Rosalind. "Post-post feminism? : new feminist visibilities in postfeminist times." *Feminist Media Studies* (2016) 610-630.

Gillespie, Kelly, and Leigh-Ann Naidoo. "#MustFall: The South African Student Movement and the Politics of Time." *The South Atlantic Quarterly(*2019*):* 190-194.

Ginwala, Frene."Women and the African National Congress : 1912-1943." *Agenda (*1990) 77-93.

Gqola, Pumla Dineo. "How the 'cult of femininity'and violent masculinities support endemic gender-based violence in contemporary South Africa." *African identities* 5.1 (2007): 111-124.

Gqola, Pumla Dineo. "In search of female s/staffriders: Authority, gender and audience, 1978–1982." *Current Writing: Text and Reception in Southern Africa* 13.2 (2001): 31-41

Gqola, Pumla Dineo. "Ufanele uqavile: Blackwomen, feminisms and postcoloniality in Africa." *Agenda* 16.50 (2001): 11-22.

Gqola, Pumla. "Where have all the rainbows gone? memory." *Rhodes Journalism Review* 2004.24 (2004): 6-7.

Gqola, Pumla Dineo. "" The difficult task of normalizing freedom": spectacular masculinities, Ndebele's literary/cultural commentary and post-apartheid life." *English in Africa* 36.1 (2009): 61-76.

Gqola, Pumla Dineo. "A peculiar place for a feminist? The New South African woman, True Love magazine and Lebo (gang) Mashile." *Safundi* 17.2 (2016): 119-136.

Hall, Stuart. 1997. "The Work of Representation." In *Representation : Cultural Representtaion and Signifying Practices* , by Stuart Hall, 13-58. London: Sage.

Hamilton, Carolyn, et al. *Becoming worthy ancestors: Archive, public deliberation and identity in South Africa*. Wits University Press, 2011.

Hammond, Nicol. "National Mothers : Singing a Queer Family Romance for the New South Afriva." *Women and Music : A Journal of Gender and Culture* (2015): 77-85.

Hassim, Shireen. "Gender, Social Location and Feminist Politics in South Africa." *Transformation* (1991):65-82.

Hassim, Shireen. "A Life of Refusal: Winnie Madikizela-Mandela and Violence in South Africa" *Storia Delle Donne* 10 (2014):55-77

Jacobs, Nancy J, and Andrew Bank. "Biographies in post-aparthied South Africa : A call for awkwardness." *African studies* (2019):165-182.

Keeling, Kara. "Introduction : Another Litany for Survival." In *The Witch's Flight : The Cinematic , The Black Feme=me and the Image of Common Sense*, by Kara Keeling, 2. Duke University Press,2007

Kerr, David. "Popular Culture in Eastern Africa: Archives of the Everyday." *Eastern African Literary and Cultural Studies* 7.4 (2021): 239-244.

Kalinga, Chisomo "Confronting the black Jezebel stereotype: The contentious legacy of Brenda Fassie, South Africa's pop princess" Dangerous Women Project.org, 26 March, 2016. https://dangerouswomenproject.org/2016/03/20/confronting-black-jezebel-stereotype/

Lewis, Desiree. "Myths of motherhood and power: black women in literature." *English in Africa* 19.1 (1992): 35-51.

Lewis, Desiree. "Winnie Mandela: The Surveillance and Excess of" Black Woman" as Signifier." *Southern African Feminist Review* 2.1 (1996): 7.

Lewis, Desiree, Ellen Kuzwayo, and Mamphela Ramphele. "Gender myths and citizenship in two autobiographies by South African women." *Agenda* 15.40 (1999): 38-44.

Lewis, Desiree. "Constructing Lives: Black South African Women and Biography under Apartheid." *Apartheid Narratives*. Brill, (2001): 163-189.

Lewis, Desiree. "Biography, Nationalism and Yvonne Vera's Nehanda." *Social Dynamics* 30.1 (2004): 28-50.

Lewis, Desiree. "Mother of the Nation." Chimurenga Online, 2010, December 22,

Lewis, Desiree, and Cheryl Margaret Hendricks. "Epistemic ruptures in South African standpoint knowledge-making: Academic feminism and the# FeesMustFall movement." *Gender Questions* 4.1 (2017): 18.

Ligaga, Dina. "Mapping emerging constructions of good time girls in Kenyan popular media." *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 26.3 (2014): 249-261.

Ligaga, Dina. "Presence, agency and popularity: Kenyan "socialites", femininities and digital media." *Eastern African Literary and Cultural Studies* 2.3-4 (2016): 111-123.

Ligaga, Dina Adhiambo. "Beyond shame culture? Kenyan women's self-representation practices online." *Postcolonial Text* 15.3 & 4 (2020).

Ligaga, Dina. *Women, visibility and morality in Kenyan popular media*. African Books Collective, 2020.

Lim, Eng-Beng, and Tavia Nyong'o. "Afterword: Queer Reconstellations." *Social Text* 38.4 (2020): 149-156.

Livermon, Xavier. "Queer (y) ing freedom: black queer visibilities in postapartheid South Africa." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 18.2-3 (2012): 297-323.

Livermon, Xavier. "Representations of Sophiatown in Kwaito Music: Mafi kizolo and Musical Memory." *Music, Performance and African Identities*. Routledge, 2012. 179-200.

Livermon, Xavier. "Soweto nights: Making black queer space in post-apartheid South Africa." *Gender, Place & Culture* 21.4 (2014): 508-525.

Livermon, Xavier. ""Si-ghetto fabulous" ("we are ghetto fabulous"): kwaito musical performance and consumption in post-apartheid South Africa." *Black Music Research Journal* 34.2 (2014): 285-303.

Livermon, Xavier. "Usable traditions: Creating sexual autonomy in postapartheid South Africa." *Feminist Studies* 41.1 (2015): 14-41.

Livermon, Xavier. *Kwaito bodies: Remastering space and subjectivity in post-apartheid South Africa*. Duke University Press, 2020.

Lorde, Audre. "Uses of the Erotic : The Erotic as Power." *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches by Audre Lorde* (1984): 1-7.

Macharia, Keguro "Queer Kenya in law and policy ." *Queer African Reader* (2013) 273-289.

Macharia, Keguro. *Frottage : Frictions of Intimacy across the Black Diaspora.* New York: New York University Press,2019

Madondo, Bongani, interview by Ts'eliso Monaheng. 2014. *Brenda Fassie , Our Girl in the Mirror* (September 11). http://www.warscapes.com/blog/brenda-fassie-our-girl-mirror

Madondo, Bongani. *I'm Not Your Weekend Special : Portraits on the Life + Style & Politics of Brenda Fasie.* Johannesburg : Picador Africa,2014

Mari, Lorenzo. "Romance and Freedom : Nelson and Winnie Mandela's Politics of Gender in Three Post-Apartheid Novels." *Other Modernities* (2014):95-112.

Melamed, Laliv. "What Is a Girlfriend? : Toward a Political Concept of the Girlfriend." *Discourse (*2021):421-446.

Mhlambi, Thokozani. "Kwaitofabulous : The study of a South African urban genre ." *Journal of the Musical Arts in Africa.* (2004);116-127.

Mojapelo, Max. *Beyond Memory : Recording the History , Moments and Memories of South African Music.* Somerset West: African Minds,2008

Moji, Polo Belina. "Divas and deviance: Hip-hop feminism and black visuality in Lauren Ekué's Icône Urbaine (2006)." *Agenda* 32.3 (2018): 10-20.

Motimele, Moshibudi. The Rupture of Neoliberal Time as the Foundation for Emancipatory Epistemologies. *South Atlantic Quarterly* 118,1 (2019): 205-214.

Msimang, Sisonke. The Resurrection of Winnie Mandela. Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2018

Munro, Brenna. "Nelson, Winne and the Politics of Gender ." In *The Cambridge Companion to Nelson Mandela*, by Rita Barnard, 92-114. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014

Musila, Grace A. Lot's Wife Syndrome and Double Publics in South Africa. *PMLA* 131,5 (2016): 1452-1461

Musila Grace A. "Margins and their im/possibilities in Eastern African imaginaries, *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 30,1 (2018): 1-5

Musila , Grace A. “The Burden of Representation in the Life Stories of Wambui Waiyaki Otieno and Winnie Madikizela-Mandela” *Auto/Biography Studies,* 35, 3(2020): 599-621

Mupotsa, Danai. "The promise of happiness: Desire, attachment and freedom in post/apartheid South Africa." *Critical Arts* 29.2 (2015): 183-198.

Mupotsa, Danai S. "Feeling backwards: temporal ambivalence in An African City." *Feminist Theory* 20.2 (2019):201-214.

Mupotsa, Danai S. "Fragile feeling." *Journal of African Cinemas* 11.3 (2019): 315-332.

Mupotsa, Danai S., Polo B. Moji, and Natasha Himmelman. "Cinematic imaginaries of the African city." *Social Dynamics* 47.1 (2021): 1-6.

Mupotsa, Danai S. "Conjugality." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 26.3 (2020): 377-403.

Naidoo, Prishani. "Struggles around the commodification of daily life in South Africa." *Review of African Political Economy* 34.111 (2007): 57-66.

Naidoo, Prishani. "Between old and new: struggles in contemporary South Africa." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 114.2 (2015): 436-445.

Ndebele, Njabulo. "The rediscovery of the ordinary : some new writings in South Africa." *Journal of Southern African Studies* (1986): 143-157.

Ndebele, Njabulo. The Cry of Winnie Mandela. Cape Town: David Phillip, 2003.

Ndebele, Njabulo. "Still Thinking of MaBrrr." In *I'm Not Your Weekend Special : Potraits on the Life+Style&Politics of Brenda Fassie*, by Bongani Madondo, 96-107. Johannesburg: Picador Africa, 2014

Ndelu, Sandy, Simamkele Dlakavu, and Barbara Boswell. "Womxn's and nonbinary activists’ contribution to the RhodesMustFall and FeesMustFall student movements: 2015 and 2016." *Agenda* 31.3-4 (2017): 1-4.

Ndlovu, Thabisani. "Shuttling between the suburbs and the township: the new black middle class (es) negotiating class and post-apartheid blackness in South Africa." *Africa* 90.3 (2020): 568-586, 40 (1999): 38–44

Ndlovu, Thabisani. "Fixing families through television?" *Cultural studies* 27.3 (2013: 379-403.

Nuttall, Sarah. "Reading in the lives and writing of black South African women." Journal of Southern African Studies 20.1 (1994): 85-98.

Nuttall, Sarah. "Reading and recognition in three South African women's autobiographies." *Current Writing: Text and Reception in Southern Africa* 8.1 (1996): 1-18.

Nuttall, Sarah. "Self and text in Y magazine." *African identities* 1.2 (2003): 235-251.

Nuttall, Sarah. "Stylizing the self: The Y generation in Rosebank, Johannesburg." *Public culture* 16.3 (2004): 430-452.

Nuttall, Sarah. Entanglement: Literary and cultural reflections on post-apartheid. NYU Press, 2009.

Nuttall, Sarah. "Intimate lives, interior places." *Image & Text: a Journal for Design* 29.1 (2017): 18-36

Nyairo, Joyce, and James Ogude. "Specificities: Popular Music and the Negotiation of Contemporary Kenyan Identity: The Example of Nairobi City Ensemble." *Social identities* 9.3 (2003): 383-400.

Nyong'o, Tavia. "Queer Africa and the fantasy of virtual participation." Women's Studies Quarterly 40.1/2 (2012): 40-63.

Nyong'o, Tavia. "Situating Precarity between the Body and the Commons." Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory 23.2 (2013): 157-161.

Nyong'o, Tavia. "Unburdening representation." The Black Scholar 44.2 (2014): 70-80.

Nyong'o, Tavia. "Queer Hip Hop and its Dark Precursors." Palimpsest 2.2 (2013): 144-146.

Nyong'o, Tavia. Afro-fabulations: The queer drama of Black life. Vol. 14. NYU Press, 2018.

Oelofse, Marietjie, and Derek Du Bruyn. "The importace of oral history in transforming South Africa." *Journal for Contemporary History* (2004): 151-169.

Owen, There. 2013. *Madiba , a man who made hearts sing.* Dec 1. Accessed June 08, 2022.

Okech, Awino. "Feminist digital counterpublics: Challenging femicide in Kenya and South Africa." Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 46, no. 4 (2021): 1013-1033.

Peterson, Bhekizizwe. "A love letter to those who passed on and those still tasked with creating a better future for all." *Safundi* 22.1 (2021): 23-25.

Peterson, Bhekizizwe. "Kwaito,'dawgs' and the antimonies of hustling." *African Identities* 1.2 (2003): 197-213.

Peterson, Bhekizizwe. "Spectrality and inter-generational black narratives in South Africa." *Social Dynamics* 45.3 (2019): 345-364.

Ramphele, Mamphela. 1996. "Political Widowhood in South Africa : The embodiment of ambiguity ." *Daedalus* 99-117.

Robinson, Leone. "Is the 'Girl Boss' Really Just an Anti-Feminist Commodification?." Critical Reflections: A Student Journal on Contemporary Sociological Issues (2023).

Samuelson, Meg. Remembering the Nation, Dismembering Women (2007)

Shange, Nombulelo. "Mappings of feminist/womanist resistance within student movements across the African continent." *Agenda* 31.3-4 (2017): 60-67.

Snead James A. "On repetition in black culture." *Black American Literature Forum* (1981):146-154.

Solanga, Misha. 2017. I want to be Brenda Fassie - Nomuzi Mabena". 14 September 2017. Accessed June 08, 2022. https://www.snl24.com/drum/celebs/i-want-to-be-brenda-fassie-nomuzi-mabena-20170914

Spencer , Lynda Gichanda, Dina Ligaga, and Grace A Musila. "Gender and Popular Imaginaries in Africa." *Agenda* 3-9 (2018).

Spencer, Lynda Gichanda. "'In defence of chick-lit': refashioning feminine subjectivities in Ugandan and South African contemporary women's writing." *Feminist Theory* 20.2 (2019): 155-169.

Spencer, Lynda Gichanda. ""Having it all"? :(re) examining conspicuous consumption and pernicious masculinities in South African chick-lit." *English in Africa* 45.3 (2018): 79-97.

Steingo, Gavin. "Historicizing Kwaito." *African Music :Journal of International Library of African Music* 76-91 (2008):76-91

Tau, Siphokazi. "Brenda Fassie and Busiswa Gqulu : a relationship of feminist expression, aesthetics and memory." *Social Dynamics : A journal of African studies* 23-36 (2021) :23-36

Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. Silencing the past: Power and the production of history: Beacon Press, 2015

Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. "The Otherwise Modern" Carribbean Lessons from the Savage Slot." In *Remixed: the Michel-Rolph Trouillot Reader*, by Yarimar Bonilla, Greg Beckett and Mayanthi L Fernando, 220-237. New York: Duke University Press, 2021

Wainaina, Binyavanga. *One Day I Will Write About This Place.* Minneapolis: Graywolf Press, 2011

Worby, Eric, and Shireen Ally. "The disappointment of nostalgia: Conceptualising cultures of memory in contemporary South Africa." *Social Dynamics* 39.3 (2013): 457-480.

Wright, Timothy. "Melancholy freedom: Movement and stasis in." *Journal of African Cinemas* 11.3 (2019): 207-224.

Xavier, Livermon. “Doing the right thing in post-apartheid South Africa” , Safundi 20,4 (2019):407-409

Yates, Kimberley, Pumla Gqola, and Mamphela Ramphele. "This little bit of madness: Mamphela Ramphele on being black and transgressive." *Agenda* 14.37 (1998): 90-95.

Zikalala, Zuko."Fabricating Pleasure , Fabricating Black Queer Experience:The Time and Space of FAKA." *Masters Research Report.* Department of African Literature , March, 2019